

***Preparing Youth for Citizenship and Democracy:  
Young Bahrainis' Civic and Political  
Knowledge and Understanding***

**By**

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Poor text in the original  
thesis.

*I dedicate this work*

*To My beloved parents, husband and children*

*and*

*To the Bahraini youth who made my journey*

*possible and worthwhile*

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## ABSTRACT

Preparation of young people for effective citizenship has been a major concern in Bahrain since the transition towards democracy in 2001, and the movement towards reform in most aspects of life. To expedite the process of development and reform, education, training and youth issues are receiving growing attention in Bahrain. On a path of educational reform, Bahrain seeks to improve the quality of life for Bahraini citizens and increase their chances for prosperity, and, thus, citizenship education has been identified as a key initiative, which involves a clear commitment to help students acquire the skills, values, and knowledge necessary to enable them to become active citizens.

The present study examines whether young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understanding necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy. This is done by looking at three domains: citizenship, community and identity; rights, responsibilities and law; and democracy, political literacy and government. These categories comprise the conceptual framework of this study, support the development of the research hypotheses, and serve as guidelines for the drafting of the research instruments; a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule. In this mixed methods approach, a questionnaire was administered to 460 final year secondary school students. This was followed by in-depth interviews with a stratified sample of 22 young people who had participated in the questionnaire survey.

The research provides valuable insights into the civic and political knowledge and understanding of Bahraini secondary school students and sheds light on the problems encountered by these young people as they engage in the process of learning about citizenship and democracy. The findings reveals a noticeable understanding of the conceptions of citizenship and shows that young citizens have sufficient understanding of their rights and responsibilities; some knowledge of democracy, but little understanding of politics and government. Furthermore, they are aware of issues affecting their community, but they are less involved in community associations or activities.

The study recommends a national strategy to improve the teaching of citizenship education in Bahrain, in formal and informal contexts. This needs to match and respond to the views, perceptions, and experiences of young people in order to encourage and enable them to become useful, active and responsible members of Bahraini society.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the last two decades there has been a great deal of attention directed towards citizenship education all over the world. We are living in the decade of citizenship (Dahrendorf, 1997). The current revival of interest in citizenship has been brought about by significant social and economic change, specifically in relation to the means of communication, population growth and movement, and the environment (Scott and Lawson, 2002).

Citizens need to be educated about what it means to be a citizen. The diverse definitions of citizenship and citizenship education in the literature point to their relationship to democracy. Therefore, education for Democratic Citizenship is the teaching and learning of the principles and practices of democratic governance, rights and responsibilities and citizenship (Osler 2000a; Patrick 2002; Miller 2004). In other words, citizenship education in a democratic society most assuredly needs to be concerned with promoting understanding of the ideals of democracy and a reasoned commitment to the values and principles of democracy (QCA 1998; Osler 2000b; Patrick 2002; Branson 2003).

Citizenship education has two major components. The first involves educating young people about their nation's history and government, with emphasis upon the core concepts of democracy in their country. Cajani and Ross (2007) argue that knowledge of history is the precondition of political intelligence and essential to effective participation in the democratic processes of governance. The second involves development of competent and responsible citizens whose perspective, knowledge, and skills will enable them to participate more effectively in local, state, national, and

international affairs (Bahmueller 2002; Branson 2003). Portelli and Solomon (2001) maintain that:

Citizenship is simply legal status in a country, but democratic citizenship demands becoming informed about issues that affect you and participating with others in determining how society will resolve those issues (p.12).

The Council of Europe (2005) emphasizes the above ideas and defines education for democratic citizenship as all practices and activities designed to help young people and adults to participate actively in democratic life by accepting and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society. Similarly, a French concept of citizenship education (Audigier, 1998) is:

Belonging to a democratic community, accepting the rights and duties entailed by this membership. By rights we mean human rights, in particular in relation to the state, and by duties we mean the demand for active participation in social life (p.15).

Literature shows that students involved in education for democracy are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of democracy; know their rights and responsibilities; have an understanding and awareness of their community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, and think critically (QCA 1998; Parekh 2000; Banks 2004; Miller 2004). With this knowledge, students will promote some particular elements of citizenship education, such as community service, political awareness and human rights education (Leicester *et al.*, 2000).

Osler (2000b) believes that the key aim of any programme of citizenship education should be based on human rights principles and enable individuals to develop a range of secure and confident identities as citizens. It should also aim to examine and understand the barriers to citizenship such as racism, as a first stage, and equip them with the skills to challenge and overcome such barriers in enabling young people to

overcome them. Osler argues that young people confident in their identities will be in a strong position to challenge the stereotypical images of minorities that currently help support discriminatory practices. In her view, such a situation has the potential to contribute to a new anti-racist project that will strengthen democratic institutions and practices and enable the full participation of all and will also contribute to the development of a society in which all citizens can claim their citizenship rights and responsibilities on the basis of equality. Thus, Citizenship education should include mutual respect amongst citizens of different religions, race, genders, and ethnicity (Parekh, 2000); and help students to develop a reflective commitment to justice and equality throughout the world (Osler and Vincent, 2002). Gutmann (1996) maintains that citizenship education should help students to develop their primary moral allegiance to justice - not to any human community. Gutmann contends, 'doing what is right cannot be reduced to loyalty to, or identification with, any existing group of human beings' (p.69).

Citizenship education is viewed as significant in many countries including Bahrain. As a consequence of the transition towards democracy in Bahrain, a reform movement occurred in most aspects: political, economic, social welfare, health, work and education. For example, the political reform includes the establishment of 'The National Charter', and a new 'Constitution', people's political participation, forming political organizations, the right to vote, and free expression of opinion (REDRESS, 2004). This reform movement has contributed to the educational commitment to preparing the students to live in a democratic society, providing them with a democratic culture, developing the practical values and skills in the effective participation in democratic activities and national unity, which the curriculum should develop and nurture (Ministry of Education, 2004a: 54). Consequently, citizenship



education has been identified as a key initiative. The citizenship education to which Bahrain aspires is evident in the ruler of Bahrain, King Hamad Al-Khalifa's words:

The Citizenship Education that Bahrain aspires to focuses on the development of children as citizens in order to create citizens who participate in their local communities, understand their rights and exercise their duties to society (King of Bahrain, 2005, my translation).

The reform led by King Hamad Al-Khalifa introduces the values of democratic citizenship to enable the future generations to participate effectively and positively in different fields of life. I believe that a free political system has the obligation to give all citizens the opportunity and ability to take an active part in shaping the institutions and laws of the country in which they live. If this objective is to be achieved, then young people should be enabled to develop the capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. In order to help young people to become caring, contributing, productive and responsible citizens, the entire school program must reflect a clear commitment to helping young people acquire the skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge necessary to achieve this goal.

This study intends to examine whether 18 years old young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic knowledge and understanding necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy, before the formal introduction of 'Citizenship Education' into schools in Bahrain. This will be done by looking at three domains: Firstly, citizenship, community and identity; secondly, rights, responsibilities and the law; thirdly, democracy, politics and government. In doing so, the study will provide a detailed analysis of the civic knowledge and the political understanding of young Bahraini citizens. It will also shed light on their experiences, attitudes and beliefs. The findings of my research will

help the educators, curriculum designers and policy makers to build upon what Bahraini young people already know and understand, and revise the content and types of activities that should be introduced if effective learning is to take place.

## **1.1 Background**

This section presents a review of the context of my work and leads to the research problem. It reviews Bahrain's demographic, cultural, political, and economic status, and explains how the political changes in the country raised awareness regarding citizenship education.

### **1.1.1 Bahrain Demographic, Cultural and Economic Background**

Bahrain is an archipelago of 40 islands in the Arabian Gulf located off the Eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. The island of Bahrain is pear-shaped (See map in Appendix VI), is 48km long and 16km wide. It has a total area of 727 sq. km. (274 sq.m.) The four main islands are joined by causeways, and make up about 95% of the total land area. Bahrain is connected to Saudi Arabia by a 23km causeway, opened in 1986.

The capital city is Manama and the populous Muharraq Island is connected by a causeway to Manama. Sitra, a mainly industrial island is also connected to Manama by a causeway. Other islands of significant size include Nabih Saleh to the east, and Jiddah and Umm Al Nassan to the west. There are numerous other tiny islands in the archipelago but they are mainly uninhabited and are best known for the rich variety of migrating birds which live there for part of the year. Bahrain is divided into five governorates: Capital, Central/Middle, Muharraq, Northern, and Southern.

The total population according to the 2006 estimate is 724,645 of which Bahrainis form 65% and the expatriates 35%. Approximately 66% of the indigenous population

is originally from the Arabian Peninsula and Iran. Bahrain currently has a sizeable foreign labour force (about 34% of the total population). The indigenous population is 98% Muslim. Although some two-thirds of the indigenous population is Shi'a Muslim, the ruling family and the majority of government, military, and corporate leaders are Sunni Muslims. In addition to this, Bahrain has a sizable expatriate community of approximately one third of the total population, many of whom are from Asia (BDHRL, 2002). The small indigenous Christian and Jewish communities make up the remaining 2% of the population. Roughly half of foreign resident community are non-Muslim, and include Christians, Hindus, Baha'is, Buddhists and Sikhs. The official language is Arabic. English, Farsi, and Urdu are also widely spoken.

Bahrain is the fastest growing economy in the Arab world (UN, 2006), has the freest economy in the Middle East, and the twenty-fifth freest overall in the world (Index of Economic Freedom, 2006). Bahrain's natural resources are Oil, natural gas, fish, and pearls. Agricultural products are fruit, vegetables, poultry, dairy products, shrimp, and fish. Bahrain exports oil and other mineral products, base metals, and textiles to the Major markets of India, U.S., Saudi Arabia, Japan, and South Korea. It also Imports crude oil, machinery and appliances, transport equipment, and foodstuffs. The Major suppliers are Saudi Arabia, U.S., France, U.K., Germany, and Japan.

Bahrain has invested its oil revenues in developing an advanced educational system. The first public schools for girls and boys were opened in the 1920s. The government continues to pay for all schooling costs. Although school attendance is not compulsory, primary and secondary attendance rates are high, and literacy rates are currently among the highest in the region. Higher education is available for secondary school graduates at the Bahrain University, Arabian Gulf University and specialized



institutes including the College of Health Sciences - operating under the direction of the Ministry of Health, which trains physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and paramedics. The government has identified the provision of educational services to the Gulf Cooperation Council as a potential economic growth area, and is actively working to establish Bahrain as a regional center for higher education (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2007).

### **1.1.2 Bahrain Political Development**

Bahrain is a monarchy. The Al-Khalifa extended family has ruled the country since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues to dominate all facets of society and government. Bahrain was formerly a British protectorate and after gaining independence from British administration in 1971 it continued to be ruled under the aegis of the Amir with his government and a national assembly (Parliament) made up of members from different political parties. In 1973 Bahrain's first Constitution was introduced setting out a number of important guarantees of individual rights. However, according to the official reports, the National Assembly which was first elected and convened in December 1973, served for less than two years (REDRESS, 2004).

As a result of routine abuse and routine denial of civil rights in Bahrain, and due to increasing unrest amongst women's groups and strikes amongst workers in numerous industries the government sought to introduce a State Security Act in 1974 to curb such activity (Human Right Watch, 1997: 17). Because of the controversial nature of this Bill which effectively suspended provisions relating to an individual's rights to security and liberty of the person in the Constitution, the National Assembly refused to give consent to the Bill without further amendments. This led the government to dissolve the Assembly in 1975 in order to enact the State Security Laws and



effectively suspend some of the constitutional rights. A state of emergency was imposed in the country (Nakhleh, 1976: 169). Thus the people of Bahrain have struggled for 30 years to introduce democracy in the country and it is only recently that reform has begun.

In 1999, Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa died and was succeeded by his son Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa. Under his rule, a number of important reforms have been introduced in Bahrain. In 2001, the Amir granted an amnesty to all political prisoners and religious leaders held under the State Security laws. This resulted in the release of a large number of detainees. The effects of this decree also resulted in the return of many Bahrainis living in exile and the cancellation of international search warrants. 'The National Charter', a new 'Constitution', and a Human Rights Committee have been established. A number of legislative reforms have already been completed. For example, Decree 4 of 1999 and Decree 19 of 2000 set up a 'Higher Judicial Council' that has enhanced the separation of powers and independence of the judiciary (REDRESS, 2004).

Today, the King, Hamad al-Khalifa, who rules Bahrain as the constitutional monarch, has promised to introduce reforms to guarantee the rule of law and democracy in the country. In his speech on 23 December 2000, the King said that 'the accomplishing of the National Charter draft represents an advanced step in the course of modernizing the political structure of the state including the systems and institutions, in such a way that meet the aspiration of the people of Bahrain towards furthering civilized progression' (Government of Bahrain, 2000: 3). He emphasized that 'the national charter draft was to be a prerequisite for the political organization of the state' (p.3). Such a National Charter would 'protect the society's unity and cohesion' and offer a guarantee to the citizens about their basic individual rights of education, work, social

welfare, health, and free expression of opinion. It will also provide the people with 'the right to participate in the management of their country's affairs in the context of legitimacy and constitutionalism' (p.4). The ruler ended his speech by saying that 'The new formula and the national modernization shall be the features of our best days to come' (p.5).

Political movements of various tendencies emerged in Bahrain in the form of associations. A Supreme Council of Women, which lobbies for the development and promotion of women's rights, has been established (Amnesty International, 2001). In 2002, the government adopted a constitution that reinstated a legislative body - a bicameral parliament (Al-Majlis Al-Watani) with a 40-member elected Council of Representatives (COR), and a 40-member Shura (Consultative) Council appointed by the King. Members of both chambers serve four-year terms. The Council of Ministers (cabinet) is appointed by the King and headed by the Prime Minister. Also in 2002, the citizens selected representatives to the COR in free and fair multiparty elections. The constitution states that the king is head of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government (BDHRL, 2006).

The government's policies on naturalization remain controversial. In June 2002, the King issued a decree allowing citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to take up dual Bahraini nationality. Opposition political groups charge that the government is granting citizenship to foreign nationals who have served in the Bahraini armed forces and security services to alter the demographic balance of the country, which is primarily Shi'a. According to passport officials, about 40,000 individuals have been naturalized over the past 50 years (about 10% of the total population) (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2007)

A little over four years after King Hamad Al-Khalifa announced a sweeping reform plan, Bahrain's liberal experiment failed (Middle East Report, 2005). Citizens experienced restrictions on civil liberties such as the freedom of press, speech, assembly, association, and some religious practices (BDHRL, 2007). Accordingly, public moves were taken in Bahrain to question the government, so that the state institutions can become more transparent, accountable and responsive to the public. The Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies (2002) states that democracy demands an open government that will allow the government itself to provide a better service to the public and at the same time ensure that the Bahraini people are better protected. It is thought that 'Bahrain is well on the way to putting this in place' (p. x).

### **1.1.3 The Education System in Bahrain**

Bahrain is considered to be a pioneering country in the field of education in the Gulf area (Sarhan, 1995: 19). According to the official report of the Bahrain Government, 1919 marks the beginning of a modern public school system in Bahrain. The Ministry of Education offers education through three types of schools (Primary, Intermediate and Secondary) and seeks to develop its methodology, curriculum, methods of evaluation, teacher training and school buildings.

The education system consists of nine years of basic education which covers both the Primary and Intermediate stages, and three years of Secondary education with various tracks, as shown in Figure 1.1:

**Figure 1.1: The educational ladder in Bahrain**

Grade	Age							Religious Education Primary, Intermediate and Secondary
12	17	SECONDARY EDUCATION						
11	16	General		Commercial	Industrial	Applied		
10	15	Science	Art			Textile	advertising	
9	14	BASIC EDUCATION						
8	13							
7	12							
6	11	Third Cycle (Intermediate)						
5	10							
4	9							
3	8	Second Cycle (Primary)						
2	7							
1	6							
First Cycle (Primary)								

Source: Ministry of Education (2004a: 9).

**1.1.3.1 Basic Education: Primary and Intermediate Education**

Primary education includes the first two cycles of basic education. It lasts for six years and caters for children aged 6-11. In the first three grades (first cycle) a class-teacher system is applied whereby only one teacher teaches all the subjects. In the second cycle (Grades 4-6) an associate class-teacher system is applied: two teachers, one for Arabic language, Islamic religion, and social studies; and the other for mathematics and sciences. The Ministry has also initiated several developmental projects in recent years, such as offering design and technology curricula, mastering Quran recitation, teaching English from the first grade, etc.

The third cycle of basic education is called Intermediate education, and lasts for three years. Upon completion of primary education or its equivalent students are admitted to literacy classes, and a subject-teacher system is applied. There is a single sex schooling system throughout Bahrain (Ministry of Education, 2004a).



### ***1.1.3.2 Secondary Education***

This stage prepares students for entry to universities, higher education institutes or the labour market. It lasts for three years and is divided into six semesters at three levels. Entry is conditional on obtaining the Intermediate School Certificate or its equivalent.

The credit-hours system is applied at this stage, which offers broad options of subjects and courses that enable the students to tailor the study to their future goals. This system enables students to pursue different curricula in the form of five tracks: scientific, literary, commercial, technical (for boys only), or applied studies: textile and clothing, and graphic design (for girls only). Depending on the common courses, students can move from one track to another. A total of 156 credit hours are needed to graduate for all tracks except technical, where a total of 210 credit hours are required (one credit hour is equivalent to fifteen class periods of one hour). At the end of the secondary stage, the student is awarded 'General Secondary School Certificate' in the track of his/her choice after having passed the examinations held at the Kingdom level.

The Ministry's intention to introduce ICT (computer science) in all subjects led to its introduction in all disciplines of secondary education. An Internet curriculum was incorporated in the basic computer curricula of secondary school at the beginning of the second semester in the school year 2000/2001. Consequently, the Internet was introduced in the computer laboratories in secondary schools and linked to the learning resources, the school administrator, registration divisions and teachers' rooms through an intranet.

As part of the comprehensive qualitative development of education, the unification of secondary education tracks project, which is implemented in four schools in the school year 2004/2005, aims to enhance the quality of secondary education output to

meet the requirements of the labour market and higher education, and provide secondary school students with common overall capacity building opportunities by providing different options through one academic track in the secondary school; this will expand their university entrance opportunity (Ministry of Education, 2004a: 84).

The current educational objectives include, amongst others, the development of social interests, attitudes, skills, and habits, as well as knowledge (Ministry of Education (2004a). Meeting these expectations requires a lifelong educational effort. The contemporary effort to improve education and to give more explicit attention to citizenship and character development can be a positive influence if it is based on a more realistic understanding of the total educational system.

#### **1.1.4 Development of Citizenship in the Bahraini Curricula**

Bahrain, like other societies, both developed and developing, has viewed education as a means of political socialization by which the child is inducted into citizenship. Citizenship education was first introduced in Bahrain in 1971. A national education textbook for the curricula of all schools is presented as part of humanities, with a stress on moral values along with loyalty to the state. In the early 1990s, the concept of citizenship education was incorporated in all subjects, at both primary and secondary stages, to achieve integration and unity of knowledge (Alsulaiti, 2002).

Citizenship education was introduced at both primary and secondary stages. At the secondary stage, its curricula cover a wide range of subjects and concepts that include the dimensions of local and global citizenship. Other school subjects deal with other topics and concepts that contribute to getting acquainted with the national culture, values, and trends and different life skills that ultimately develop citizenship education (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002). After 2001, the political reforms led to educational

reforms too. It is recognized that there is a need for enriching Bahrain's new curricula with citizenship and democratic concepts.

A new addition to the curriculum has, therefore, been developed (Ministry of Education, 2004a). This addition aims at 'deepening and enhancing the students' citizenship values and providing them with abilities and skills to be able to participate effectively in the social issues and to practise their rights and duties to ensure their balanced growth and adaptation to the developments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (Ministry of Education, 2004a: 32). The content of this addition to the curriculum is designed to encourage students to develop and apply civic skills and values in the context of present day Bahrain (Ministry of Education, 2004b).

#### **1.1.5 Education Reform and Youth Issues in Bahrain**

Bahrain has embarked on a path of educational reform. It seeks to improve the quality of life for Bahraini citizens and increase their chances for prosperity (AlBelooshi, 2007). To expedite the process of development and reform, education, training and youth issues are receiving growing attention in Bahrain. This is evident in efforts to improve standards within the educational sector.

The Ministry of Education in Bahrain is responsible for directing the educational system. It devises the educational policy within the framework determined by the State, supervises and determines the quality criteria, and co-operates with other public bodies and institutions to develop and improve the education system and link it to the individual's and society's needs (Ministry of Education, 2004a).

The educational policy of Bahrain is based upon two fundamental principles of the State Constitution (2002) which are, firstly, to provide education for all school age



children throughout the country; and secondly, to improve the quality of education to meet the needs both of the young learners and that of the country's social and economic development. In Bahrain, public education is free for all students, and compulsory for children ages six to fifteen according to a new Education Law. This has resulted in a literacy rate of 90 per cent, a steady increase over the past few decades (UNICEF, 2004). Meanwhile, education was seen as a prime means of contributing to the building of Bahrain's modern polity. To achieve this goal the Ministry of Education has recently brought citizenship to the forefront of the social responsibility.

According to the Cabinet Affairs' approval of the document entitled 'Fundamental Directions for Educational Development in the Next Stage' on 26/5/1996, the Ministry of Education engaged in crystallizing these directions through specific projects. This document consists of 36 directions grouped under 13 main topics. The main topic 'Affiliation and Citizenship' includes the following: Ensuring the citizens receive education and training in such a manner that their faith in God, affiliation to the country and loyalty to the Amir are established in order to contribute to society's solidarity and unity; enriching and developing the citizen's personality, self-respect, thinking and creativity skills; deepening the citizen's respect for the cultural heritage and the conservation of Bahraini social values, besides openness to other cultures; recognizing the environment and conserving its resources; enhancing and establishing the spirit of discipline and commitment to duty among the young learners and providing them with various social and moral privileges (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2004a).

Having looked at the Bahraini education policy, it is evident that the preparation of young people for effective citizenship has been a major concern of Bahraini



educators. Educators, parents, and community leaders are searching for ways to give young people a sense of hope, an experience of community, and a belief in their own personal effectiveness. Thus, educators are challenged to seek and implement the means to improve citizenship education in schools.

There have been moves towards reform in Primary, Intermediate and Secondary education in particular. Some of the more prominent developments include a plan to set up an Intellectual City to enhance education, a new Youth Parliament, and a National Youth Strategy, giving teens an opportunity to share their opinions on the issues that shape their lives (Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 2006). It is hoped that the changes will help to prepare new generations for the challenges of the modern world.

## **1.2 Rationale for the Study**

This study aims to examine whether young people graduating from the national schools of Bahrain are equipped with the civic knowledge and understanding necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy. The rationale for this study emerges first, in the context of the growing debate about the role of citizenship education to safeguard and nurture democracy; and secondly in the context of the need for citizenship education in schools as a means to prepare Bahraini citizens to live as democratic citizens and contribute to the future health and well-being of their community.

Citizenship education is important because every society needs people who can contribute effectively, in a variety of ways, to the future health and well-being of communities and the environment (Patrick, 2002). Thus, education for democratic

citizenship requires informed, active and responsible citizens possessing a broad knowledge and understanding of public affairs and the skill to use that knowledge effectively in community life (Davis 2000; Torney-Purta *et al.* 2001). Such knowledge and skills in civic matters make responsible and effective democratic participation possible.

There are some major trends and challenges for curriculum development in this area. Locally, the reform movement led by the King has caused the development in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Democracy became the government system and the country has witnessed Municipality and Parliament elections in 2002. All these have contributed to the educational commitment in preparing the students to live in a democratic society, providing them with democratic culture, developing practical values and skills in effective participation and national unity, and other areas that come under the values system which the curriculum should develop and take care of (Ministry of Education, 2004a). Globally, the world has witnessed numerous transformations in the last few years and the globalization issue has risen with its challenges and risks (Preuss, 2003). This has caused boundaries to fall and the distances to become shorter, increasing opportunities for people, funds and information to transfer and move beyond the boundaries, spreading the culture of democracy, increasing calls for reform and for women's participation (Ministry of Education, 2004a). All these issues have formed a strong impetus for the curriculum specialists and have made them think about the best ways to train the young learners to be open-minded on global innovations and events, to study and evaluate them in depth, to enhance the level of debate and stress both self and national capacity building.

In Bahrain, research revealed deficiencies in civic preparedness of young people. Some studies show deficiencies in social studies textbooks at both Primary and

Intermediate levels (Abdulatif 1991; Wehbe 1992) which have failed in helping to develop youth into knowledgeable, active and responsible citizens (Kadhim, 2003). There is a lack of civic values and skills that young people should have in order to be responsible citizens of a constitutional democracy (Eid, 2004). Hasan (2001) and Almanai *et al.* (2003) highlight the importance of citizenship education in schools in shaping the future lives of young Bahraini citizens. It has been emphasized that the main objective of education in Bahrain is to prepare the individual for the future (Ministry of Education, 2004a).

Despite their intention to be democratic in their mission statements, schools failed to transmit democratic values to young people. In a study, Bahraini young people, females in particular, expressed their desire for a healthy and secure school climate where they can build good relationships with their teachers and other school members, and where they are given the chance to express their opinions freely (Eid, 2001). Due to the continuing decline in learning experiences related to citizenship, young people may have difficulty in making the transition to responsible adulthood in the near future (Ebrahim, 2007). They need specially designed opportunities to learn the basic skills and values, to develop the necessary understanding and to take on increasing responsibility as citizens in activities that involve production and service to others (Almanai *et al.* 2003; Eid 2004).

Although Bahrain has progressed a considerable distance in enabling young people to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for a responsible and productive life in society (Ministry of Education, 2004a), the young people have not yet learned these competencies. In the light of this challenge, Bahrain has endeavoured to rewrite the education objectives and functions to enhance and improve the quality of education, putting forward the necessity of enriching the new curricula with citizenship.



This study aims to accomplish several tasks necessary for the research field to move forward at this time. First and foremost, to my knowledge, there have been no studies which look at what the students themselves know and understand about citizenship in a democracy. This is of particular importance since research in this area is almost non-existent. It also comes at a time when the field needs to critically examine broad-based and largely untested assumptions about the status of citizenship education in the schools of Bahrain. It will, therefore, shed light on citizenship education in a democracy by identifying the knowledge and understanding of young people as a central concern, to enable policy-makers to propose strategies for change.

Indeed, there is a huge gap in the knowledge and research base that underpins this area in Bahrain. This explains the important role of this study in building strong foundations for this area prior to the formal introduction of citizenship education in schools. Hence, I aim to provide evidence of how well-informed and well-prepared the students are about citizenship and democracy. To my knowledge, there are no studies dealing with secondary schools in Bahrain in general, or Bahraini young people in particular, in relation to citizenship education.

This study must be seen within the context of recent policy developments in citizenship education in Bahrain. These policy developments have significantly influenced the aims and overall design of the study. Currently, policy-makers have focused their efforts on reforming citizenship education in Bahrain through the articulation of standards for citizenship understanding and have developed a Citizenship Education Syllabus (Ministry of Education, 2004b). Yet the researcher, as a member of a committee for developing citizenship education in the schools of Bahrain, revised the proposal of the projected curriculum. It indicates that policy-makers have largely ignored the essential questions for reforming citizenship

education in Bahrain. This study aims to answer those essential questions, i.e. what do school students actually understand about citizenship? And what do students really need in order to improve their competency in a democracy?

If policy-makers fail to address these questions, they will fail to make any changes to the core instructional practice and to students' understanding of citizenship, and ultimately and most importantly, the future citizenship education project will not fulfil its purposes.

This study seeks to ensure that the benefits to students, teachers, school principals, curriculum developers, schools, and society at large, of citizenship teaching in schools are realized. In particular, the benefits of the study include increased clarity for curriculum developers about what they should put into such a curriculum, a better foundation for schools to co-ordinate existing teaching approaches and learning opportunities, and to relate positively to the local community. Additionally, this study will help reflect on the students' lives and practices, and I may offer myself as an educational researcher and as a member of a committee for developing citizenship education in Bahraini schools. Over time, it is hoped that the study will improve the understanding of citizenship for those interested in creating a healthy school climate and preparing good citizens.

Last but not least, this study offers an invaluable baseline for the future conduct of the study and provides continuity with the existing research literature on citizenship education. When considering the value of this research, I believe that in any changing society it is important to gain an insight into the concept of citizenship through research. Feedback to the community could then be given to help with the management of such changes.

### **1.3 Organization of the Study**

This thesis is divided into five chapters: Introduction, literature review, research methodology, analysis of findings, conclusions, interpretations and recommendations. Chapter one presents a general background about the study: Bahrain's political developments, educational system, research and citizenship in the school curriculum. It also includes the research problem and the rationale of the study. Chapter two presents a critical review of pertinent literature in citizenship and citizenship education - its meanings, traditions, challenges and debates. It reviews the civic knowledge content and its role in developing students' civic learning in three detailed sections: Citizenship, community and identity; rights, responsibilities and law; democracy, politics and government. This chapter also sheds light on the role of the schools in the development of democratic citizenship. Chapter three justifies the methodology of the study. Chapter four provides the analysis of data and the findings. Finally, chapter five presents the interpretations of findings and its relation to the Bahraini context and offers the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It also provides a suggested national strategy to enhance citizenship education in Bahrain and help to prepare Bahraini youth for the future.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on citizenship and citizenship education. It considers the role of the school in developing citizenship education particularly in the areas of human rights, political literacy and democracy and is divided into three sections. The first section (2.2) presents the theoretical background for the thesis and provides a preliminary framework by introducing the meaning of ‘Citizenship’ and ‘Citizenship Education’. It also considers the on-going debates concerning a local, national, and global focus for citizenship. The second section (2.3) explores the connections between Human Rights Education (HRE) and citizenship education, and highlights the importance of their links. The third section (2.4) reviews the concept of democracy and discusses its link to citizenship. It also sheds light on the political socialization process and explores the importance of political knowledge, understanding, and awareness for young people to participate actively in a democratic society.

#### **2.2 Citizenship and Citizenship Education**

The purpose of this section is twofold. Firstly, it introduces a range of concepts with regard to citizenship and citizenship education and how they are defined and approached in terms of policy and practice. Citizenship education is introduced in this review of literature in terms of definitions, models, approaches, importance, goals, components and challenges. Secondly, it reviews the literature, which considers civic knowledge as a foundation of civic competence.



### 2.2.1 Meanings of 'Citizenship'

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the subject of citizenship by political theorists, educators and philosophers. Some have approached it directly, examining the strengths and weaknesses of current conceptions of citizenship, its present practice, and its historical development (See for example, QCA 1998; Crick 2000; Osler 2003a; Banks 2004). Lawton *et al.* (2000) point out that:

Citizenship is a recent concept as part of the modern nation state because, in ancient and medieval societies (where monarchies, empires and chiefdoms existed), people were referred to as subjects and not citizens (p.17).

Many scholars point out the complexity of the topic of citizenship. Oliver and Heater (1994: 8) maintain that 'owing to the complexity, even subjectivity of the citizenship idea, no universally accepted definition or description has been produced'. It seems that citizenship is a 'contested' concept that does not have a specific meaning (Crick 2000; Osler 2003a; Banks 2004; Kerr and Cleaver 2004). Riesenberg (1992) argues that:

It is very difficult to define citizenship in a few words. Although it is one of the oldest institutions in Western political thought and practice, it is not one of the easiest to grasp in a single comprehensive thought (p.xvi).

Preuss (2003: 2) believes that the reason for this may be that 'over the centuries the idea of citizenship has offered an attractive and non-trivial element for the construction of political communities'.

The significance of having a clear definition of the citizenship concept is that agreement over such a concept not only provides common ground for citizens in

terms of their loyalty, identity, attitudes and behaviour, but also helps provide a secure, social, and political environment for countries (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002). This means that agreement over such a concept is essential for citizens' social and personal relations and for their political discipline.

Citizenship has evolved historically and can be most simply expressed in terms of the relationship of the individual to the state. Sinclair (2001: 243) defines it as 'the particular nationality that someone has and the official status, rights, and duties that any citizen has because of it'. In the same vein, the Commission on Citizenship (1990: 64) defines citizenship as 'the reflection of the legal relationship that applies within the boundaries of the State concerned'. Heater (1992) goes on to say that:

It is the State that confers the status and that can withdraw it. ...It is in the context of the State that citizens exercise their rights and perform their duties (p. 23).

Absent from these definitions is the meaning of citizenship in a democratic society 'Democratic Citizenship' in which citizens work for the betterment of the whole society. This is found in Huddleston and Kerr (2006) when citizenship is defined as:

Being a member of a particular political community or state... [It] brings with it certain rights and responsibilities that are defined in law... It is sometimes referred to as nationality ... and used to refer to involvement in public life and affairs (p.2).

It can be observed that this definition is extended to include belonging to a community, where 'citizens are not only individuals but also members of particular religious, ethnic, cultural and regional communities' (Parekh, 2000: ix). This membership in a community is defined in terms of rights and guarantees and involves recognition of the meaning of citizenship in a democratic society. Thus, 'Democratic

Citizenship' is defined by Patrick (1999: 2) as 'the social and legal link between individuals and their democratic political community'. Multiple relationships reinforce this link (Arthur and Baily 2000; Bahmueller 2002), and citizens' awareness of these relationships can enhance their sense of belonging and their capacity to rule (Parekh 2000; Hasan 2001; Banks and Banks 2001). In this sense, Starkey (2002) notes that 'Citizenship' is always a matter of belonging to a community, which entails politics and rights. Citizenship is based on respect for justice, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In addition, these relationships include a citizen's relationship to him- or herself, to other citizens, to the community, to governmental institutions and political system, and to the world (Osler and Vincent, 2002). Therefore, Democratic Citizenship is a lifelong learning experience aimed at 'making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society' (Birzea *et al.*, 2004: 14).

Whatever the conceptual definitions of citizenship, a practical definition is 'being a member of a nation-state'. The citizen here, as Cogan and Derricott (2000) point out, is 'a constituent member of society' and citizenship, moreover, can be seen to be 'a set of characteristics of being a citizen, given and agreed upon by a panel of experts, including educational, political, socio-cultural and economic dimensions at the local, national and international levels' (p.14). The realization of this concept of 'Citizenship' depends upon the fulfilment of two basic conditions: First, a national government with the subsequent creation of a civil society that is based upon a willingness by its members to live and work together within this civil society; second, a democratic system with the necessary political structures to ensure a balance between rights and duties (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002).



### 2.2.2 Citizenship Theories and Traditions

The literature reveals how firmly the idea of citizenship is embedded in Western tradition. Scholars including Isin and Wood (1999), Crick (2000), Preuss (2003) and Banks (2004) believe that some concepts of citizenship have developed through relatively recent political theories, such as liberalism, communitarianism and civic republicanism.

‘Liberalism’ is a theory of citizenship that argues that the individual is more important than the group, and, therefore, the institutions of citizenship are meant to protect the rights of the individual (Oliver and Heater 1994; Isin and Wood 1999). This implies that the exercising of rights is seen as a choice on the part of citizens, based on the assumption that they have the necessary resources and opportunities to make such a choice. Oliver and Heater (1994) argue that ‘the freedom which to the liberal is the highest good is not a licence; its enjoyment requires that the free individual respects institutional procedures and the reciprocal freedoms of others’ (p.120), and ‘should undertake certain duties and responsibilities and be loyal to the state rather than pursue his [or her] own selfish interests’ (p.114). Thus, ‘the liberal citizen combines responsibility with autonomy [and] is expected to be able to have the freedom to choose; not to be forced to be free’ (p.122).

In contrast, the theory of ‘Communitarianism’ contends that the individual does not stand apart from society, but is bound to that society, and from this derives his/her identity. The highest ideal under this theory is the common good (Isin and Wood, 1999). For communitarians, citizenship is defined through, and is seen to develop, particular civic virtues such as respect for others and recognition of the importance of public service (Arthur and Baily, 2000). Arthur *et al.* (2001) argue that the core



understanding essentially holds that the community, rather than the individual or state, should be at the centre of our analysis and our value system.

The theory of 'Civic Republicanism' does not necessarily see a conflict between the individual as defined by liberalism and communitarianism. Civic republican theory attempts to incorporate the liberal notion of the self-interested individual within the communitarian framework of egalitarianism and community belonging. Like communitarian theory, it emphasises the things that bind citizens together into a community (Isin and Wood, 1999). In other words, it demands of its citizens that they put the interests of the community above their personal interests. According to Larkin (2001: 2) 'the civic republican tradition is also linked to an ideal of direct democracy in which each citizen takes part in each political decision'.

Generally speaking, in the liberal tradition, the civil liberties are a framework of law to protect individuals against the state, and in the civic republicanism civil liberties are the positive means by which citizens may influence affairs of state (Crick, 2000). However, the dilemma that emerges from an analysis of these two ideologies can be overcome. In this regard Heater (1999) asserts that:

By being a virtuous, community conscious participant in civic affairs (a republican requirement), a citizen benefits by enhancing his or her own individual development (a liberal objective). Citizenship does not involve an either/or choice (p.117).

In modern times, these traditions have influenced the development of Western beliefs and have supported the development of laws and customs about democracy and what it means to be a citizen, as Larkin (2001) states:

Britain and most of the Western world countries engage in a hybrid democracy where there is a combination of civic rights and

obligations as formally developed by the Romans, and the philosophy of equality and mutual support as per the civic republicanism of the ancient Greeks (p.2).

In this regard, a major concern of contemporary citizenship theory is to link the liberal, communitarian and civic republican traditions. In Western liberal traditions of citizenship, citizenship theorists, such as Turner (1990) and Isin (1996) have pointed out that modern citizenship is constituted both by a set of practices, i.e. cultural, economic and symbolic, and by a set of rights and obligations defined through legal, political and social parameters. Turner's theory of citizenship portrays citizenship as not just top-down imperatives of the state authorities but also as a bottom-up struggle of the citizens in both private and public spheres of society.

In analyzing the evolving tradition of citizenship, in England, the 'Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship' in the Crick Report (QCA, 1998) traces the origin of the practice of citizenship to ancient Greek and Roman institutions. It states that,

Citizenship has meant involvement in public affairs by those who had the rights of citizens: in taking part in public debate and, directly or indirectly, in shaping the laws and decisions of a state (p.9).

Here, citizenship is defined carefully and precisely, drawing on philosophical ideas dating back to ancient Greece, but essentially focusing on modern democracy. In the Crick Report, there is an attempt to relate its definition of citizenship to Marshall's theory (1950) of citizenship, which is based on three elements in the civil, political, and social spheres. For instance, civil citizenship comprises the rights of individual liberties: freedom of speech and thought, religious freedom and the right of equality before the law. Political citizenship brought the rights of participation, the right to

play a role in the exercising of political power. Finally, social citizenship comprises the rights to a minimum level of economic and material security (Baily, 2000: 15).

Theorists, such as Heater (1990), Lister (1997), Isin and Wood, (1999), and Kymlicka (2001), attempt to find ways of uniting the liberal emphasis on individual rights, equality and the due process of law, with the communitarian focus on belonging and the civic republican focus on the processes of deliberation, collective action and responsibility.

Crick (QCA, 1998), believes that a historical investigation of the origins of Greek citizenship establishes the first construct of that concept, i.e. individual rights. His comments are reflective of liberalism and civic republicanism, which are based on the development of politics in ancient Greece. In addition, Marshall's theory (1950), which conceptualises the concept of citizenship, particularly with regard to social rights, is often considered a good starting point for contemporary thinking on citizenship (Commission on Citizenship, 1990). According to Marshall, citizens have a right to a minimal level of social and economic well-being and that this security should be provided by the state. He also suggests that liberty entails individuals being able to make choices through the course of their lives, which are not constrained by their initial (at birth) socio-economic endowments (Isin and Wood, 1999). Shafir (1998) observes that:

The strength of Marshall's, and the social-democratic, approach is that they go beyond the conventional idea that membership in a community is predominantly a political matter. Marshall's theory is at once legal, political, and socio-economic, and since it is also historical, it introduces into the study of citizenship the element of social change that was missing from the more one-dimensional and static normative approaches (p.13).



There have been attempts to construct new models that can resolve the tensions and rivalry among the different traditions as well as combining the merits of these traditions. Kymlicka and Norman (1995: 309) highlight the need to generate a 'theory of citizenship' but also note the difficulties involved. In an attempt at arriving at a theory of citizenship, Preuss (2003: 14) suggests that, ideally, different dimensions of citizenship should be united in the concept of citizenship attached to the democratic nation-state. Preuss suggests six different dimensions of citizenship: national, legal, political, identity, social integration, and cultural distinction.

In recognition of these dimensions, a growing body of literature is now emerging internationally, which analyses citizenship at different scales, from local spaces to global arenas.

### **2.2.3 Citizenship and Identity**

The meanings of citizenship are often framed by discussions of identity. In other words, different perspectives on citizenship define different relationships between citizenship and identity. For liberal thinkers, for example, citizenship denotes formal membership of a nation-state, an identity, which is universally defined in order to promote formal equality in rights and obligations for all. For civic republican thinkers, in contrast, citizenship is an overarching civic identity produced by, and productive of, a sense of belonging to a particular nation-state (Miller 1995; Habermas 1998). Central to much civic republican writing is the idea that citizenship should be understood as a common civic identity, shaped by a common public culture. Miller (1995), for example, notes that a conceptualisation of citizenship merges the classical communitarian emphasis on belonging with the recognition that modern societies are likely to contain a far greater diversity of interest than their classical forbears. He thus



proposes that citizenship, as a civic identity, can work to unite citizens so long as this identity is stronger than their separate identities as members of different groups such as ethnic, religious and so forth.

Despite their fundamentally different foundations, both schools of thought see citizenship as universal, and individual/group identity as particular, and both conceptualise citizenship at the level of the nation-state. The difficulty in both conceptualisations arises from the problematic conception of identity as noted by Isin and Wood (1999). They argue that:

Defining citizenship as universal and identity as particular not only creates an artificial separation between citizenship and identity, but assumes that each individual and group understands experiences and practises citizenship in the same way (p.14).

Many writers, thus, argue that the problem lies in the need of the individual to affirm his or her identity (Lister, 1997). Citizenship is an ensemble of different forms of group identity (belonging) such as gendered, ethnic, ecological, or national citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999). Brown (1995) maintains that citizenship is also an identity and practice that is likely to differ across the spaces in which people's lives are played out from the home to personal relations, in local and national politics, to the global arena.

Moreover, Isin and Wood (1999) argue that to make identities irrelevant to citizenship is to ignore their relatively durable institutionalisation in discourse and practice. In the same vein, Osler and Starkey (2003: 252) note that 'citizenship requires a sense of belonging ... to neglect the personal and cultural aspects of citizenship is to ignore the issue of belonging'. In addition, Greenfeld (1992) notes that national identity has remained strong in the modern era because its emphasis on the importance of people

provides a source of dignity to all individuals, whatever their class, while a community gives its members a sense of belonging, identity and dignity (Parekh, 2000). It is 'a constitutive aspect of one's identity which affects one's sense of status and self-respect' (Kymlicka, 2001: 250).

Furthermore, Basit (1997) argues that identities are labels, names and categories through which persons address each other and themselves, and that ethnicity, language and religion are pertinent criteria in shaping a person's identity. Discussing the identity of young people, she notes that:

Through socialisation and contact with a variety of influences within the home, the school, and the wider world, the teenager is constantly determining her/his identity in order to make sense of the universe (p.25).

Citizenship, thus, becomes a differentiated relationship of belonging, action and accountability between citizens and the many different institutions that have influence over their lives.

All the above scholars seem to suggest that different people have different identities and interests, therefore, citizenship should be seen as an institution for reducing inequalities, and acknowledging the multiple and differentiated reality of citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999). Thus, drawing on this conceptualisation of identity, not only is citizenship differentiated across individuals, but also each individual may experience and express different forms of citizenship.

#### **2.2.4 The Emergence of 'Multiple Citizenship'**

The emerging theory of 'Multiple Citizenship' equates with developing ideas on citizenship in the global context (Heater, 1992). A major recurring debate is centred

on the influence that global forces are having in national and international contexts (Habermas 1998; Cogan and Derricott 2000; Osler and Vincent 2002; Preuss 2003). Cogan and Derricott (2000: xiii) note that 'globalization has impacted on the meaning of the term Citizen and Citizenship'. In this sense, citizenship takes on new meaning and, of necessity becomes 'multidimensional' in that one must hold multiple identities. Osler (2003a) explains the causes behind the emergence of Multiple Citizenship:

Global migration, both of specialised labour and of individuals and groups displaced by war, political instability or dire economic conditions, has produced cosmopolitan societies across the world ...Migration requires individuals and groups to develop multiple loyalties and identities (p. 244).

Due to the effects of globalization on citizens in nations throughout the world, as well as the number of citizens in the world who are spending parts of their lives in different nation-states and have commitments to multiple places, a global cosmopolitan society is emerging which is being carried along by a mixture of economic, technological and cultural imperatives (Heater, 2000). Alqatam *et al.* (2002) notes that through global citizenship, generations can engage in interactive relations with members of the human race, which were not possible previously, and can become aware of their common interest. This can make people more tolerant of ethnic and cultural differences between each other. Baylis and Smith (1997: 9-11) note that 'more global homogeneity engenders fierce reactions that strengthen local identities, be they religious, ethnic or national'.

While there is still adherence to the traditional idea of loyalty to the state, there is also the emerging theory of the global dimension and multiple nature of citizenship. Habermas (1998) argues that:

Today, as the nation-state finds itself challenged from within by the explosive potential of multiculturalism and from without by the pressure of globalization, the question arises of whether there exists a functional equivalent for the fusion of the nation of citizens with the ethnic nation (p.117).

Ignatieff (1993) and Pfaff (1993) maintain that while civic nationalism is compatible with liberalism, democracy, and peace, it increases the possibility for violent conflict between nations. Similarly, Osler and Starkey (2003: 244) argue that 'the political movements based on ethnic, religious, and narrowly nationalist ideologies threaten democracy and challenge existing political and social structures'. These movements call into question the idea of citizenship as having a unique focus of loyalty to a particular nation-state.

According to Kymlicka (2001), 'the nature of ethnic and national identities is changing in a world of free trade and global communications, but the challenge of multiculturalism is here to stay' (p.9). Kymlicka goes on to add that 'recent writing obscures as much as it reveals' about this tension and 'nationalism remains poorly understood' (p.243). He notes that the idea of civic nationalisms is 'forward-looking', unlike ethnic nationalisms [which are] 'backward-looking' (p.245). Kymlicka thinks that civic nationalisms require the deliberate promotion of a common language and a common sense of history, not instead of freedom and equality, but rather as a way of defining and unifying a particular society of free and equal citizens.

Preuss (2003) asserts that the world has become a 'global village' but a 'village of strangers'. The inhabitants of this world have become neighbours in terms of physical proximity and mutual communicative accessibility, but are not neighbours in cultural terms:



We live in a village as strangers who do not understand each other and, out of mutual suspicion and fear, very frequently use violence against each other. It is neither possible nor desirable to aspire to metamorphose all the alien villagers to friends or neighbours who share the same world-view. But it is desirable to connect them in a way, which allows them to trust each other and to engage in mutual economic, social and cultural intercourse (p.16).

Heater (1992) highlights three major tensions in citizenship ideals and their educational implications. The first is the difference between the theory and practice of citizenship in the 'liberal' and 'republic' traditions, stated earlier. The second is the difference between the belief that citizenship can properly exist only in relation to the state and the alternative idea that an individual can hold multiple citizenships. The third question concerns the argument as to whether or not the role of citizenship is crucially important for the individual and the state. Heater points out that 'the tensions in these three pairs of contradictory aspects of citizenship emphasise the need for a personal sense of global duty and responsibility' (p. 27).

Hence, the tensions between competing views of citizenship are the site of much stimulating debate. This debate will remain an ongoing feature of the literature, though its form and nature will change over time under the influence of shifting local, national and global priorities (Kerr and Sardoc 2002; Smith and Print 2002). This analysis concludes that in the citizenship debate, the substantive meaning of a 'citizen' and the resulting concept of 'citizenship' remains fluid, flexible and situation-specific (Kerr and Cleaver, 2004).

As a result of this review of the concept of citizenship, it is possible to see that its traditional boundaries are being reshaped to meet the challenges posed by modern society (Arnot and Dillabough 2000; Kerr and Sardoc 2002). Discourses on

citizenship that were originally connected to the polity/state have been shifting to a more global, international focus. Cogan and Derricott (2000: xiii) note that 'the more global our world, the more vital the search for identification'. However, all over the world including Bahrain, the essence of 'citizenship' is defined as membership of a political community and the mutual relationship between the members and the political community remains unchanged. In other words, the meaning of citizenship in our time is still evolving in different contexts and has yet to take a final shape.

## **2.2.5 Citizenship Education**

### ***2.2.5.1 The Concept of Citizenship Education***

The complex and contested nature of the concept of citizenship leads to a broad range of interpretations in which citizenship education can be defined and approached. Kerr and Cleaver (2004: 10) note that 'differing meanings of citizenship translate into differing suggested approaches to citizenship education in schools'. Citizenship is a highly contested concept and this is reflected in the tensions that arise over the objectives of citizenship education (Frazer 2000; Delanty 2003; Gifford 2004). Osler and Starkey (2003) maintain that since citizenship is a contested concept, education for citizenship is also a site of debate and controversy. Thus, it is important to understand the link between the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education.

The literature indicates that the salience of concerns over the complexity of, and confusion over, the definition of citizenship is heightened for two reasons: the lack of tradition of teaching citizenship education as a curriculum subject in schools (Kerr *et al.*, 2001), and the impact of recent high profile global events, notably 11 September

2001 or 9/11, the Bali bombing and the Iraq war (Osler and Vincent 2002; Kerr and Cleaver 2004). Kerr and Cleaver (2004) note that:

A number of commentators and academics see these events as the catalyst for the current period of reflection across the world, which is focusing on the meaning of citizenship and the reconfiguring of the goal of citizenship education so as to better fit the realities of the changed global order (p.10).

Because of its close proximity to Iraq, these issues are likely to be pertinent for Bahrain. The attempts to redefine citizenship 'have had a considerable knock-on effect on citizenship education' (Kerr and Sardoc, 2002: 10). Citizenship education represents an interesting example of how theoretical debates over citizenship illuminate policy development (Gifford, 2004: 145). Therefore, there is a significant challenge facing educators in nation-states throughout the world. Lynch (1992) argues that what is required is a vision of responsible global citizenship.

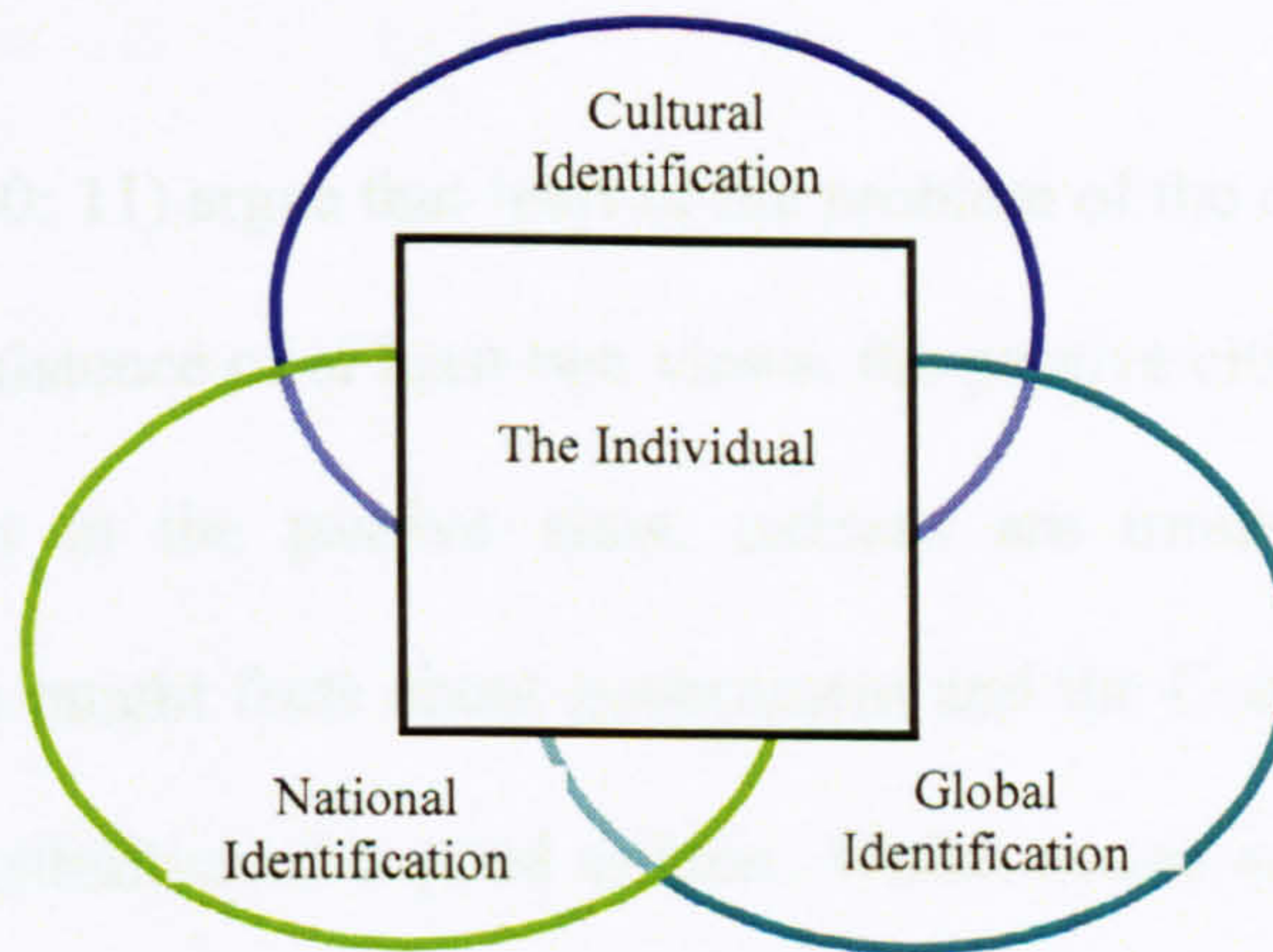
The challenge of the 1990s is to deliver not just education for citizenship of a pluralist democracy but education for active global democracy, founded on universal values about the nature of human beings and their social behaviour (p. 2).

However, Banks (1998) maintains that the challenge is how to respect and acknowledge the community cultures and knowledge of young people while at the same time helping to construct a democratic public community with an overarching set of values to which all young people have a commitment and with which all can identify. Banks (2004: 12) claims that 'the challenge is to construct a citizenship education that [helps] foster a just and inclusive pluralistic nation-state that all [young people] and groups perceive as legitimate'. He argues that individuals are capable of having multiple identifications and attachments, including attachments to their



cultural community, their nation and to the world community as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

**Figure 2.1: Cultural, national and global identifications**



**Source: Banks (2004: 8)**

This figure reveals that multicultural citizenship, in Banks' view, enables young people to acquire a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and attachments and gain the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function in cultural communities, other than their own, within the national culture and community, as well as within the global community.

Therefore, a re-conceptualised system of education for multicultural citizenship needs to address peace, human rights, democracy, and development, equipping young people to make a difference at all levels, from the local to the global (Osler and Starkey, 2003). For Banks and Banks (2001) multicultural education 'incorporates the idea that all students regardless of their gender, social class, and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics should have an equal opportunity to learn in school' (p.3).



Parekh (2000) suggests some of the tasks which need to be done to develop the idea of human rights and racial justice. These include the rethinking of the national story and national identity, addressing and removing all forms of racism, reducing economic inequalities, and building a pluralistic human rights culture. He believes that it is both possible and vitally necessary to create a society in which all citizens and communities feel valued.

Lawton *et al.* (2000: 11) argue that ‘part of the problem of the definition of citizenship education is the existence of at least two views: the passive citizen and active citizen’. They believe that in the passive view, citizens are trained for conformity and obedience and are taught facts about government and the Constitution as well as the duties and responsibilities of a good citizen. While, in the active view, citizens are educated for active participation in a democratic society, and teaching concentrates on the understanding of political ideas and conflicts and developing democratic attitudes and values - including a willingness to be critical of their nation state.

Thus, the work of scholars such as Kerr and Sardoc (2002), Osler and Vincent (2002), Banks (2004), and Gifford (2004) suggests that there is a need to rethink citizenship education and to plan a kind of civic education that will prepare young people to function within, as well as across, national borders. Kerr and Sardoc (2002) note that ‘reshaping citizenship has also meant reformulating citizenship education at the same time – the two go hand in hand’ (p.10). In addition, Osler and Starkey (2003: 244) state that ‘this tension leads us to propose a re-conceptualisation of education for citizenship so as to build on rather than deny multiple loyalties’. Banks (2004) points out that in order to educate young people to be effective citizens in their cultural communities, nation-states, and in the world community, it is important to provide a civic education that promotes national unity as well as reflects the diverse cultures

within the nation-state. As a result, for Gifford (2004), citizenship education involves understanding and practising a cosmopolitan citizenship within multiple sites of political membership. Thus, education for citizenship in the context of globalization, addresses local, national, regional and global issues.

The Crick Report (QCA, 1998) identifies three separate but inter-related strands of ‘effective education for citizenship’, which can be used to form a framework for school planning. It is important to note that these strands form the basis for the framework of this study. They are social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy. These strands are to be developed progressively through a young person’s education and training experiences, from pre-school to adulthood and the Report views them as ‘three heads on one body’:

- Social and moral responsibility: children learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other.
- Community involvement: learning about, and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community.
- Political literacy: pupils learning about how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values (pp.40-41).

The meaning of being ‘effective in public life’ is explained by Larkin (2001: 24) who notes that the term ‘public life’ is used ‘to encompass realistic knowledge of, and preparation for, conflict resolution and decision-making, whether involving issues at local, national, European or global level’.

As the Crick Report asserts political literacy as an essential outcome of education for

citizenship and democracy, Osler (2000a) observes the need to expand the definition of political literacy to ensure that politically literate citizens are able to recognise and challenge racism as an antidemocratic force for there is already a legacy of the exclusive and negative phenomena of racism, xenophobia, chauvinism and sexism. In order to do so, Osler (2000b) suggests that citizens need to have an understanding of racism, how it has operated in the past and, its current and changing forms, together with examples of how individuals and groups have successfully struggled to overcome it.

Lawton *et al.* (2000: 117) note that the Crick Report often refers, appropriately, to responsibilities, but very seldom to rights; nor does it consider how citizenship education might support antiracism in education, or engage with the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, or examine the implications of globalization. It thus fails to challenge a force that has the potential to undermine democracy and democratic citizenship.

Olssen (2004) claims that the Crick report, typical of many liberal analyses, is suspicious of any departure from the presumption of a unified social structure, and represents citizenship education as the imposition of a uniform standard applied to all groups and peoples. On this basis it is claimed that, although the Crick Report's conception of citizenship fails to adequately take account of cultural difference, it need not do so, as there is room within liberal approaches to citizenship education for recognition of difference.

However, McLaughlin (2000) argues that most of the criticism levelled at this report is appropriate and fruitful because some issues were resolved before its recommendations were put into practice. Yet, at the same time, it would be an

injustice to all the work of the Advisory Group headed by Professor Bernard Crick, if we were only to consider the criticism and not the positive outcomes. The Report was one of the main reasons that led the concept of citizenship being placed at the forefront of discussion not only in the UK but also all over the world. 'Its recommendations have had a significant impact on the national policy for citizenship education which has emerged, [and more often than not, it has received a] favourable reception' (542).

Thus, the literature review highlights the fact that the Crick Report has led to a statutory citizenship order for schools which is deliberately 'light touch' and 'flexible' and which does not lay down a prescribed teaching and learning approach to citizenship education (Kerr and Cleaver, 2004: 19). In other words, there are still considerable questions to be addressed concerning the definition, purposes, and intended outcomes of an education for citizenship (Pearce and Hallgarten, 2000). It can be noted that citizenship education has been at the heart of a major debate and policy review in the West over the past decade.

In short, the diverse definitions of citizenship and citizenship education in the literature point to its relation to democracy. Citizenship education in a democracy is teaching and learning the principles and practices of democratic governance, rights and responsibilities and citizenship (QCA 1998; Patrick 2002; Miller 2004). As pointed out by Osler and Starkey (1996: 85), 'citizenship education requires formal knowledge of human rights, a felt sense of identity and the action skills to claim a place in society'.

To sum up, the concept of citizenship education can be seen as the educational efforts to qualify young people for effective citizenship. This can be done by giving them the



knowledge, values and skills that enable them to realise their rights, duties and responsibilities, and by empowering them with the ability to think about social, political and economic issues in a critical manner. These might be considered as lessons for what form citizenship education may take in Bahrain.

### ***2.2.5.2 Goals and Purposes***

To promote active and responsible citizenship, both individuals and society as a whole are concerned about developing the capability of young people to function effectively as active, responsible and caring citizens in modern society. Thus, learners must know and use principles of democratic theory, operations of democratic governance, and behaviours of democratic citizenship. In brief, it involves concepts about democracy in the learner's country (Patrick, 2002). Therefore, the ultimate goal for citizenship education as pointed out by Bahmueller (1992), QCA (1998), Davis (2000), Osler (2000b), Rowe (2001), Osler and Starkey (2003), and Banks (2004), is to focus on the development of children as citizens in order to form citizens who have the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy. This requires that citizens understand their rights and exercise their duties to society, enhance their awareness of responsibilities needed for their development as young people to active citizens, and participate in their local and wider community. Furthermore, the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990) in the UK maintains that:

The aims of education for citizenship are to establish the importance of positive, participative citizenship and provide the motivation to join in; help pupils to acquire and understand essential information on which to base the development of their skills, values and attitudes towards citizenship (p.5).

In a similar vein, the report of the Commission on Citizenship (1990) identified the study of citizenship as involving the aforementioned along with learning democratic

behaviour through the experience of the school as a community, and from the experience of the school as an institution playing a role in the wider community. Citizenship education can 'enable young people to participate as active and informed citizens and develop in them a capacity to exercise judgment in matters of morality, ethics and social justice' (Davis, 2000: 5).

On the other hand, Banks (2004) focuses on the goals of citizenship education within culturally diverse nation-states. He suggests that citizenship education should help young people from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, language, and religious groups in a number of ways. Firstly, to acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function in cultural communities other than their own, within the national culture and community, as well as within the global community; secondly, to critically understand and examine their cultural, national, and global identifications and attachments; thirdly, to give young people the option to maintain their cultural attachments and identifications as well as the option to endorse other cultures and identities; fourthly, to develop thoughtful and clear identifications within their cultural communities and their nation-states and develop deep understandings of their roles in the world community; and finally, to understand how life in their cultural communities and nation influences other nations and how international events influence their daily lives.

Bahmueller (1992) contends that citizenship education is essential to protect individuals from unconstitutional abuses by government and from attacks on their rights from any source, public or private, and to seek the broad knowledge and wisdom that informs judgment of public affairs while developing the skill to use that knowledge effectively.

This study draws mostly upon literature concerned with the development of citizenship education within the UK context and to some extent in the USA. There is very little academic literature on citizenship in Bahrain as citizenship is a relatively new concept. However, this literature is relevant to the specific focus of my study, and the goals of citizenship education in the UK and the USA are similar to those in the Bahraini context.

In Bahrain, the overall goals for teaching citizenship to young people as pointed out by the Ministry of Education (2004a) are, in brief, to enhance citizenship values and skills, to understand the law, to develop an understanding of the role of the government, and the Bahrain political system, to develop awareness of Bahraini social, political, economical, and cultural aspects, and to develop awareness of citizens rights and responsibilities in a democracy.

Given the above, formal education in Bahrain should seek to improve civic literacy (Wehbe, 1992) to increase participation in community and national affairs, to understand the nation's changing international role, and to enable citizens to use the civic knowledge and skills to make reasoned and reflective decisions and actions about public issues (Hasan 2001; Alqatam *et al.* 2002). Achievement of these goals will help ensure that Bahrainis maintain and improve the democratic process in their country. Therefore, meeting these goals should contribute to developing citizens' recognition of their country's global relations and help Bahrain to meet contemporary challenges.

#### **2.2.6 Good Citizens and Intended Civic Competency**

According to Callahan and Ronald (1990: 338), 'good citizens are made not born'; so helping children develop their full potential as citizens should be an important priority

of families, communities and schools. Mosher *et al.* (1994) note that the school has an obligation to educate informed, rational citizens who participate in, and contribute to society.

Researchers such as Cogan and Derricott (2000), Lawton *et al.* (2000), Rowe (2001) and Patrick (2003) agree that developing citizenship in schools is important for young people, as they can learn to make responsible decisions, care about others, contribute to society, be successful in school, respect the law, be aware of their rights and be tolerant and respectful of diversity. Furthermore, they can develop their social and personal skills, such as reflective problem solving, developing tolerance to a variety of perspectives, setting and attaining goals; and developing a core set of common values.

A key part of education for citizenship is helping young people to foster a number of personal qualities and dispositions rooted in values of respect and care for self, for others and for the environment (LT Scotland Review Group, 2001). In addition, they can also:

Promote a sense of social responsibility. Being fair-minded in making decisions and being inclined to exercise responsibility are essential qualities of a responsible citizen ([www.ltscotland.org.uk](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk)).

Branson (2003: 7) states that 'traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for the worth and human dignity of every individual are imperative ... to democracy's success'. This specific approach to moral or values education is found in 'character education', which is consistently linked with citizenship education and seeks to meet the needs of the new economy, and promote democratic participation through school-based education (Arthur, 2005). Hence, good



citizens can be counted on having such traits of character as civility, sociability, honesty, self-restraint, tolerance, trust, compassion, a sense of duty, a sense of political efficacy, capacity for cooperation, loyalty, courage, respect for the worth and dignity of each person, concern for the common good, and other core citizenship values (Centre for Civic Education 1994; NAEP 1996; Patrick 1999; Arthur 2005).

Osler and Starkey (1999) note that citizens need to be able to reflect on and be comfortable with a range of personal identities. This implies, in their view, a learning environment where feelings and choices about identity are explored and developed.

They believe that:

The feeling of belonging to a community is essential for citizenship and a primary task of education is to enable learners to develop new identities to add to those that they bring to the learning process (p.201).

Teaching 'for' citizenship as well as educating young people 'about' citizenship is important (Arnot, 2006). Arnot looks at the learner as citizen in view of the fact that citizenship education courses often prepare learners for a divided world. Thus, education for citizenship is important because every society needs people who can contribute effectively to the future health of their communities locally, nationally and globally. Fostering active and responsible citizens contributes to the process of developing a healthy culture of democratic participation (LT Scotland Review Group, 2001).

Competent citizens participate in their communities, act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, have moral and civic virtues such as a concern for the rights and welfare of others, social

responsibility, tolerance and respect, and a belief in the capacity to make a difference (Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE, 2003).

In addition, Torney-Purta and Vermeer (2006) list some attitudes and dispositions young people need to develop including: patriotism and commitment to democracy, support for justice, equality and other democratic values and procedures, respect for human rights and willingness to search out and listen to others' views, and a personal commitment to the well-being of others in the community and nation. These civic values and skills are inseparable from a body of civic knowledge or content. They must be taught and learned in tandem to fulfil the mission of citizenship education, which is to develop individuals who can establish, maintain, and improve democratic governance and citizenship in their country and throughout the world (Niemi and Junn 1998; Vontz *et al.* 2000).

In short, the literature shows that young people involved in education for democracy are informed and thoughtful, have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of democracy, know their rights and responsibilities, have an understanding and awareness of their community issues and their identity and have the ability to obtain information, and think critically (QCA 1998; Parekh 2000; Banks 2004; Miller 2004). In this regard, Leicester *et al.* (2000) note that young people, as an outcome of citizenship education, will promote some particular elements of citizenship education such as political awareness and HRE.

### **2.2.7 Civic Knowledge: The Foundation of Civic Competency**

Civic knowledge is one of the main civic competences. The literature suggests that knowledge is the necessary foundation of civic participation and that 'knowledge is a valuable civic outcome' (Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE, 2003: 23). It consists of

fundamental ideas and information that learners must know and use to become effective and responsible citizens of a democracy (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002). It includes principles of democratic theory, operations of democratic governance, and behaviours of democratic citizenship (Patrick, 2003). Torney-Purta *et al.* (2001) maintain that young people involved in education for democracy need to know what citizenship is, how it is acquired or lost in various political systems, what rights, responsibilities, and duties are entailed by it, and how it is connected to the institutions of their nation-state. Alqatam *et al.* (2002) relate civic knowledge with civic participation. They note:

To live in a democratic society, young people need to know their rights, duties and responsibilities as well as the requirements of democracy in terms of effective participation in national issues (p.4).

Researchers have found strong relationships between knowledge of democratic principles, processes, and institutions and the propensity to participate in political life, orientation to political tolerance and political interest, and competence in cognitive and participatory skills of democratic citizenship, such as the capacities to analyse public issues and to cooperate with others in a group project (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Galston 2001; Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE 2003). Accordingly, the young people taking part in a study by Powney *et al.* (2000) highlight the importance of the possession of knowledge of citizenship and democracy and view it as a prerequisite to performing efficiently in a democratic society. The findings of their study show that learning for citizenship is best achieved if it is based on acquiring knowledge, reflecting on identity, living in a democratic community and developing skills for participation.

Young people, therefore, need to have some knowledge of political, social, economic, and cultural issues. These issues must interact with the teaching and learning activities, designed to promote knowledge and understanding (Patrick, 2003). Furthermore, young people need to have opportunities for learning factual and conceptual knowledge across a broad range of subjects and curriculum areas. This understanding, based upon the knowledge of learners, is relevant to living thoughtfully as active and informed citizens (LT Scotland Review Group, 2001) and will then help to provide an appropriate and valuable foundation for developing capability for citizenship.

In short, citizens in today's world seem to require factual and conceptual knowledge from a wide range of domains in order to arrive at thoughtful, informed decisions about important matters for their lives now and in the future. They are generally expected to be reasonably knowledgeable about government, politics, rights, responsibilities, community issues, the diversity of identities, and the need for mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding (QCA 1998; Torney-Purta *et al.* 2001; Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE 2003; Parker 2003; Osler 2003a). This implies that 'education for citizenship which engages with learners' own experiences of society enables them to make direct use of information and knowledge provided' (Osler and Starkey, 1999: 201). Therefore, democratic societies are obliged to promote what might now be seen as essential elements of citizenship education, such as HRE and political education (Leicester *et al.*, 2000).

### **2.2.8 Citizenship Education as a Response to Perceived Need**

Some studies on citizenship education have revealed deficiencies in it for civic preparedness. This problem can be found in some well-established democracies, such



as the United Kingdom and the United States. Recently, however, critics of citizenship education have noted that the components of competent citizenship are simply not taught in American schools. Young Americans lack knowledge, attitudes, and skills that leading civic educators believe they should have in order to be responsible citizens of a constitutional democracy (Koliba 2000; Patrick 2003; Miller 2004). Most high school students appear to lack detailed knowledge and understanding of institutions, principles, and processes of government in the United States (Miller 2004; Levin 2000). Galston (2003) blames schools for failing to transmit civic knowledge to students. Similarly, the Academy for Educational Development (2004) asserts that there are still gaps in young people's knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and processes, therefore, many young Americans are not prepared to participate fully in the democracy now and when they become adults.

In a similar vein, in Britain, Fogelman (1991), Saunders *et al.* (1995), and Kerr (1996) indicate that there is rarely coherence, consistency, institutionalization, and progression in schools in citizenship education. Furthermore, civic activities and accreditation of citizenship activities is not easy as the appropriate systems are not in place. Most schools include the intention to teach citizenship in their mission statements but there is no evidence that it is taught systematically (SCAA, 1996). English educators, politicians, voluntary bodies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and others have expressed concerns about society in general and young people in particular. These concerns include low levels of participation by young people in local and national elections, social exclusion leading to anti-social and criminal behaviour (Baily, 2000), a lack of developed thinking skills preventing them from engaging effectively in rational public discourse (Davis, 2000) and the lack of a

feeling of national identity (Osler, 2003b). Gifford (2004: 145) notes that 'the starting point of the Crick Report is that British democracy is no longer secure and this is reflected in 'worrying levels of apathy, ignorance, and cynicism about public life' (QCA, 1998: 8).

Tomlinson (2005) argues that the failure to develop a curriculum for a multiethnic society has contributed to an increase in xenophobia and racism, and there are no educational policies to deal with increased hostility towards young Muslims, for example. Lawton *et al.* (2000) indicate several reasons for the failure of citizenship education in the past:

- Citizenship education was a low status subject in schools but was dangerous: teachers could be accused of bias or even indoctrination.
- There was a shortage of good resources and of teachers who were competent to deal with difficult and complex issues.
- There was a lack of a clear definition of what political education or citizenship education was and what teachers could legitimately do (p.11).

Therefore, there is a need for young people to understand their rights, responsibilities and the law more clearly (Lawton *et al* 2000; Morris 2001), a need to combat racist attitudes and behaviour, and a need to foster international awareness (Osler and Starkey, 1996).

#### **2.2.9 The Need for Citizenship Education in Bahrain**

In Bahrain, as stated earlier in Chapter One, interest in raising the status of citizenship education, besides being related to the transition towards democracy and the new political context of Bahrain, stems, in part, from the perception that young

citizens need the required civic skills and values to be prepared to participate in a democratic society (Almanai *et al.* 2003; Eid 2004). The issue of citizenship education has therefore come to the fore recently. However, academic studies dealing with citizenship education in Bahrain are few. These few studies show that there is an absence of comprehensive coverage of citizenship teaching in terms of knowledge, skills and values in most social studies' textbooks in general and in the traditional citizenship education textbook in particular. According to Abdulatif (1991) none of the students in his study 'understand the two civic concepts, citizenship and affiliation' (p.7).

Thus, the lack of concern for citizenship education, especially in social studies' textbooks, leads to the inadequate preparation of students to participate in a democracy (Wehbe 1992; Kadhim 2003). Kadhim (2003) finds that some values of good citizenship are not given sufficient attention, and are not included in such books, including 'freedom, faithfulness, tolerance, loyalty, honesty, sincerity, and self-confidence' (p.5). However, the school curriculum has a big role to play in deepening the values of good citizenship by providing the learner with knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to accomplish the national affiliation (Hasan, 2001). The values that are more frequently discussed are patriotism, compassion, justice, self-reliance, good-neighbourhood, respect, and courage (Kadhim, 2003). While both textbooks and schools have a role to play in developing citizenship values, knowledge and skills in young Bahrainis, schools must take the lead (Almanai *et al.*, 2003).

In his speech on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2000, King Hamad Al-Khalifa referred to the importance of citizenship education for Bahrain, when he said 'Today we want this great national epic to be documented in Bahrain's history books and in the citizenship education syllabus and also in our daily lives' (Government of Bahrain, 2000).



The importance of citizenship is evident in the constitution of the kingdom of Bahrain (Government of Bahrain, 2002) in its seventh article from text (B): which states that ‘the law organizes the different ways of religious education and citizenship in the different stages of teaching and its types; the law concentrates on the strengthening of the citizen’s character and nationalism’ (p.8). Furthermore, The Bahraini National Charter (Government of Bahrain, 2000) focuses on the importance of citizenship education in the eighth article of the first chapter. It addresses education as a process of civilization and as a basis for the progress of human beings when it states that:

The law pays attention to civics, building citizens’ personalities with a solid sense of belonging to national unity and Arab nationalism through all stages and disciplines of education (p.19).

As far as building citizens’ personalities is concerned, schools must play a vital role in nurturing all young people and providing them with a comprehensive citizenship education. Such personal and social developments are essential components of education for citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2004a). This can help to make the schools, as well as local and national communities, better for all their members.

Nevertheless, citizenship education in Bahrain can contribute to developing citizens who are knowledgeable about the requirements of democracy in terms of effective participation in national issues, and who are able to understand the problems of their community and effectively help to solve such problems (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002). However, in order to achieve this, a range of skills, values and attitudes are required such as creative thinking, problem solving, ability to analyse, engaging in dialogue and accepting others’ views, assuming responsibility, decision-making and co-operation (Ministry of Education, 2004a).

The presence of citizenship education in the Bahrain school curriculum is viewed as a keystone for fostering civic participation in democratic institutions. To this end, the Bahrain Ministry of Education recently committed to expanding the scope of civic education at all grade levels. Breslin *et al.* (2006) point out that Bahrain is one of the countries that is involved in major reforms in the area of citizenship education and that the Citizenship Foundation, working with the Council of Europe and the British Council has been recently involved in initiatives in some countries including Bahrain. In addition, Ministry of Education has proceeded to introduce and adapt Project Citizen and Foundations of Democracy to Bahraini classrooms since 2005 as a pilot project. This programme is gradually being introduced and being piloted in a number of Bahraini elementary schools (Taylor, 2007).

As we have seen, schools have an important role to play in shaping the lives of young people. The future of Bahraini democracy, therefore, depends on how well the Bahraini citizens gain the competences of citizenship needed to carry out their civic responsibilities and duties, both locally and globally.

## **2.3 Rights, Responsibilities and the Law**

After reviewing the literature on citizenship and citizenship education, in this section, I review the state of human rights education (HRE), as one of the components of citizenship education, with reference to key documents on human rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The growing interest in citizenship education is linked in this section to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989). The CRC is briefly described, followed by a note about connections between democracy, rights, responsibilities and law. The linkage between citizenship education and HRE is also highlighted, along with the necessary

critiques of human rights pronouncements regarding the situation of HRE in Bahrain while the challenges ahead in improving and spreading HRE are also discussed.

### **2.3.1 Human Rights Education**

The main source of contemporary conceptions of human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948). The UDHR ‘guaranteed the rights of all people based on the inherent human dignity of every person’; stresses the central importance of a ‘common understanding of human rights’; and the importance of the achievement of ‘freedom, justice and peace in the world.’ It also encourages ‘every individual and every organ of society’ to ‘strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms’ (UDHR, 1948). In other words, the Declaration states that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms should be advanced through teaching and education.

As can be seen therefore, the UDHR emphasizes the importance of an understanding of human rights as necessary to the full realization of one’s rights and responsibilities. Article 26 and 28 of the UDHR affirm education about one’s rights as the first and foremost right that leads to the free and full development of the person within the community. It is in Article 26 that the UDHR proclaims education as a human right, and states:

Everyone has the right to education... Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.

As everyone has the right to education, it means everyone has the right to learn. Article 26 conceptualizes education not merely in terms of the development of



individual personality or even in terms of good citizenship of a nation-state, but also in terms of producing true citizens of the world, imbued with civic virtues (Osler, 2000b). The declaration of 'The Right to Learn' proclaimed by (UNESCO, 1985) states:

The right to learn is: the right to read and write; the right to question and analyze; the right to imagine and create; the right to read about one's own world and to write history; the right to have access to educational resources; the right to develop individual and collective skills... The act of learning, lying as it does at the heart of all educational activity, changes human beings from objects at the mercy of events to subjects creating their own history (pp. 67-68).

Moreover, Article 26 and Article 29 of the Declaration affirm that education about human rights is the foremost right that leads to the full and free development of the person. Article 29 categorically declares that 'free and full development' of human personality also entails 'fulfilment of duties to the community' (UDHR, 1948).

The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (1998) defines HRE as training, dissemination, and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge, skills and attitudes. These are directed towards the:

- a) Strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- b) Full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- c) Promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups;
- d) Enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;

- e) Furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UN General Assembly, 1994: para. 2).

It is clear that the definitions presented above speak directly of the efforts that aim to promote the basis of human rights within our educational institutions. This concept can create not only a sense of equality and dignity, but also an appreciation for diversity (Osler and Starkey, 1996). It tries not only to educate people to act within a democratic society, but also to empower them to participate in the democratic system (Patrick, 2003). This can, as West (2001) points out, encourage capacities for people to live democratically.

Osler (2003a) believes that once people grasp human rights concepts, they begin to look for their realization in their own lives, examining their communities, families, and personal experience from a human rights perspective. In many cases people find these values affirmed, but HRE can also lead to 'recognition of unrealized injustices and discriminations'. Bobbio (1996) and Ignatieff (2000) note that people need to know how to bring human rights home, responding appropriately and effectively to violations in their own communities. Therefore, HRE is meant to teach people and groups what these norms or rights are and how to protect them to help bring about their realization.

Generally speaking, HRE is all learning that develops knowledge and information about human rights, skills and values of human rights and also that which engenders attitudes and behaviour respectful of those rights (Amnesty International 1998; Flowers 2000). In this sense, HRE is an effort made through the combination of content and process, to develop in school students of all ages an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, to sensitise them to the rights of others, and to

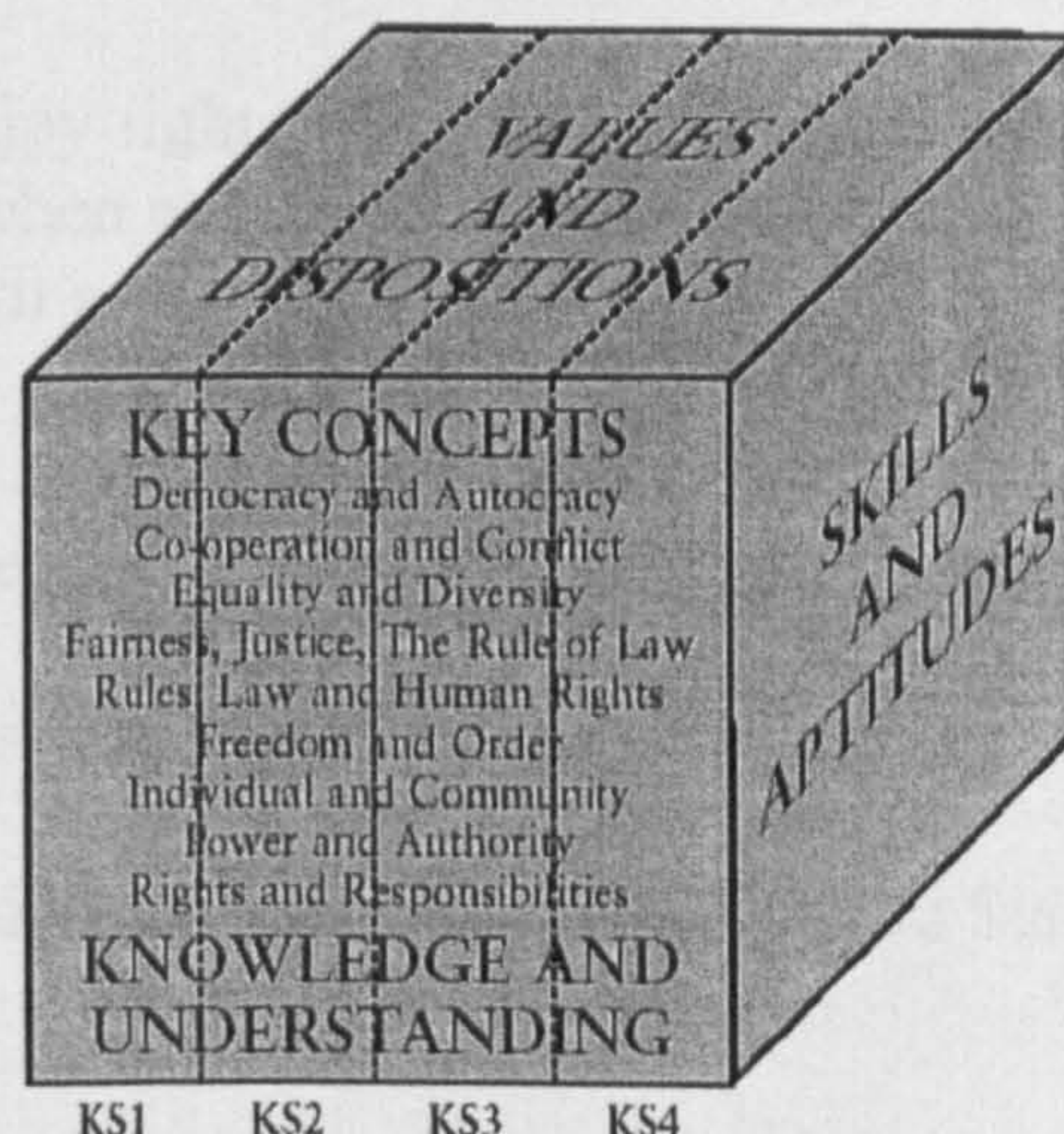
encourage responsible action to safeguard the rights of everyone at home, in school and in the wider world (Osler 2000b; Chauhan 2001).

### **2.3.2 Citizenship Education and Human Rights Education**

Given that citizenship education seeks to enhance civil society, it would seem that articulating precise boundaries between citizenship education and HRE is difficult, as ‘the two go hand in hand’ (Davis, 2000: 15). There is currently a debate about the ‘umbrella’ curriculum: ‘Does citizenship education contain human rights, or does HRE form the framework in which to discuss issues like citizenship, identity and so on? Or do both come under the broad heading of democracy’ (Davis, 2000: 14)? The debate over these issues has some implications, with a number of general references to rights and responsibilities, and some specific references to conventions. Davis argues that most definitions of citizenship education include rights while the HRE definitions do not include citizenship as such. In discussing this, we can point to ‘Human Rights’, which appears as one of the key concepts and an essential element of citizenship education, presented by QCA (1998: 45) in this cube as follows:



**Figure 2.2: The key concepts and the essential elements of citizenship education**



The cube shows the interrelationship of the essential elements and key concepts of citizenship education, and suggests the need to approach them in a developmental and sequential way through the four key stages of schooling, i.e. early years (KS1), primary (KS2), secondary (KS3), and other settings (KS4) (Huddleston and Kerr, 2006). Similarly, Bahraini educators believe human rights should be considered as one of the key concepts of citizenship education, as documented in the Bahraini citizenship education national curriculum scheme (Ministry of Education, 2004b). Furthermore, this study addresses most of the key concepts shown in Figure 2.2 and has embedded them in the conceptual framework of the research.

In spite of the differences between citizenship education and HRE in terms of detailed content and history, they are interrelated. There are a number of key linking concepts in their definitions, such as the preservation of democracy and rights, the notion of responsibility, and hence the teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding, which will enable people to participate and take informed action



(Davis, 2000). Certainly, HRE is essential to active citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic civil society. Osler and Starkey (1996) state that:

In order to enjoy rights, citizens must know about them ...they become real when exercised in the context of democracy, social justice and civil society (p.75).

In other words, only people who understand human rights will work to secure and defend them for themselves and others. This implies that 'citizenship education requires formal knowledge of human rights' (Osler and Starkey, 1996: 85).

The aim of both citizenship education and HRE, in the long-term, relies on the knowledge and attitudinal base that people are equipped with in order to lead 'social change' (Chauhan, 2001: 7). They aim to ensure that people participate in the polity and speak out against infringements of their rights (Davis, 2000). This is to say that HRE may ensure the continuation of participating in either civil society or in voting in an election. This entails learning about, and becoming helpfully involved in, their communities.

The Director of UNESCO in the International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy (UNESCO, 1993) advocated that HRE should be an initiation to democratic living – to the assumption of responsibilities, to the challenges of participation, to learning about the linkage between rights and duties, knowing and caring. In fact, this is emphasized in The Plan of Action for the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004) when talks of the achievement of a 'universal' human that includes the practice of democracy and the creation of peaceful, non-violent behavioural patterns and skills.

According to Symonides (1998), a human rights culture cannot be constructed without the participation of civil society, and a broad coalition of partners. Osler (2000b) notes that since citizenship concepts associated with human rights (freedom, equality, justice and peace) are based on a concern for individual human dignity, these principles can be applied to any community, including schools.

In addition, citizenship education and HRE are related to the CRC in establishing the learner as citizen of the school. In addition, it is important to bear in mind the usefulness of human rights as a foundation for deciding public issues of citizenship and moral value and that the international nature of rights offers a framework for education for global citizenship (Davis, 2000). The convention was ratified by 61 states in 1990. The ratification of the convention by almost all nations except two member states, Somalia and the United States (Flowers, 1999), means that it is by far the most widely agreed international human rights treaty. Furthermore, the ratifying governments undertook to implement it in law, policy and practice. Governments should therefore accept the obligation to promote children's participation in decision-making in issues that affect them as 'the CRC is an ideal basis for citizenship education' (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 115).

Furthermore, according to Davis (2000) both HRE and citizenship education are characterised by being part of school life, 'whether or not intended - in the hidden curriculum of rules, obligations and relationships, in the assignation of pupil identities, and in the micro-political society of the school' (p.22). He argues that it is useful to determine where both are positioned in the curriculum, whether they are 'free-floating' or whether they are buried in a history, geography, and religious or moral education syllabus. This gives immense scope to schools and teachers as to what they include and how citizenship education is approached.



In brief, the emphasis in both citizenship education and HRE is on the development of students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, since citizenship education 'attempts to overcome prejudice and exclusion and encourage support for the values underlying human rights instruments' (Osler and Starkey, 1996: 85). However, the purpose of both citizenship education and HRE is not just to develop an understanding of the definitions and properties of citizenship and to be able to name certain rights. Learners should not only learn the knowledge component of citizenship education and HRE, but the emphasis should be also on building affective civic skills and values necessary for agents of social change (Chauhan, 2001). Therefore, both citizenship education and HRE are 'long-term projects', which are 'forward looking' in their focus on changing ways of acting in public life, 'whether for individuals or for nations' (Davis, 2000: 28).

### **2.3.3 Understanding Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities**

Rights and responsibilities lie at the heart of the language of citizenship. Thus, citizenship does not mean only citizens' claim to their rights from the state, but also their obligations to fulfil their duties to their homeland. 'If a citizen does not meet such duties, s/he will no longer be worthy of enjoying the civil rights to which s/he is entitled' (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002: 2).

As noted earlier, the rights approach stems from liberal thought, in which citizenship is understood as a formal status which entitles individuals to specific universalised rights enshrined in law (Heater 1999; Isin and Wood 1999). However, 'Liberalism' promotes a rather negative notion of freedom which does not enable citizens to claim rights, since claiming rights requires the resources, power and knowledge to do so (Isin and Wood, 1999). In contrast, Marshall (1950) introduces a positive notion of liberty into

citizenship through the concept of social rights, rights to welfare and resources, such as rights to health, education and a dignified level of socio-economic well-being. He also argues however, that social rights are essential to enable all people to participate in social and political life, that is, to exercise their civil and political rights.

The rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy differ from those of other political systems. The principal rights of citizens of all democracies are those that allow them to participate in the political process. For example, they must have the right to vote in free, fair and regular elections, to be able to examine the conduct of public officials, to make petitions and to exercise freedom of political speech through the press, political association and assembly and have the right to an education that prepares them to participate in the democratic process (Lynch 1992; Verhellen 1997; Galston 2001).

In addition, citizenship in a democracy entails responsibilities in the exercise of the powers of citizenship so that they are used in ways that are consistent with fundamental democratic principles. Historically, the responsibilities of citizenship have their roots in civic republican thought, in which political participation is understood as the civic duty of all citizens and the expression of their citizenship and social membership (Lister 1997; Heater 1999). Patrick (1999) argues that the responsibilities of citizenship also involve action to narrow the gap between ideals and realities. For instance, the highest standards for good government in a constitutional liberal democracy are, firstly, equal security for the rights of all persons in the polity and, secondly, government by consent of the governed. In a democracy, citizens 'own' the political system (Leicester *et al.* 2000; Fahmy 2003). Therefore, they ought to fulfil the responsibilities that ownership entails, e.g., using their political system wisely and passing it on intact or improved to future generations (Keeter *et al.*

2002; Kennedy 2003). Thus, these responsibilities are essential to the functioning of a democratic system and to the well-being of the larger community and are inherently obligatory for citizens.

The duties of responsible citizenship include exercising responsibilities, observing public commitment to the values of constitutional democracy (e.g. liberty, justice, the rule of law, and voting), respecting the rights of others, defending their own rights and the rights of others, and exercising their rights in order to make democracy work (Galston 2001; Patrick 2002). Patrick (1999) mentions additional duties such as,

Demonstrating commitment and loyalty to the democratic political community and state, constructively criticizing the conditions of political and civic life, and participating to improve the quality of political and civic life (p.2).

At the centre of much contemporary debate is the balance and nature of rights and responsibilities (Lister, 1997). In other words, the respect of rights and responsibilities of others and the ability to work with others to achieve common goals should reflect equity and social justice throughout the community.

Rights are often contrasted with responsibilities. However civil rights require taking on personal and shared responsibility and decision-making, and involve helping and respecting one another. 'To claim the right to express one's own view also means accepting and respecting everyone's equal right to do so' (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 130). Thus, the existence of certain citizenship rights also entails an obligation on the part of other persons or the community and/or provides the holder of the rights the capacity to exercise those rights.



#### **2.3.4 Democratic Citizenship and the Rule of Law**

In a democracy, the people are the source of government's authority to make decisions for the public benefit (Arnot and Dillabough, 2000). Law is the means by which these decisions are formulated as rules and implemented as public policy. Davis (2000) notes that:

HRE should not stress only the obligation not to break the law or not to risk legal action (legal rights and responsibilities), but it should encourage more of a positive, social and moral responsibility and actions (p.17).

Frazer (2000) and Galston (2001) note that if the essence of the political process is making public policy, that is the making of public decisions and choices, law is the instrument through which these decisions are expressed, implemented, enforced, and adjudicated. Moreover, Schwartz (2006) notes that the law provides the primary means for structuring organizations and establishing relationships in a society. It also provides an essential link between constitutionalism and democracy, in which the decisions and actions of any political system are revealed by translating fundamental principles into rules which the government is obliged to enforce. In this sense, law is very important in the lives of people because their lives are fundamentally structured by law.

As mentioned above, in a democracy, the citizens govern. Therefore, democratic citizenship must incorporate the rights that enable the citizens to govern themselves. The literature reveals that citizens should enjoy rights that extend beyond participatory rights. These include the rights of privacy and property, freedom of religion, and expression. Having considered the rights of citizenship in general, the following section discusses the citizenship rights of young people.

### **2.3.5 Citizenship Rights and Young People**

Citizenship is one of the basic rights of every child, young person and adult. Article 1 of the UN Convention (CRC, 1989) defines a child as a human being below the age of eighteen years. Accordingly, as for the sample of this study, by age 18, young people are usually considered young adults, fully autonomous and able to take on the responsibilities and duties of citizenship. They have reached the age of consent and the age of criminal responsibility, and they have acquired the right to apply for a driving licence and to work full-time (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2002). They are legally considered old enough to make decisions affecting their life. In some countries, they may be liable or eligible for military service, and they have the right to vote and, with it, the right to formal participation in the political life of the country.

Weller (2003: 153) notes ‘young people, in their early teens, inhabit a transitional middle-ground somewhere between childhood and adulthood and are, constitutionally, excluded from many spaces of citizenship’. The CRC (1989) sets forth a comprehensive set of civil, cultural, economic, social, and political rights for children. It contains over fifty articles that can be divided into three general P categories, protection, provisions and participation; firstly, protection, covering specific issues such as abuse, neglect, and exploitation; secondly, provision, addressing a child's particular needs such as education and healthcare; and thirdly, participation, acknowledging a child's growing capacity to make decisions and play a part in society (Verhellen 1997; Flowers 2000). Thus, this convention accords to children a wide range of rights including, most centrally, the right to have their ‘best interests’ as ‘a primary consideration’ in all actions concerning them (Article 3), the ‘inherent right to life’ (Article 6), and the right of a child ‘who is capable of forming his or her own views ... to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child’

(Article 12). The articles on participation rights are the most revolutionary part of the CRC, these recognise the right of children to make certain choices themselves and the right to dialogue with others. More importantly, these participation rights, ‘the right to express an opinion, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of association and protection of privacy’ (Articles 12 to 16), bring children back into society by recognising them as meaning-makers and by recognising their citizenship (Verhellen, 1997). Indeed, the CRC effectively recognizes children as current, as well as future, citizens (Osler and Starky, 1996; Holden and Clough, 1998).

Indeed, citizenship education needs to address individual rights, as guaranteed in the CRC and the constitutions of ratifying nations. Moreover, Osler (2000a: 33) notes that ‘the convention provides us with a set of principles which have far-reaching implications for the theory and practice of citizenship education’. Rowe (2001) argues that:

If children are encouraged to believe they have the right to respect and to be free from discrimination, then their school experiences should underline rather than undermine that message (p.41).

Little research has been conducted about young people's views of their rights, how they define and regard them, and how practical or relevant they consider the concepts of rights are in their daily lives (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 116). Most secondary school students have neither political rights nor a political role (Levin, 2000). Furthermore, ‘young people nowadays are often uninvolved and withdrawn, and are becoming increasingly passive in reaction to the society that confronts them’ (Que’Niart and Jacques, 2004: 178). Young people are increasingly likely to feel alienated from politics in general and are disappointed in a society that excludes them (Parekh,



2000). As a result, 'many of them no longer believe in politics' (Que'Niart and Jacques, 2004: 179). Similarly, Davis (2000) comments that

There is no formal recognition of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, that children have a right to have their views heard in decisions that affect them. There has been no direct consultation with pupils on the National Curriculum or teaching methods. Pupils are not represented on governing bodies (p.15).

'It is illogical to expect students to understand lessons about rights and democracy, yet expect them not to notice denials of their own rights, or discrepancies between what school staff practise and preach' (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 132). They go on to say that schools which split the theory from the practice of citizenship, alienate young people.

In contrast, democratic schools show the importance of practical citizenship education which honours the CRC rights. If all schools are to adopt these standards, staff and students have to engage in a critical reconsideration of common assumptions about childhood, education and rights. In other words, young people are to be represented not just within the school, but in regional and national committees for education, where they are routinely consulted about educational policy and change (Davis and Krikpatrick, 2000).

Therefore, there is a need to introduce extensive educational legislation on the rights and procedures for pupils in every country, as there is in some European countries such as Scotland and Northern Ireland. These countries specify that schools must have mechanisms by which pupils can have a grievance or concern heard through pupil councils, where pupils are represented on school boards or committees (Davis, 2000). Davis argues that the clear absence of directives about children's rights within

educational legislation creates an uncomfortable position for schools and teachers when introducing HRE. Accordingly, bearing in mind the hope of introducing such legislation in Bahraini educational institutes, it is worth noting that Amnesty International (1998) points out that changing the legislation may be an important first step in changing teacher education or making training appropriate.

It seems likely that the role which young people play depends upon how much they are recognized as valuable resources for advancing human development in their community (Breslin and Dufour, 2006). Indeed, recognizing young people as citizens, securing their rights, and giving them role in their society will, in turn, instil in them a sense of responsibility to their community.

### **2.3.6 Human Rights Education in Bahrain**

Bahrain, which ratified the UN Convention, has not, to date, promoted HRE as enthusiastically as some other countries. In Bahrain, there is a clear understanding of the purpose and importance of HRE and that it should be a part of education, but the question of how human rights should become a part of the formal curriculum is of pressing concern.

In this situation, it is important to mention that Amnesty International (1998) argues that in some cases it might be necessary to implement separate human rights courses to compensate for the lack of previous training on these issues, but ideally human rights concepts and values should be an integral part of all teaching practices and courses. During their visit to Bahrain, UNESCO specialists, Meriam Krela and Linda King pointed out that citizenship and human rights could be taught as one subject in order to reduce the political sensitivity. They emphasized the importance of teacher training and the necessity to prepare not only teachers but all education specialists

and school principals to practise citizenship and human rights principles in the school community, in order to help students understand those principles not only in theory, but also in practice (AlShoroqi, 2004).

Hence, before deciding whether or not to teach citizenship and human rights as one subject, it is important to consider the status of citizenship education and HRE within the school curriculum, and the time allocated to them. In some European countries such as Holland, Sweden and Denmark, the amount of time spent on the preparation for CE or HRE is increased in initial and in-service courses. In Germany, to pass their two-year probation, all teachers need to demonstrate knowledge of educational law, and as this law includes extensive coverage of the rights of pupils and parents, such knowledge will have a detailed rights base (Davis and Kirkpatrick, 2000). The situation in the UK is, however, criticized by Davis (2000: 24) when he observes that ‘the increasing pressure on the teacher education curriculum to fulfil competences means that time or effort devoted to preparation for citizenship education or HRE is squeezed out, compared to other European countries’.

There is a need to focus on citizenship education and HRE in teacher education programmes. Even if some attention is already given to citizenship education and HRE in our training programmes and practices, it may still not be enough. This is illustrated at the University of Bahrain where HR issues are marginalised in almost all colleges. The report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002) indicates some positive and negative aspects regarding the status of the rights of the child in Bahrain. The positive aspects state that human rights studies are compulsory for law undergraduates at Bahrain University. In addition, Bahrain ratified the Convention concerning child labour and established a National Committee on Childhood.



On the other hand, the above report indicates some deficiencies in Bahrain regarding issues, presented in the CRC, such as the principles of non-discrimination (art.2), best interests of the child (art.3), survival and development (art.6), and respect for the views of the child (art.12). These are not fully reflected in the State legislation and administrative and judicial decisions, as well as in policies and programmes relevant to children. Traditional attitudes towards children in society may limit the respect for their views especially within the family and schools. In addition, children are not systematically heard in court and administrative proceedings in matters that affect them in accordance with article 12 of the Convention. Although access to basic education is free and almost universal, education is still not compulsory, and pre-primary education is available only through private institutions. Furthermore, human rights education, including the Convention, is not currently part of the curriculum.

In fact, in Bahrain, education has a major role to play, though a complex and demanding one, in teaching and upholding human rights, supporting human development and promoting civil society (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2002). In order for HRE to make a lasting contribution to human rights culture in the country, educators need to understand the distinct models of HRE that are found in practice, and to clarify their links with social change strategies.

## **2.4. Citizenship, Democracy and Politics**

This section reviews the concept of democracy and highlights its relationship to citizenship. It also discusses the role of the school in developing school-community relations by involving students in their community. It also looks at political socialization, and how schools promote political education by developing young people's political knowledge and understanding.

### **2.4.1 The Concept of Democracy and its Relation to Citizenship**

Knowledge and appreciation of democracy as a political system and form of civic life requires an understanding of the basic concept of democracy (Patrick, 2003). The word democracy is derived from the Greek words *demos* or 'people' and *kratia* meaning 'authority' or 'rule' (Wikipedia, 2007). Thus, 'democracy' may be defined simply as 'rule of the people' or, as defined by Weale (2006), 'it is the rule of the citizen' (p.20) that is 'necessarily tied to the nation-state' (p.21). In other words, it is a system where the population of a society controls the government.

Understanding the concept of 'democracy', however, is more complex and demanding than merely defining a word. Building on the earliest origins of the word, the concept of democracy as 'popular self-government' rests on the principle that the people as a whole are considered the foundation of political life and the common citizen has a voice in politics (Bahmueller, 1992). The people are the ultimate source of authority, their interests and welfare are the principal targets of government, and their rights are the foundation of justice, the ultimate standard of the good society (Patrick, 2002). Thus, liberty is the fundamental precondition for the very concept of self-government, which embraces both individual and collective aspects of self-rule (Soule, 2001).

Democracies are built on the belief that people should be free, should have choices and opportunities, and should work together to make each other's live better (Keeter *et al.*, 2002). A commitment to democracy potentially affects and transforms all aspects of human life, especially those that pertain to the relationships of persons in any community. These may include the workplace, the school, the arts, the family, other personal relationships, and even the mentality of a people (Koliba, 2000).

The concept of citizenship is a key to the comprehension of what democracy is and how it works (Levin, 2000). This concept links belonging and governing; the two are synonymous because in a democracy all citizens are equal members of the polity (QCA 1998; Osler 2003a), which means that there are no classes of citizenship, no second class citizens (West, 2001). As stated earlier, citizens are the ultimate source of the authority of their government. Therefore, in a democracy the government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. It is a form of government in which all citizens can directly participate in the decision-making process (McConnachie, 2000). In other words, citizens have the right to form a government and to participate in the decisions of their government for the benefit of all citizens. In this sense, the UN Development Programme (UNDP, 2002) states that:

Democratic governance in this fast changing environment is about more than people having the right to vote. It must be about strengthening democratic institutions ... and it must be about promoting democratic politics that make participation and public accountability possible (p. 61).

The structure and process of democracy affects, and is affected by people's sense and practice of citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999). Torney *et al.* (2001) and Fahmy (2003) observe that the more young people know about democratic institutions and processes, the more likely they are to vote as adults. In addition, the more strongly they perceive that their schools teach about the importance of voting, the more likely they are to indicate that they will vote.

Citizenship can simply be viewed as a legal status in a country, however, citizenship in a democracy (*i.e.* democratic citizenship) is more than a legal status, it is a character or spirit, an ethos that guides relationships among persons and animates individual commitment to fundamental principles of democracy (Patrick, 2003).



Democratic citizenship 'entails becoming informed about issues that affect individuals and participating with others in determining how society will resolve those issues' (Portelli and Solomon, 2001: 12).

Thus, schooling has a potentially powerful role to play in the development of democratic citizenship. There is a growing acceptance of this within international agencies, and it is acknowledged in the Bahraini government education policy statements. However, Schweisfurth (2002) argues that the requisite values, knowledge and skills need to be developed within the teaching force before there is hope of instilling them in young learners.

#### **2.4.2 Democratic Models: Schools and Classrooms Ethos**

Young people need democratic models operating in their daily lives and opportunities to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities (Gathercoal, 2000). In the same vein, Bhatti (1999: 103) argues that 'children's experiences at schools help to shape their attitudes towards learning and can have a lasting effect on some of their future aspirations and preferences'. In her study, Bhatti shows the crucial role schools and teachers, in particular, play in children's lives. She argues that 'teachers can change children's lives' and that 'a positive attitude among teachers and schools will certainly make a difference for all children' (p.241).

Furthermore, according to Mosher *et al.* (1994: 24), 'children educated in democratic groups benefit personally as well as in terms of social development'. In schools, this kind of learning experience in civics and government is likely to develop the cognitive, participatory skills and dispositions among students necessary for citizenship in a democracy (Vontz *et al.*, 2000). Thus, the ethos, organisation, structures and daily practices of schools including whole school activities and

assemblies have a significant impact on the effectiveness of citizenship education (QCA, 1998). Schools need to consider how far their ethos, organisation and daily practices are consistent with the aims and purposes of citizenship education and affirm and extend the development of students into active citizens (QCA 1998; Lawton *et al.* 2000).

In doing so, students gain such exposure ‘by being surrounded by practices, symbols, groups and individuals that reinforce the message that democracy is important’ (Torney-Purta and Vermeer, 2006: 21). According to Lawton *et al.* (2000: 15), ‘it is not only what children are taught and what they learn but also their actual experiences at school which contribute to their understanding of their rights and their responsibilities as future citizens’. As a result, a democratic school ethos is important and this needs to be experienced in the context of the wider community.

In a democratic school community, relationships are based on shared values rather than bureaucratic roles, resulting in individuals, who care, listen, understand, respect others and are honest, open and sensitive (Sergiovanni, 1994). A good deal of evidence now exists suggesting that a positive school community, i.e. staff members and students sharing a vision for the future of the school, caring about, trusting, and respecting each other, provides a necessary foundation for school improvement. This can facilitate teachers’ instructional efforts and enhance students’ personal well-being (Royal and Rossi, 1997).

Through developing such practices and the associated ethos schools provide implicit and explicit messages which can have a considerable influence on students’ learning and development (QCA, 1998). There is evidence that a positive relationship exists between a democratic school climate and the development of democratic civic

knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour among students (Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE, 2003).

Broadly speaking, promoting active and responsible citizenship comprises not only helping young people to acquire relevant civic knowledge and skills through studies of various topics or subjects, but also gives them the chance to experience democracy, which is likely to make them active and responsible citizens now and later in their lives.

#### ***2.4.2.1 Open Discussion and Democratic Values***

Researchers such as Hahn (1998), Baldi *et al.* (2001) and Torney-Purta *et al.* (2001) highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a classroom climate that is conducive to a free and open exchange of opinions about public issues and other controversial topics. They believe that this kind of classroom practice is related to the development of such civic dispositions as tolerance, civility, propensity to participate, and political interest.

Torney-Purta and Schwille (1986) observe that when students participate in classroom discussions and are encouraged to express their opinions, they are more politically knowledgeable and interested, and less authoritarian. On the other hand, students who are taught through an emphasis on lectures and patriotic rituals tend to be more authoritarian and less knowledgeable about politics. Furthermore, they argue that the stress on patriotism may actually harm support for civil liberties.

Simpson and Daly (2005) conducted a study of discussion-based citizenship education for post-16 students in Northern Ireland over a period of 18 months. The study showed that an overwhelming majority of the students involved gave comprehensive and



positive evaluations of a citizenship course that was reliant upon a discussion-based form of education. Democracy needs to be experienced by students in order for them to internalise democratic values and beliefs (Parker 2003; Eid 2004). Osler and Vincent (2002) maintain:

Democracy is best learned in a democratic setting where participation is encouraged, where views can be expressed openly and discussed, where there is freedom of expression for pupils and teachers, and where there is fairness and justice (p.3).

Such engagement can be through school council and in students' daily encounters with aspects of school life (QCA, 1998). Schools can prepare their students for responsible and effective engagement in a democracy by helping them to acquire knowledge about fundamental democratic processes and skills and providing them with opportunities for open and respectful discussion of opinions in the classroom (IEA, 1999). Through the school curriculum, and by providing an open classroom climate for discussion and inquiry, schools seem to be effective in promoting both civic and political knowledge and engagement (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001). Rowe (2001) argues that:

Children will learn about democracy and their rights to be heard if class and school rules are open to constructive criticism, and if children are invited to contribute to the running of the school as significant members of it (p.41).

However, Banks (2004: 10) maintains that 'the democratic ideals taught in citizenship lessons are contradicted by practices such as racism, sexism, social-class stratification, and inequality'. For Banks, this contradiction creates a 'citizenship education dilemma'. He points out that:

In nation-states throughout the world, citizenship education programs and curricula are trying to teach students democratic ideals and values within social, economic, political, and educational contexts that contradict democratic ideals such as justice, equality, and human rights (p.10).

Osler (2003a) reminds us of the Council of Europe's (1985) recommendation regarding the need to reaffirm democratic values in the face of the re-emergence of the public expression of racist and xenophobic attitudes. The European Commission in its review of training programmes on active citizenship looked explicitly at the ways in which such programmes sought to promote equality and challenge racism. Miller (2004) believes that democratic values do not necessarily emerge from classroom instruction but schools can cultivate them in many ways, including creating democratic schools and classrooms, involving students in service-learning programmes and linking the discussion of democratic values to current policy debates.

#### ***2.4.2.2 School-Community Relations***

Research shows that successful school-community relations exist in schools where communication is open, participation is widespread, teamwork is common and diversity is incorporated (QCA 1998; Patrick 1999; Henness 2001). This can enhance students' social development and provide them with experiences necessary to prepare them for full participation in a democratic society (Royal and Rossi, 1997). It provides students with a sense of competence, belonging, usefulness, and experiences that increase their resilience to stresses in life. In addition, it should be remembered that citizens who exhibit the highest levels of politicization and participation in political life are those who are the best integrated within society (Arthur and Baily, 2000).

Research also indicates that schools can play an effective role in promoting positive citizenship by involving students in their communities. Students demand a strong involvement with others, which is ‘a direct expression of the way a person relates to the world around him or her’ (Que Niart and Jacques, 2004: 178). Promoting positive citizenship should begin with an opportunity for students to participate in activities, such as community service or political volunteering, which are linked to the formal curriculum (Zaff *et al.*, 2003).

Barber (1992) suggests a programme of civic education, which teaches citizenship through a combination of schooling and community service. Such efforts can be nurtured through students' involvement in a range of practical projects dealing with, for example, the school environment, and through helping others in voluntary service. This can help these young citizens to renew their commitment to the national community through service to the local community. The QCA (1998: 40) stresses the importance of learners' involvement in community affairs. Such learners not only tend to be more involved and better citizens, but also significantly improve their academic knowledge and skills, and tend to stay involved throughout their lives (Koliba 2000; Henness 2001; Torney-Purta and Vermeer 2006).

Moreover, Newton (2002) argues that the ‘need to have some real curriculum time for citizenship is counter balanced by the importance of recognising that it cannot be delivered through the formal curriculum alone’ (p.527). In short, Newton calls for recognition of the fact that effective citizenship education requires a whole school dimension including behaviour policy and opportunities for pupil participation in school and the wider community. This is emphasized by Kennedy (2003) who maintains that:



Authentic teaching moves beyond abstract academic concepts and gives students opportunities to 'engage with both the knowledge they are expected to learn...and with activities that will give them experience with the practice of democracy both in their classrooms and outside their classrooms (p.65).

The Commission on Citizenship (1990) stresses that providing opportunities for learning through community experiences are an indispensable springboard for encouraging students to make voluntary contributions in later life. 'Partnerships between schools and the community can assist collaborative working towards positive participative citizenship' (Leicester *et al.*, 2000: 96). This can be seen when young people contribute to the polity by informing themselves about public affairs, sharing their views with other citizens and with elected representatives (Alqhatam, *et al.*, 2002), participating through organizations or through established associations and social movements, participating in political parties and voting in the elections (Niemi and Smith, 2001).

Thus, through youth participation in the education component of community service programs as well as through participating in activities, students have a greater knowledge of the world around them, and a better understanding of the political process (Zaff and Michelsen, 2001). Blozis *et al.* (2002) observe that students' sense of community is greatly related to their engagement in school activities that increases their understanding of their role and responsibilities as citizens, and develops a growing sensitivity to diverse cultures. Chi (2002) notes that community-service projects promote active models of citizenship that foster the heart and soul aspects of citizenship, including caring for and taking action to benefit other individuals of the community. According to ECS (2003), it also helps students acquire the skills, values, knowledge, and practice necessary to become effective citizens.

To sum up, whatever the context or focus for learning, the opportunities provided in schools make important contributions to the process of educating for active and responsible citizenship. These learning experiences provide opportunities for the development of students' capabilities and encourage their active involvement in the local community in which they live in order to participate as responsible citizens (Rowe, 2001).

### **2.4.3 Citizenship, Politics and Government**

Politics and government are a necessity in any society and citizens cannot fulfil their potential without an effective political process and the establishment of a government which reflects the aspirations of people to live together (Leicester *et al.* 2000; Alqatam *et al.* 2002). Promoting individual security and public order, integrating diversity, achieving social equality, enhancing economic prosperity, protecting individual rights, promoting the common good, and establishing justice are some of the competing purposes of politics and government ( Osler 2003a; Parker 2003; Banks 2004).

In order to function successfully, modern political systems depend upon effective participation by their citizens (Cogan and Derricott, 2000). The important role of citizenship and politics in society would seem to suggest that citizenship education itself is necessary for all parts of society. The final report of 'The Development Education Commission' (DEC, 2000) illustrates that in the citizenship education context this usually involves 'participative democracy' implying continuous active involvement in the processes of local or national politics rather than simply using one's power as a voter to try to enable the election of the people or policies one supports.

Thus, democracies provide a wide range of means by which citizens can participate in civic and political life to influence the actions of government locally and nationally.

#### **2.4.3.1 Education and Political Socialization**

Although a number of factors influence political socialization - family, education, media, peer groups, and organizations - the school is the principal institution in society formally charged with teaching the younger generation about political society and citizenship (Abujado 1998; QCA, 1998; Zaff *et al.* 2003). As childhood and adolescence are the formative stages for developing social and political orientations, most of the focus is on political socialization in the educational setting that occurs in the primary and secondary school system (Lister *et al.*, 2003). In particular, schools can socialize their members to become valued members, i.e. good citizens, who can function well in any specific community (Koliba, 2000). Therefore, 'schools have the responsibility to communicate with and to stress to the young and old the importance of local political involvement' (Baily, 2000: 45). Political socialization is defined as the process of learning political attitudes and behaviour through social interaction (Braungart and Braungart, 1998). Lawton *et al.* (2000) note that:

Politically under-educated or ill-educated and inactive members of societies are dangerous because they can misrepresent the complexity of humanity and opt for simplistic solutions based on populist politics, often encouraging authoritarian and undemocratic solutions to complex societal issues (p.23).

In addition, Lawton *et al.* (2000) believe that 'education systems with a citizenship education syllabus would enable the emergence of thinking citizens who would be less likely to seek solutions to conflicts through violence' (p.23).

Several terms are presently used interchangeably to refer to institutionalised forms of



political knowledge acquisition. In this thesis, the different terms used in political socialization as mentioned above are used interchangeably to refer to the process of political socialization in their specific contexts. These include 'political education', 'citizenship education', 'political literacy', and 'political knowledge'. In the USA and Europe, the terms citizenship education, civic education or political education are used to specify the type of political socialization process by which members are socialized into becoming participating democratic citizens who accept the democratic values and norms of their governing ideologies (Hahn, 1998). In the UK, terms like political education, used in the 1980s, may be taken to mean the same as citizenship education which is currently used (Derricot, 1998). The Great Britain Commission of Citizenship (1990) identifies the goal of citizenship education in the UK as being that:

Young people should leave school with some confidence in their ability to participate in their society, to resolve conflict and, if they oppose a course of action, to express that opposition fairly, effectively and peacefully (p.18).

Thus, 'at some stage all young people should gain some awareness of what politics is about' (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 11). In the Bahraini context, citizenship education, in a broad sense, comprises political education, and moral education, which are regarded as being inextricably intertwined. In the past, political education, embedded in citizenship education textbooks, was education about loyalty to the nation, the state and the social institutions (Wehbe, 1992). Moral education, integrated in the school curriculum, is education about the behavioural norms governing the relationship between individuals (Ministry of Education, 2001). The citizens were, therefore, expected to incorporate the official values and norms in order to become the moral citizens of the political community.

Citizenship education has been an ongoing matter of academic and political debate (Gifford, 2004) and this debate, especially in democratic societies, on educating young people and adults for politics and citizenship is no clear-cut matter (Pearce and Hallgarten 2000; Lister *et al.* 2003; Osler and Starkey 2003). In this sense, the debate over political socialization as a force for stability or for change permeates many of the controversies in education. Contrasting perspectives are evident in political socialization theory and research as well as in educational programs designed to teach students about society and politics (Davis, 2000). For example, some researchers and educators view the relationship between political socialization and education as largely concerned with training students to fit into the political system and display conventional citizenship behaviour (Parker, 2003). Heater (1990) analyses the nature of institutionalised political socialization process and argues that:

The style of political education will be affected by the perceived purpose of the school system as a whole. This in turn may well be determined by the political regime. This purpose itself will be related to the kind of involvement in politics expected of the individual. And this expectation will be shaped by basic assumptions concerning the way people can and should behave in society (p.211).

Political socialization is considered an important source of societal and political stability (Algam *et al.* 2002; Althof and Berkowitz 2006). However, cognitive and developmental theories in psychology, along with conflict theories in sociology, view the individual as an actor in his or her socialization process and emphasize the struggle over political power among competing groups in society (Abujado, 1998). Thus, although adults attempt to inculcate political values and norms, young people perceive, interpret, and respond in their own ways, with generational and group conflict a significant source of political change (Braungart and Braungart, 1998). Gifford (2004) maintains that:

If citizenship education is to have the potential to transform a political culture, as Crick suggests, then it is necessary to identify exactly how this is going to occur (p.145).

It is likely that subsequent school experiences are selectively filtered to conform to the young person's existing political beliefs. Interaction with teachers and political experiences that confirm the student's political orientations are internalized whereas those that run contrary to the student's political orientations are likely to be dismissed (Lister *et al.*, 2003).

Any democratic society must concern itself with the socialization of its citizens. If the goal of political socialization is ultimately to promote democracy and competent citizenship, then this should begin in childhood, and schools are critical to this process to reflect the spirit of democracy (Althof and Berkowitz, 2006).

#### ***2.4.3.2 Young People and Political Knowledge***

Young people's awareness of civic and political knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions, develop slowly over time and as a result of what one learns and experiences in the home, school, community, and organizations of civil society. Citizens in a democracy are always engaging in politics in actual locations, like deliberating in public meetings, claiming rights in the courts or in the home, forming groups and networks or using public spaces to articulate demands (Brown, 1995). Those experiences should 'engender the understanding that democracy requires the responsible self-governance of each individual; one cannot exist without the other' (Branson, 2003: 7).

More recently, Lister *et al.* (2003) and Levinson (2007) suggest that young people's political knowledge and support for democratic values are greater in classrooms that



encourage free discussion and participation than in traditional classrooms that emphasize rote memorization. This emphasizes the importance of political awareness and political interest.

While attention is rightly being paid to citizenship in the context of caring for others and knowing one's legal rights, the same level of attention has not been paid to preparing and encouraging people to understand and use their political rights (Hansard Society 1996 in Leicester *et al.* 2000). Thus, practices and purposes must be understood, both local and national, including the work of parliaments, councils, parties, pressure groups, and voluntary bodies. This is important 'to show how formal political activity relates to civil society, and to cultivate awareness and concern for world affairs and global issues' (QCA, 1998: 40). This political awareness, knowledge and understanding is necessary for the people to grasp both the inherent complexity of society and their rights and responsibilities within it. However, 'the relative presence or absence of political consciousness among the general public is a central problem of democratic theory' (Lawton *et al.*, 2000: 23).

Yet young people acquire knowledge about politics at school not only through formal classroom training. For example, a school system may have a mandated political curriculum with clearly defined goals, objectives, content, and activities for each grade level. However, they also acquire the knowledge about politics through informal experiences and indirect kinds of learning, such as class elections, extracurricular activities, and group interactions. A report about the school curriculum and the culture of Scotland (Scottish CCC, 1999), states that:

... an understanding of the political structures and processes, of rights, obligations, law, justice and democracy will not be sufficient. The curriculum should go further, by seeking to develop young people's insights into the major political issues and ... by fostering a sense of

active and responsible citizenship. The imperative should not be to impart mere information, but to equip young people with the capability to engage actively in issues arising in these and other fields (Section 2).

Studies looking at young people's political participation have found that a great deal of disparity exists between men and women in terms of their interest in political and electoral affairs, and in their connection with politics (Fahmy, 2003). Interest in political affairs is also directly linked with educational level and the conditions under which social integration occurs (Lister *et al.*, 2003).

#### ***2.4.3.3 Democracy and Gender Equality***

Towards the end of the 20th century, there was a rise in the use of gender-neutral language in the world. The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA, 1975) aimed to prevent gender discrimination in employment, education, and the provision and utilization of goods, facilities and services, and to realize gender equality in every sector of society.

Government of Bahrain has revealed a deep ambivalence towards gender issues over the past six years. Gender equality and women's rights have been highlighted by the pledge contained in the Constitution and the National Action Charter that 'all citizens are equal before the law in rights and duties. There is no discrimination on the basis of sex ...' and "all citizens, male and female, have the right to take part in public affairs and to enjoy political rights in the country, starting with the voting and candidacy rights in accordance with the law'. However, these rights are unevenly provided, depending on the individual's social status, sect, or gender (BDHRL, 2006: Sec.5).

Reports such as the Human Development Report (2003), BCHR (2006), and BDHRL (2006) stress the existence of gender discrimination in Bahrain. Women are discriminated against in education, employment, income, training and promotion.

A free education system is provided in Bahrain. The number of girls enrolled in intermediate and secondary schools exceeds that of boys. In fact, women outnumber men in most of the colleges in Bahrain. Young women graduating from secondary schools with higher grades as compared with young men have less success in getting government scholarships and do not have the same opportunities as men in vocational education. Competition and over-qualification are contributing to an increase in the unemployment rate among female graduates; the public sector cannot absorb more employees, and the private sector prefers to hire men (Al-Najjar, 2006). Writh (2001) maintains that women around the world have achieved higher levels of education than ever before and today represent more than 40% of the global workforce. Yet, their share of management positions remains low, with just a tiny proportion succeeding in breaking through the glass ceiling.

The educational achievements of women have yet to be translated into greater economic participation. To achieve this, discrimination against women in job opportunities must be eliminated (Human Development Report, 2003). In Bahrain, there is no policy condemning violence against women or safeguarding their welfare in the labour market. Bahrain's labour laws do not prohibit or provide protection against gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The government has so far not taken any action against employers guilty of gender discrimination. This is despite the fact that since 2001, women have participated overtly in a variety of demonstrations and political, cultural, and social activities (BCHR, 2006). Despite the implementation of equal opportunities legislation in Bahrain, there has been a reluctance to pursue the policies necessary to make gender equality a reality.



#### ***2.4.3.4 Democracy and demographic needs***

Rural and urban areas have different features and specifications regarding structure and services all over the world. In the Bahraini context, official reports reveal that educational, social, and municipal services, particularly in the villages, are inferior to those found in urban communities (BDHRL, 2006: Section 2c). A report by UNICEF (2004), for instance, states that 100% of Bahraini urban population uses clean drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, while this is not the case for rural population.

A report by BDHRL (2006) states that due to the problems that rural areas face in Bahrain, rural people have participated in demonstrations complaining about their poverty, their need of basic services, such as health centres, schools, water, electricity, housing shortages, human rights abuses, and other issues. Accordingly, public moves were taken in Bahrain to monitor all forms of discrimination. Rajab (2003) has asked for all forms of discrimination to be stopped.

In the light of the above, and due to the significance of effective citizenship education, it is important for this study to focus on two crucial variables. These are ‘gender’ and ‘place of residence’. We need to ascertain whether young males and females residing in urban and rural areas are equally assisted in developing their civic and political understandings and attitudes to enable them to become active and useful members of society.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has critically analysed the relevant literature on ‘citizenship’ and ‘citizenship education’, at an international level, while keeping in mind the Bahraini

context. The literature review makes it clear that the process of enabling young people to adopt their role as citizens, to realise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities is related to the issue of socialization. Therefore, the school has a special role to play in shaping the lives of young people. It has a major effect on the civic attitudes of children, and for teaching knowledge about citizenship responsibilities. Such values, perspectives, knowledge, and skills in civic matters, make responsible and effective civic participation possible (Rowe, 2001).

Since helping young people to acquire relevant knowledge and skills through studies of various topics or subjects is important, the most important contributions to promoting active and responsible citizenship involves giving young people democratic and political experiences that will help them to be active citizens now and later in their lives.

It can be suggested that implementation of a meaningful and effective citizenship education requires changes from the way much citizenship education has traditionally been taught. There is a need to identify precisely which school experiences have an impact on children's citizenship learning. An active and participating citizen is not confined to lesson time; such participation goes on throughout a child's school life. Pratte (1988) highlights the fact that citizenship education is perhaps needed more than ever to provide a sense of purpose, solidarity, and guidance in a fragmented and a rapidly changing world.

Thus, education for citizenship in a democracy should be a continuing goal of schools. To achieve this goal, students must learn their civil rights and responsibilities in a democratic school community. Educators, therefore, need to share ideas and work more effectively to promote responsible citizenship.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used in my research project. It starts by stating my conceptual framework, and presenting the research aim and objectives. It then justifies the methods that I adopted in collecting the data. It also discusses the sampling techniques, research instruments (survey questionnaire and interviews) and piloting. It also looks at the issues of reliability, validity, and research ethics with regard to my study.

#### **3.2 Conceptual Framework**

This section discusses the conceptual framework, which is based upon the literature review and derived from citizenship education theories and concepts. This framework acts as a foundation for my research, guides my study, and provides a foundation for both data collection and data analysis.

In the light of the understanding gained from the literature review, this framework builds on current citizenship education definitions and models. It is evident from the literature reviewed in chapter two that educators throughout the world recognize that education for democratic citizenship entails learning how to become an effective citizen in a democratic society, i.e. to participate actively in democratic life and work for the betterment of the whole society. This involves teaching and learning the fundamental processes of democracy, principles of democratic theory, structures and functions of democratic institutions, politics and the purpose of government.

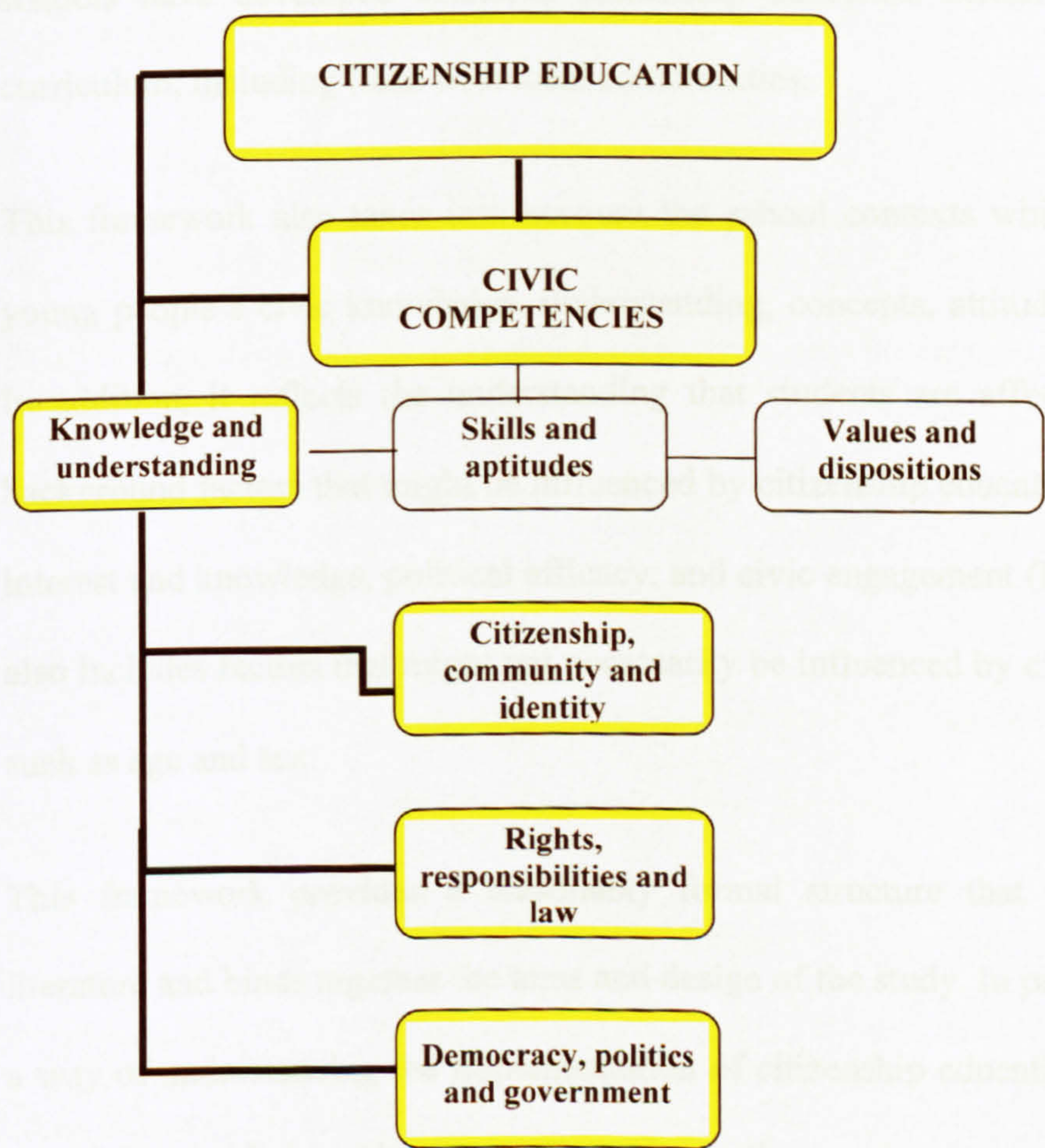


Furthermore, citizenship education includes learning about the rights and responsibilities and laws in society, which enable the citizens to govern themselves; and aims to develop understanding of the public life and affairs (QCA 1998; Bank 2004; Birzea *et al.* 2004; Breslin and Dufour 2006; Huddleston and Kerr 2006; Deuchar 2007). This framework also draws on some current citizenship education models such as citizenship education research and UK governmental reports, for example, the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), the IEA Study (1999) the Citizenship Education Scheme (QCA, 2001), and the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study by Kerr *et al.* (2003).

The models and the literature have provided valuable insights for this study. They are firmly grounded in the contemporary institutional context of citizenship education, and meet the needs of the citizenship education that Bahrain requires at this preliminary stage. These insights have helped shape the conceptual framework for my study that is organized into three domains: citizenship, community and identity; rights, responsibilities and law; democracy, politics and government. This framework offers a formal structure which focuses on planning a whole school approach to citizenship, as is presented, in particular, by the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), The IEA civic education study (1999) and QCA (2001). The framework ensures that my data collection and analysis are comparable with other citizenship studies. The following diagram presents the conceptual framework for my study:



**Figure 3.1: The conceptual framework for this study**



Citizenship education is expressed in terms of three strands forming a ‘braid’ of civic competencies (Torney-Purta and Vermeer, 2006). The three strands which include civic knowledge, civic skills and civic values provide frameworks of competencies in civic education (Chi *et al.*, 2006). Given the need for all students to acquire civic knowledge and understanding, civic skills, attitudes and values are necessary for them to lead fully equitable and participatory lives in a democratic society (Hamot *et al.*, 2005).

#### *Citizenship, Community and Identity*

This framework focuses on how young people embrace the knowledge about certain aspects of citizenship – citizenship, community and national identity; rights,



responsibilities and law; democracy, politics and government – and explores how far schools have developed effective citizenship education across the whole school curriculum, including links with local communities.

This framework also takes into account the school contexts which might influence young people's civic knowledge, understanding, concepts, attitudes, and experience. In addition, it reflects the understanding that students are affected by a range of background factors that might be influenced by citizenship education such as political interest and knowledge, political efficacy, and civic engagement (Kerr *et al.*, 2003). It also includes factors that might not necessarily be influenced by citizenship education such as age and sex.

This framework provides a reasonably formal structure that is based upon the literature and binds together the aims and design of the study. In particular, it provides a way of understanding the implementation of citizenship education, and a means of organising and linking the data collected in the three components of the study.

### **3.3 Aim and Objectives**

The main aim of the study is to examine whether young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy.

The specific objectives of the research relate to three domains, as follows:

#### ***i) Citizenship, Community and Identity***

- a. To examine young people's conception of citizenship.
- b. To identify young people's concerns about their community issues.



- c. To explore how young people perceive their identity.

***ii) Rights, Responsibilities and Law***

- b. To investigate to what extent young people are aware of their rights.
- c. To examine whether young people are aware of their responsibilities.
- d. To explore young people's awareness of the need for laws.

***iii) Democracy, Politics and Government***

- a. To identify what young people understand by the term 'democracy'.
- b. To explore to what extent young people are aware of their political role in a democracy.
- c. To investigate whether young people view their school as democratic.

The above issues were explored with reference to young people's background characteristics, i.e. gender and place of residence. These were based on the following research questions and hypotheses.

The main research questions that the inquiry sought to answer were:

1. What do young people actually understand about citizenship and democracy?
2. What do young people really need in order to improve their competency in a democracy?

### **3.4 Research Hypotheses**

A good hypothesis is a very useful aid to organising research and 'an essential part of testing for significance' (Blaikie, 2003: 178). It specifically limits the enquiry to the interaction of certain variables; it suggests the methods appropriate for collecting, analysing and interpreting the data and the resultant confirmation or rejection of the

hypothesis through empirical or experimental testing. It gives a clear indication of the extent of knowledge the participants obtain (Fraenkel and Wallen 1990; Opie 2004).

To examine the civic and political knowledge of the young people graduating from secondary schools in Bahrain, the research proposed specific hypotheses. This was done in the form of one primary hypothesis and three secondary hypotheses, which were based on the fundamental aspects of citizenship education that were presented in the conceptual framework of this study.

The main hypothesis of the inquiry was:

There is a statistically significant relationship between the young people's background characteristics, i.e. gender and place of residence, and the levels of civic and political knowledge they hold at the level of 0.05.

In order to test the main hypothesis, the following three secondary hypotheses needed to be tested:

There is a statistically significant relationship at the  $p < 0.05$  level, between young people's background characteristics (i.e. gender and place of residence) and their conceptions of:

- (i) Citizenship, community and identity
- (ii) Rights, responsibilities and law
- (iii) Democracy, politics and government

Each of these sets of relationships was explored further through the analysis of qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews.

### 3.5 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is the systematic and scientific investigation used to collect and analyze quantitative data. It is concerned with quantifying relationships between variables (independent variables) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population (Gray, 2004). This study aimed at quantifying relationships between young people's background characteristics, i.e. gender and place of residence, and their conceptions of some aspects related to citizenship. This study is mainly descriptive. It has measured young people's conceptions, perceptions and attitudes, as they are (Hopkins, 2000).

Quantitative research is appropriate in situations in which there is pre-existing knowledge, which permits the use of a standardised data collection method (the survey), and in which the aim is to document prevalence or test research questions (Borg and Gall, 1996). The use of this methodology is supported by Cohen *et al.* (2000: 73) when they indicate that 'if the purpose of the research is to make generalisable comments then a survey approach might be desirable, using some form of stratified sample'.

Quantitative research is often used to gain a general sense of phenomena and to form theories that can be further tested by using qualitative research methods which are often used to gain greater insights and better understanding (Creswell, 2003). According to Gorard (2001: 3), whatever approach the researcher uses, the researcher 'must start from a quantitative basis'.



### **3.6 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is the methodology in which qualitative data are collected and analyzed (Gray, 2004). The data in this kind of study are recorded in words, remain as words throughout the analysis, and the findings are reported in words (Blaikie, 2003). Fischer (2005) argues that unlike quantitative research, qualitative research involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour. This study seeks ‘to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations and what their perspectives are on particular issues’ (Woods, 2001: 3). Woods maintains that:

Qualitative researchers are interested in how understandings are formed, how meanings are negotiated, how roles are developed, how a curriculum works out, how a policy is formulated and implemented (p. 4).

Generally speaking, the main justification for the use of qualitative methods was the ability to provide more insight or a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Hanson and Grimmer, 2007). In this sense, meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach and the researcher in this study is interested in how young people make sense of their lives.

### **3.7 Mixed Methods Approach**

The research design of my study was informed by the notion of ‘fitness for purpose’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 73). That is, the research problem defines the most appropriate method (Silverman, 2005). The researcher ‘should use a method that is appropriate to what the research is trying to find out’ (Punch, 1998: 244).

This study examines the civic and political knowledge of the young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain. Accordingly, in order to get an in-depth and broad understanding of Bahraini young people's conceptions, perceptions, attitudes and experiences related to citizenship in a democracy, I developed a research design, which uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. These two methods were triangulated to provide convergent evidence for drawing inferences. Triangulation of different methods provides a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation from more than one source of information and from more than one perspective (Cohen *et al.* 2000; Gorard 2002). Multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003).

Quantitative research typically seeks detail in certain aspects of correlations between variables. By contrast, for qualitative research, 'detail' is found in the precise particulars of such matters as people's understandings and interactions (Silverman, 2005). However, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and a good quality piece of quantitative research is often dependent on the findings of descriptive studies, based upon qualitative techniques (Gibson *et al.*, 2004).

Indeed, in choosing a method, everything depends upon what we are trying to find out and no method of research, quantitative or qualitative, is intrinsically better than any other (Silverman, 2005). Mahoney (2000) argues, 'It is particularly important for the well-being of educational research that we do not waste time in methodological 'paradigm wars' instead of concentrating on the development of all methods'. To some extent 'all methods of educational research deal with qualities, even when the observed qualities are counted' (Gorard, 2001: 6). In this sense, Gorard notes 'words can be counted, and numbers can be descriptive' (p.346).

Indeed, according to Gorard (2002), the quality of educational research is increased by conducting multi-approach research. Here, the qualitative data can be used to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same subjects or site (Silverman, 2005). As stated above, many studies adopt both qualitative and quantitative components and it is common for descriptive statistics and qualitative findings to be presented together (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003).

In the 'quantitative' paradigm, the researcher is independent and external. He or she is objective and focuses on the facts, reduces phenomena to the simplest elements, and chooses large samples. While in the 'qualitative' paradigm, the researcher is part of what is observed, and focuses upon meaning and interpretation, tries to understand what is happening, and looks at the totality of each situation, develops ideas, and deals with small in-depth samples (Cohen *et al.* 2000 and Gibson *et al.* 2004).

'Without a combination of approaches, we are often left with no clear way of deciding between competing conclusions' (Gorard, 2001: 5). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the quantitative data collected from a survey questionnaire was followed by gathering qualitative data from interviews. This was done in order to explore the issues addressed in the questionnaire in detail.

### **3.8 The Survey**

Surveys are a generalised means of data collection conducted mainly through the use of questionnaires (Burton, 2000). 'It is difficult to imagine a large-scale survey without the use of a carefully constructed questionnaire' (Gray, 2004: 187). The survey is 'an investigation into one or more variables in a population that may involve the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data' (Gray, 2004: 406). For the



purpose of this study, I conducted a survey to collect data from a predetermined population at one point in time. This kind of research is called a cross-sectional survey, whereby subjects are usually examined once (Fraenkel and Wallen 1990; Hopkins 2000; Blaxter *et al.* 2001). There are no typical formats for a survey; they are designed or modified to meet the needs of the researcher or fit the topic of research (Burton, 2000).

A survey 'is used to scan a wide field of populations in order to measure or describe any generalised features' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 171). Therefore, the survey appeared to be the most suitable approach for this kind of research, being conducted in this study because it can be used to gather large scale data (Anderson and Arsenault, 2001), represent a wide population and gather both numerical and textual data (Bell, 1999). The survey is an extremely flexible research method that helps to examine the characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, and intentions of [the young people in this study] (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

In the quantitative survey research, 'models are based on human characteristics and processes that constitute a form of reality that may occur under a wide variety of conditions and thus can be generalised to some degree' (Borg and Gall, 1996: 383). This means that surveys allow generalisations to be made (Burton, 2000). Accordingly, the findings from my research might be considered widely generalisable. It was clear that the main objectives of this study were not only to gain insights of young people's civic and political knowledge and understanding, but also to seek an understanding of the status of citizenship education in the schools of Bahrain prior to its formal introduction in the schools.

In this study, there are various advantages in using a quantitative survey questionnaire; firstly, it is useful because it allows a wide response range; secondly, it facilitates an analytical approach exploring relationships between variables, so this study aims at exploring the relationship between young people's background characteristics and their conceptions, perceptions and attitudes; thirdly, it is easy to analyse, as data entry and tabulation for nearly all surveys can be easily done with computer software packages; fourthly, it is familiar to most people and nearly everyone has had some experience completing questionnaires and it generally does not make people apprehensive. Furthermore, it offers the possibility of complete anonymity, which can be very useful in obtaining opinions, which are unlikely to be discussed in front of fellow students (Borg and Gall 1996; Bell 1999; Burton 2000; Cohen *et al.* 2000; Pelsang and Smith 2000; Anderson and Arsenault 2001; Gorard 2001; Opie 2004).

Gillham (2000) notes that no single method has been so abused as the questionnaire. As using questionnaires 'is not problem free' (Opie, 2004), and has limitations, the survey in this study was followed by an in-depth study conducted through interviews with a smaller sample gathering qualitative data to shed more light on the civic and political knowledge of the young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain in relation to their background characteristics.

### **3.9 In Depth Study**

The main source of qualitative data in this study came from in-depth interviews. The structure of the interviews was determined through an examination of the quantitative data, collected through the survey questionnaire, and which identified issues to be addressed in the interviews. Borg and Gall (1996) state:

Interview studies must be built upon the findings of previous studies. Earlier surveys are especially useful as they often permit the investigator to explore changes over time (p.444).

Interviewing is a research strategy that aims to move away from fixed answer questions (Burton, 2000: 196). Compared to questionnaires 'interviews can yield rich material and can often put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses' (Bell, 1999: 135). It is interesting to know how many people feel positively or negatively about something, but the intention of qualitative inquiry is to ascertain 'what' they feel, and 'why' they feel that way, 'who' feel the way they do, and 'where', 'when' and 'how' (Basit, 2003). Basit argues that 'such a detailed scrutiny clearly cannot be carried out by only using numbers, percentages and statistics' (p.151). To this end, the interview is used, in this study, to gather descriptive data in the young people's own words so that 'the researcher can develop insights on how [young people] interpret some piece of the world' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 95). The objective of qualitative interviews is to access the 'world' in terms of the people being researched and to seek responses for a particular purpose (Gillham, 2004). In the present study, an important step toward achieving this objective was to structure interviews in order to focus on particular topics that emerged from the preliminary questionnaire data.

Different types of qualitative interviews can be employed, sometimes at different stages of the same study: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Bell, 1999). A structured interview can take the form of a questionnaire or checklist that is completed by the interviewer rather than by the respondent. The problem about this format is that, the interviewer decides what questions to ask - and may not be asking the important questions (Bell, 1999). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) comment that:



When the interviewer controls the content too rigidly, when the subject cannot tell his or her story personally in his or her own words, the interview falls out of the qualitative range (p.96).

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are open-ended, which encourages the subject to talk in the area of interest and allows the researcher to probe more deeply, picking up on the topics and issues the respondent initiates. The open-ended nature of the questions allows the subjects to answer from their own frame of reference rather than from one structured by prearranged questions (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 3). In this type of interview, the subject plays a stronger role in defining the content of the interview and the direction of the study. Moreover, this type of interview is centred on a topic that may produce a wealth of valuable data, but 'such interviews require a great deal of expertise to control and a great deal of time to analyse' (Bell, 1999: 138). Some see this type of interview as a kind of guided conversation (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). However, Bell (1999) notes that:

Conversation about a topic may be interesting and may produce useful insights into a problem, but it has to be remembered that an interview is more than just an interesting conversation. You need certain information and methods have to be devised to obtain that information if at all possible (p. 138).

Thus, it is important to note that the type of interview selected depends on the nature of the topic and what the researcher wishes to find out (Bell, 1999). A semi-structured interview was thought to be the most suitable kind of interview for the present study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) note that, in semi-structured interviews, the use of the follow-up questions is important to get more depth and understanding about an idea, a concept, a theme, an event, or an issue so that the information is balanced and thorough and enables the researcher to explore unanticipated responses and obtain nuanced answers. Additionally, in the present study, semi-structured interviews

enabled the young people to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regarded situations from their own point of view. In this sense, 'the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life; it is part of life itself' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 267).

Thus, for the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was formulated, (Appendix III) where topics and open-ended questions were written but 'the exact sequence and wording did not have to be followed with each respondent' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 278). The interview, although relatively open-ended, was focused around particular topics and was guided by some general questions. With this kind of interviews, the researcher is 'confident of getting comparable data across subjects' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 95-96). Bell (1999) suggests:

In some interviews where specific information is required, it is generally wise to establish some sort of structure or you may end with a huge amount of information, no time to exploit it and still without the information you need (p.139).

The main purpose of the interview in this study was to gain insights into students' knowledge and understanding of citizenship and to concentrate on the concrete details of the young people's present experience of citizenship, and their own understanding of their experience. I wanted to understand, in considerable detail, how participants thought and how they came to develop the perspectives they hold. This goal often 'leads the researcher to spend considerable time with subjects' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 3) 'eliciting rich data on [their] views, attitudes, and the meanings that underpin their lives and behaviours' (Gray, 2004: 213).

### **3.10 Selecting the Sample**

Sampling refers to the process of selecting individuals who will participate in the study, who will be observed, questioned, or tested (Opie, 2004). The major task in sampling is to select a sample from the defined population by an appropriate technique that ensures the sample is representative of the population and as far as possible not biased in any way (Burns, 2000). When the target population is large and inaccessible to the researcher, then a representative sample is required; ‘it is tedious and expensive to study such large populations’; and sometimes it is ‘impossible’ and ‘unnecessary’ (Blaikie, 2003: 160-161). Hopkins (2000) and Gorard (2001) note that the researcher almost always has to work with a sample of subjects rather than the full population.

While it is difficult to test the defined population, findings can only be generalised from the sample to the population if the sample accurately reflects the proportion or relative frequency of relevant characteristics in the defined population (Burn, 2000). Therefore, as we can see, in order to generalise from the sample to the population, the sample has to be representative of the population. The safest way to ensure that it is representative is to use a random selection procedure or a stratified random sampling procedure, to make sure that he/she has proportional representation of population subgroups (e.g., sexes, races, regions). Therefore, considering the discussion above, considerable care had to be taken in selecting the survey sample.

#### ***3.10.1 Survey Sample***

For the purpose of this study, a survey was conducted to collect data. Accordingly, in order to design and conduct a successful survey, two main components in determining whom to survey need to be kept in mind. The first is to determine the ‘target



population' to successfully meet the research aims and objectives; the second is to decide how many people need to be surveyed. In my study, sampling techniques were employed to produce a sample which was, as far as possible, representative of the population as a whole.

Care has to be taken to ensure that the survey sample is truly representative. 'The sample must be large to accomplish what is intended by the analysis' (Gorard, 2001: 13). The larger the sample, the more precisely it reflects the target group. If researchers decide to carry out a survey, they need to consider what characteristics of the total population need to be represented in the sample to enable them to say with confidence that the sample is reasonably representative (Bell, 1999). According to Hopkins (2000), the safest way to ensure that it is representative is to use a random selection procedure.

In simple random sampling, the only one way to go about the selection of a sample is the use of a random number generator. This is used to select cases one after another from the sampling frame (Gorard, 2001), which is the total population. Gorard further notes that:

Random sampling is free of the systematic bias that might stem from choices made by the researcher, and it enables the analyst to estimate the probability of any finding actually occurring solely by chance (p.19).

A more complex form of sampling is stratified random sampling, which involves dividing the population into homogenous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). For example, in order to obtain a sample representative of the whole population in terms of gender, a random selection of subjects from both male and female groups must be taken (Blaikie, 2003).

Bell (1999) maintains that if the researcher decides to include 50 per cent of the wider population, a random sample gives each of the individuals concerned an equal chance of being selected. A stratified random sample is a two-stage process: Firstly, dividing the wider population into homogeneous and discrete groups (strata) if possible; secondly, randomly selecting the sample within these groups. The difficulty with this method is that stratification requires that the researcher knows the proportions in each strata of the population, and it also becomes increasingly difficult as more variables are added. The advantage of stratified random sampling is that it increases the likelihood of representativeness. It ensures that any key characteristics of individuals in the population are included in the same proportions in the sample. This method, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990: 77) is 'the best choice', and much more feasible than simple random sampling and more representative than cluster sampling.

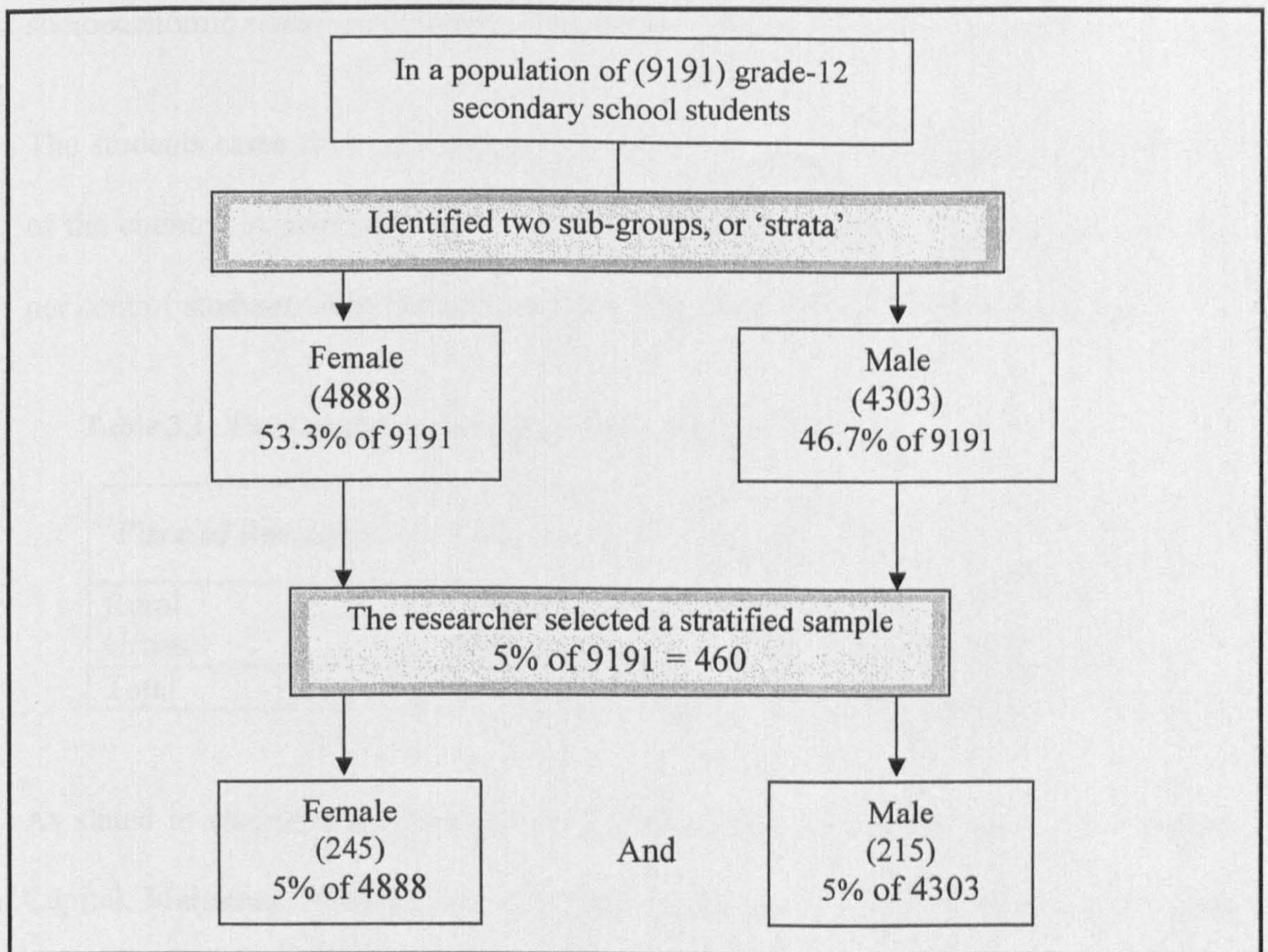
In this study, a stratified random sampling approach was adopted because it increases the quality of the sample by reducing the likelihood of strata characteristics distorting the results (Gorard, 2001). The nature of this study required that the sample be 12th grade students at secondary level for three reasons: First, the study was to examine the background civic and political knowledge of students graduating from government schools of Bahrain to investigate the extent to which they had gained the knowledge, skills and values the national curriculum provides for Bahraini students. Second, to meet the aims of the research, it was necessary that the subjects had considerable experience of the Bahraini education system, and be able to complete a survey questionnaire which contained high-level cognitive questions related to some aspects of citizenship. Third, the students were young people aged 18 years who had started to get their civic rights as adults and had begun to shape their attitudes and values as

well. Therefore, these secondary school students in grade-12 were deemed to be more appropriate for the study than those who were in the lower levels of schooling. In summary, this cohort of students was selected because they represented the outcome of the educational system in Bahrain, particularly in regard to citizenship education.

I aimed to obtain as representative a range of responses as possible to enable me to fulfil the objectives of my study and to provide answers to key questions. The target population consisted of 9191 students, aged 17-18 years, who were registered in grade-12 in 2005/2006. This included 4888 female students (53.2%) and 4303 male students (46.8%). Based on this number, I decided to choose five per cent from the total students' population for the study ( $5\% \text{ of } 9191 = 459.55$ ). This was a manageable sample which still enabled me to generalise from the findings. Hence, 460 students from grade-12 were selected within one month. They were chosen randomly (by using a table of random numbers) from all secondary schools (12 boys' and 14 girls'). I then determined the number from each stratum to be sampled: Girls' ( $5\% \text{ of } 4888 = 244.40$ ); Boys' ( $5\% \text{ of } 4303 = 215.15$ ). Following this, permission to carry out the survey was obtained and the Girls' and Boys' schools were approached to administer the survey.



**Figure 3.2: A stratified random sample**



Thus, the sample of the study was a stratified sample of 460 (215 male and 245 female) Bahraini students in grade-12 in secondary third level, who had experienced the formal national curriculum implemented by the Bahraini Ministry of Education. The average age of the students was 18 years. All students were at the same level during the entire study year (from December 3, 2005 until May 20, 2006). Figure 3.2 presents the sample according to gender.

In all studies, subject characteristics can affect the relationship the researcher is investigating. Researchers should, therefore, limit their effect either by using a less heterogeneous sample of subjects or preferably by measuring the characteristics and including them in the analysis (Burns 2000; Hopkins 2000). Accordingly, researchers must report sufficient information about their subjects to identify the population group



from which they were drawn. For human subjects, variables such as sex, age, and socioeconomic status are common, depending on the focus of the study (Burns, 2000).

The students came from socioeconomic backgrounds reflective of the social structure of the country. A sample of 54.5 per cent of students was from rural areas, and 45.4 per cent of students were from urban areas. For more details see the table below:

**Table 3.1: The sample according to place of residence**

Place of Residence	Total	%	Male		Female	
			count	%	count	%
Rural	251	54.5	106	23.0	145	31.5
Urban	209	45.4	109	23.7	100	21.7
Total	460	100	215	46.7	245	53.3

As stated in chapter one, there are five governorates in Bahrain. These are: Middle, Capital, Muharraq, Northern, and Southern. In the sample, 38.5 per cent (20.9% male and 17.6% female) were from the Middle governorate; 22.4 per cent (14.6% male and 7.8% female) were from the Capital, Manama. 17.0 per cent (5.2% male and 11.7% female) were from Muharraq and 17 per cent (5.9% male and 11.1% female) were from the Northern governorate while only 5.2 per cent of female students were from the Southern governorate. Each school enrolls students from a given catchment area, which contains families who originate from different areas of Bahrain. This diversity provided a range of students for the study in terms of their views and background knowledge of citizenship and politics.

The students came from families with varied backgrounds. Their parents had received education at different levels. For example, the research revealed that 9.1 per cent of mothers were postgraduates, 29.1 per cent were graduates, 33.9 per cent had finished secondary education, and 23 per cent had finished elementary education while 4.8 per

cent of mothers had no formal qualifications at all. The highest percentage of mothers was those who had received secondary education and who were undergraduates. Considering fathers, 4.6 per cent of fathers were postgraduates, 24.3 per cent were graduates, 33.7 per cent had completed secondary education, and 28 per cent had finished elementary education, while only 9.3 per cent of fathers had no formal qualifications. It can be observed that while students' parents were relatively well qualified overall, a higher percentage of mothers was qualified compared to the fathers.

According to the Bahraini literature and my personal observations, gender and place of residence can have a profound influence on Bahraini young people's perceptions of citizenship. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, due to the shortage of time available, and for reasons of brevity in the study, I focussed on these two crucial variables, i.e. 'Gender' and 'Place of Residence'. There were two reasons for investigating students' background characteristics in such a way; first, to limit the research so that it focussed on how the students' background characteristics affected specific civic and political knowledge and understanding; second, to identify possible reasons for the current problems in the citizenship education curriculum and to find possible solutions for these problems.

### ***3.10.2 Sample for In-depth Study***

As noted above, the study sample was a stratified sample of 460 (215 male and 245 female) Bahraini students in grade-12 in secondary level and represented five per cent of the whole study population (9191). To be consistent with the survey study sample, the interview sample comprised 22 students, which was five per cent of the survey sample, twelve girls and ten boys. Moreover, half of these selected were from rural



areas and the other half of them were from urban areas to examine a range of different experiences.

Four Secondary Schools in Bahrain from the Middle governorate were used to conduct the interviews. Two schools (one boys' and one girls') were in rural areas and two schools (one boys' and one girls') were in urban areas.

### **3.11 Formulating the Instruments**

#### ***3.11.1 Devising the Questionnaire***

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for gathering information from respondents (Anderson and Arsenault (2001). 'Questionnaires are superior in providing descriptive, inferential and explanatory information' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 171). In the process of data collection in my study, the core components of citizenship, as identified earlier (See Figure 3.1), were used to inform questionnaire design and the conceptual framework of the study. These core components were based on the researcher's wide reading on the subject in both Arabic and English, and informed the design of the questionnaire. These core components, which provide the framework for this research, were explored through surveying a representative sample of secondary school students who completed a questionnaire. The questionnaire investigated students' knowledge and understanding of citizenship in a democracy with respect to the three domains of citizenship, community and identity; rights, responsibilities, and law; democracy, politics, and government.

A panel of subject experts (judges) reviewed the research instruments of this study. A systematic examination of the survey questionnaire's content and format was

undertaken. Six judges reviewed the items and commented on whether the items covered a representative sample of the contents that needed to be included. These judges were as follows: The Director of Citizenship Education and Human Rights Centre, University of Leeds; Two Social Studies' specialists and citizenship education curriculum developers of Secondary education in the Ministry of Education Bahrain, both of whom had PhDs; A Professor of Sociology who was Head of the College of Arts in the University of Bahrain; A Bahraini philosopher who was the ruler's consultant on cultural affairs and was Head of the College of Higher Studies at Gulf University; The Head of the Research and Development Centre at the Ministry of Education, who was one of the citizenship education specialists at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) .

The judges looked at the objectives of the study, read over the items/questions, and responded to the following question for each item 'Is the knowledge measured by this item essential/useful or not essential/not useful to the performance of the issue under investigation?' In other words, does each item measure one or more of the objectives. They also placed a cross in front of any objective not assessed by any of the items. In addition, they evaluated the appropriateness of the format of the instrument. Almost all the judges agreed that the items presented in my research instruments were essential and useful. This meant that the items/questions addressed in the questionnaire and the interview schedule were drawn from current citizenship education studies and related to the core elements of citizenship education which should be taught to Bahraini students during the 12 years of schooling. I revised some of the questions and sent the questionnaire again to the judges. This time they approved all the questions.

The survey questionnaire (Appendix II) consisted of seven pages including the covering page, and comprised 35 questions. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section one presented a general personal background of the sample, including the research variables (q1 to q8). Section two examined young people's conceptions of citizenship, their concerns about community issues, and their perceptions about their identity (q9 to q16). Section three investigated the young people's awareness of their rights and their responsibilities in a democratic society, and explored their understanding of the need for laws in their society (q11- q17 to q21). Section four explored young people's knowledge about democracy, the working of democratic institutions and the electoral system; and examined their awareness of their political role in a democratic system (q22 to q29). This section also investigated the role of the school in the development of democratic citizenship and explored if young people viewed their school as a democratic institution (q30 to q35).

The survey questionnaire was composed of mainly closed questions (e.g. requiring yes or no answers, multiple-choice, Likert Scales and ranking questions). It also included a few open-ended questions, which permit respondents to reply to questions in their own words and express themselves more fully (Borg and Gall 1996; Cohen *et al.* 2000; Anderson and Arsenault 2001); they lead to interesting or unexpected responses (Gray, 2004) and give us important clues for further investigation (Pabst *et al.*, 2001). The importance of using both closed and open-ended questions is noted by Cohen *et al.* (2000), who state that:

If only closed items are used, the questionnaire may lack coverage or authenticity; if only open items are used, respondents may be unwilling to write their answers for one reason or another (p.129).



The survey questionnaire of this study was paper-based and was in Arabic. Paper-and-pencil forms allow the respondents to browse the scope and content of the survey and give them the freedom to answer questions in any order (Norman, *et al.*, 2001). This kind of questionnaire is often distributed by mail, but because of the generally low response rates of mailed surveys, some type of personal contact is generally recommended (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Personal contact with respondents has been found to have a positive effect on the rate of questionnaires returned. Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 160) argues that self-administrated (face-to-face) questionnaire is more like a highly structured interview, but note that it is time-consuming for the researcher; while postal surveys may generate possibly poorer answers because the respondent has no one available to answer any queries. Thus, the availability of the researcher can be an advantage in terms of explaining and clarifying the purpose of the study or particular items (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore, Opie (2004) maintains that:

Self-administrated questionnaires cause little problem. They are generally easily distributed, explanation of purpose and identification and correction of any misunderstandings can be made, control over order of completion can be maintained and, almost inevitably, a high response rate is achievable (p.105).

The researcher self-administered the questionnaires. I believe that self-administering them provided me with opportunities to observe the young people's attitudes, opinions, and comments towards the research instrument and the research topic. The study was conducted at secondary schools in Bahrain at the end of the second semester of the academic year 2005-2006. The questionnaire required 45 minutes (one class period) to complete and was collected by the researcher after completion. The questionnaire was piloted before the main study to ensure reliability and validity. In my study, the survey provided cross-sectional descriptions of young people's self-

perception of the role played by various agents in shaping their perceptions of different aspects of citizenship. However, the qualitative nature of some of the data sought made it judicious to use open-ended questions, which could be triangulated with the interview data.

### ***3.11.2 Designing the Interview Schedule***

I used a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct individual face-to-face interviews with students in the third level of secondary school. The use of this type of schedule is supported by Burton (2000) who maintains that the interview schedule is useful because it acts as a prompt. In addition, Bell (1999: 140) notes ‘careful preparation of an interview guide or schedule helps the researcher to record responses under prepared headings’. The interview schedule is a kind of framework, which is established before interviewing takes place. This helps to ensure that the researcher gets reasonably comparable data from all respondents (Borg and Gall, 1996: 445). In addition, being clear in mind about what the researcher must cover in the interview and being confident in the interview schedule is vital if the interview is to be a success (Burton, 2000).

Therefore, a framework was established by selecting topics to guide the interview. The core elements of the conceptual framework of my study (Section 3.2), was also used as an initial framework to provide the structure for the interview schedule of my study.

The interview schedule (Appendix III) consisted of 30 questions and was divided into four sections. First, young people were asked personal questions (q1-q2). Second, they were asked about their conceptions of the three domains of the study: citizenship, community, and national identity (q3 to q8; q30); rights, responsibilities and law (q9

to q17; q25-q26); democracy, politics and government (q18 to q24; q27) and the whole school curriculum (q22-q28-q29).

However, there was an allowance for open themes to emerge that could either fall within or outside the broad structure. That means, the respondents were allowed considerable latitude for their answers within the framework. Certain specific questions were asked, but respondents were given the freedom to talk about the topic and give their views in their own time, as recommended by Bell (1999).

I listed all the topics in which I was interested and then discussed these with colleagues to see whether and in what ways it was possible to introduce them into a 'normal' conversation before devising my interview schedule. These formed the basis of the interview schedule along with the themes that emerged from the questionnaire data. I addressed these themes in my interview schedule (Appendix III). In designing interview schedules, the opening and closing questions are of particular importance. Burton (2000: 207) notes that starting with a very general question is 'very helpful to build rapport with the interviewee'. She also notes that the closing question is equally important to ensure that the interviewee has a sense of closure.

The semi-structured interviews that I conducted were fully tape-recorded. This is because tape-recorded interviews provide a far more reliable record of the interview than note taking. Burton (2000: 209) states that 'notes are not only very slow but open to doubts about validity' as it would be almost impossible for the interviewer to record the content of the interview accurately onto paper. Furthermore, in my study, tape recording was useful as it allowed me to check the wording of any statement that I might wish to quote and 'to revisit areas of the interview for further analysis or to clear up any ambiguities' (Bell, 1999: 140). However, Burton (2000) notes:



While tape recording is undeniably helpful, it cannot record mannerisms or other non-verbal events during the interview. Therefore, it is important to note such events and to spend some time after each interview completing a research diary in which comments on the interviewee's mannerisms or other non-verbal communications can be stored to be used later in the analysis (p.209).

Thus, a major advantage of the interview is that it provides insights into the way a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc.) to provide information that a written response would conceal (Burton 2000; Bogdan and Biklen 2003).

Furthermore, in the interview schedule closed questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no' were avoided; and the aim of the questions was not to challenge, but to make clear' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). In addition, the language of the questions must be understandable to the respondents (Bell 1999). As stated earlier, the language of the interviews was Arabic. Also, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2003):

No rules can always be applied across all interview situations, but, in general, interviewing requires flexibility, trying different techniques, including jokes, gentle challenges, or sometimes sharing experiences with them (p.97).

During the interviews, I was particularly interested in finding out the young people's way of viewing the world; and to do this, it is important to develop the skills of listening to 'get at' the subject in question as 'Good listening usually stimulates good talking' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 97),. As a result, I made a point of listening carefully to what the young people were saying while treating them as the experts of the topic and giving them due respect.

However, according to Bell (1999: 142), 'interviewing is not easy and many

researchers have found it difficult to strike the balance between complete objectivity and trying to put the interviewee at ease'. Nevertheless, it is likely that 'good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 95). I tried to put the interviewees at ease by choosing a comfortable place to conduct the face to face interviews. In addition, I introduced myself to the interviewee to build a good relationship. I explained the aims of the interview and assured the interviewees that their responses would be used for the purpose of the research only.

### **3.12 Pilot Study**

#### ***3.12.1 Purpose***

Piloting should be the preliminary step to the main study, mirroring the method, approach and questions, and checking the validity and reliability of the instrument. A pilot study is very important for survey design (Cohen *et al.* 2000; Opie 2004). It enables modifications to take place so that subjects in the main study experience no difficulties in completing it (Anderson and Arsenault 2001; Opie 2004). Bell (1999) notes that:

All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable [the researcher] to remove any items which do not yield usable data (p.128).

Bell (1999: 128) further states that the purpose of piloting is 'to get the bugs out of the instrument'. The purpose of carrying out a pilot study is to develop, adapt, or check the feasibility of techniques, to determine the reliability of measures, and/or to calculate how big the final sample needs to be. In the latter case, Hopkins (2000) maintains that the pilot should have the same sampling procedure and techniques as in

the larger study. Furthermore, wording questions is not as easy as it seems; and ‘careful piloting is necessary to ensure that all questions mean the same to all respondents’ (Bell, 1999: 14).

### ***3.12.2 Procedure***

In this study, the questionnaire and the interview schedule were piloted with a group of students, similar in their general characteristics to the target population, before using them in the main study. Accordingly, two schools (one boys’ and one girls’) were selected randomly and a letter was sent to the principals of the schools asking for their permission to approach their students to pilot the research instruments.

The questionnaire was piloted with one class of 30 students from grade 12 in each school. Thus, the sample consisted of 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls) chosen on the basis of convenience by the school administrators. These students were asked to complete the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interview schedule was also piloted and four students (two male and two female) from grade 12, two of whom were from a rural area and the other two from an urban area, were chosen randomly from each of the above two schools to pilot the interview schedule. Piloting reveals ‘flaws in the questions, inadequacies in the coding system, gaps in interviewer training, and other problems that must be solved before research data can be collected’ (Borg and Gall, 1996: 445). Therefore, as a result of the pilot studies, the questionnaire and the interview schedule were modified, as explained below, before data were collected for the main study.



### ***3.12.3. Questionnaire***

After piloting some comments were made about the questionnaire by the students. Firstly, some questions were ambiguous, and the students had difficulty in giving reasons for their answer. For example:

Q9: Do you consider yourself to be a citizen of Bahrain? Yes ☐; No ☐; Not sure ☐;

Give reasons for your answer.

It was suggested the question be rewritten as:

(a) If yes, what makes you feel like a Bahraini citizen? (b) If no, what prevents you from feeling like a Bahraini citizen?

Secondly, the following questions were also rewritten to make them clearer: Q13, Q17, Q18, and Q20 in section one; Q23 and Q27 in section two; Q30 and Q35 in section three.

Thirdly, certain words were added to give the respondents more choice: in Q34, 'Others (please state)' was added; in Q21 'Not sure' was added; in Q32 'No time' was added; and in Q16 'Give reasons for your answer' was added.

In the light of the pilot study, the questionnaire was revised before it was used in the main study.

### ***3.12.4. Interview Schedule***

As a result of piloting, some changes were made to the interview schedule. Some questions in the interview schedule needed to be rephrased, such as Q8; Q9; Q18 and Q19. For example, Q19 was, 'What is the role of the family/community/school in preparing young citizens to participate in a democratic society?' It was rephrased and split into three questions as follows:

What is the role of the family in preparing its children to: (a) be good citizen;  
(b) participate in a democratic society?

What is the role of the school in preparing students to: (a) be good citizen;  
(b) participate in a democratic society?

What is the role of the community in preparing young citizens to: (a) be good citizen;  
(b) participate in a democratic society?

Some questions were removed from the interview schedule because they were repetitive. Other questions were added, for example, Q13 'Who protects your rights as a citizen?'; 'Q27 'Do you personally have an interest in politics? Why/ why not?' and Q29 'What can your school do to be 'democratic' / more 'democratic'?'

### **3.13 Data Collection for the Main Study**

Gaining access to the sample, (Secondary School students), involved various formal procedures. My study involved data collection in two stages: First, the survey and second, the in-depth study.

#### ***3.13.1 The Survey***

At the first stage of this study, I used the questionnaire to gather quantitative data from 460 students in the third level of secondary school. The questionnaire was in Arabic. In order to administer the questionnaire, I wrote a formal letter, accompanied by my research instruments, explaining the purpose of my research to the Ministry of Education. After receiving a positive response from the Ministry, I sent a letter to the principals (see Appendix I) of the twenty-eight chosen schools explaining the nature of the research in order to seek their permission to administer the survey questionnaire (see Appendix II) to grade-12 students who would be chosen randomly to participate

in my study. In the letter, I assured them of the confidentiality of the data. The following table shows the sample drawn from the schools:

**Table 3.2: Sample needed for the survey drawn from each Secondary School**

<u>245</u>	<u>Female students</u>	= 16 girls from each school
15 schools		
<u>215</u>	<u>Male students</u>	= 16 boys from each school
13 schools		

The students were chosen randomly by the following procedures: First, the schools were asked to provide a numbered list of students’ names that were in grade-12. Next, a Table of Random Numbers was used to select the sample. I then proceeded to write down any number, within the range of population needed, until the first 16 numbers (16 female students) in each school had been selected. After that, the names of the students selected were recorded, and the schools were asked to gather them in a room to complete the questionnaire on an agreed day. The same process was used with boys’ schools with approximately 16 students from each school participating in the study.

Once permission had been granted, telephone calls were made to all the schools to arrange appointments to administer the questionnaire to the student sample. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire in a 45 minutes class period in the presence of the researcher.

Before handing out the questionnaire, I explained what the research was about in detail and answered any questions that the students had about it. To maximise the response rate, a check was made at the end to ensure that there was an answer to every question (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). I did that by going round the class and explaining the



questions to the students in cases where there was some ambiguity. The questionnaire was collected at the end of the class period ensuring a hundred per cent response rate. The questionnaire was followed up with semi-structured interviews with 22 students, chosen from four different schools.

### ***3.13.2 The In-depth Study***

In the second stage of this study, I used the interview schedule to conduct individual face-to-face interviews with 22 students in the third level of secondary school. The interview schedule was in Arabic and the interviews were conducted in the same language. A letter was sent to four secondary schools from the Middle governorate (two Girls' and two Boys') seeking their permission to provide the required number of students from grade-12 to be interviewed in each school. This included six girls and five boys from two schools in the rural areas and the same number of students from the other two schools in the urban areas.

The aim of my research was to address issues about young people's rights and responsibilities in their home, school, and community; their interpretation of their community's social, economic, educational and political issues; and how they saw themselves as individuals responsible for making a change in their society. Therefore, an interview schedule was needed to allow me explore these issues. My role was to follow up ideas, probe responses at the right time and, if necessary, investigate motives and feelings. The semi-structured interviews that I conducted were fully tape-recorded, transcribed and translated.

I sought permission from the students before tape recording the interviews. This was important because 'the researcher should never record without permission' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 104). All the students agreed to have the interview tape-recorded.

### 3.14 Validity

Validity is concerned with the degree to which a method, a test or a research tool actually measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe (Bell 1999; Wellington 2000). It has to do with whether the methods, approaches and techniques actually relate to the issues one has been exploring (Blaxter *et al.*, 2001).

Issues of validity reflect various aspects of the research. As Opie (2004) suggests, there is an instrument (a method, test or tool), there are the results of the use of the instrument (actual measurements), and there are the claims, objectives or hypotheses, of the researcher (what is supposed to be measured), and the term ‘validity refers to them collectively, not separately’ (p.68). Whatever the procedure for collecting data, it should always be examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be valid. Two forms of validity concern the researcher - internal and external. Internal validity relates to issues of truthfulness of responses, accuracy of records, or the authenticity of work. On the other hand, external validity refers to the generalizability of the results (Anderson and Arsenault, 2001: 13).

To avoid threats to the internal and external validity of my study, it was essential that the data collection and analysis measured young people’s knowledge and understanding of the issues in a valid way. Care was taken in designing the research, including the conceptual framework, the objectives, hypotheses, methods, the instruments, sampling, piloting, and conducting the main study by collecting and analysing the data from the questionnaire and the interview schedule. I ensured the validity of my study in a number of ways, which are stated below.

In all studies, subject characteristics can affect the relationship the researcher is investigating. In my study, the participants were largely homogeneous; they were very similar with respect to the characteristics I was studying. All participants were of the same age (17-18 years old), spoke the same language (Arabic), lived in Bahrain and had the same culture (Bahraini). In addition, they were government schools' students in grade-12, who received a similar education. In other words, they had a similar knowledge acquired from their teaching programmes in their schools. All government schools in Bahrain are centralized in policy, teaching styles and strategies, textbooks, curriculum etc. Each school enrolls students from the same neighbourhoods with students coming from nearly all areas in Bahrain, i.e. rural and urban.

Cohen *et al.* (2000) indicate that invalidity can be minimized at the research design stage by choosing the right time scale, ensuring adequate resources for the required research to be undertaken; selecting a suitable methodology, choosing an appropriate sample and instruments for data collection. Accordingly, my study was conducted in secondary schools in Bahrain at the end of the second semester in 2006. At this time, all the students had completed their curriculum requirements. The appropriate methods, instruments and sample were used. The time factor is important in research. Thus, my decision to conduct a cross-sectional survey, whereby subjects were examined once, to find out the overall students' knowledge and understanding of citizenship was made after the declaration that citizenship education would become a discrete subject in secondary school and the draft syllabus had been issued for specialists' consultation in Bahrain. In my study, all respondents were asked the same questions in the same circumstances.

In this study, the sampling techniques that were employed produced a sample representative of the population as a whole. The stratified random sampling method



was found to be appropriate for my study. This approach involves dividing the population into homogeneous groups (strata) with each group containing randomly chosen subjects with similar characteristics. This led to a high quality sample by reducing the risk of freaky or odd results in terms of the strata characteristics (Gorard, 2001). This random sample gave each of the individuals concerned an equal chance of being selected. This method is much more feasible than simple random sampling and more representative than cluster sampling (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990). This sampling technique helped me to obtain as representative a range of responses as possible and enabled me to fulfil the objectives of my study and to provide answers to key questions. However, one should be aware that generalisations that were reached may only be applicable to this particular population and sample and limited to this particular time, i.e. the end of the school year 2005/2006.

My study utilizes data collected by means of self-administered survey questionnaires and one-to-one, in-depth interviews, ensuring a hundred per cent response rate. Cohen *et al.* (2000) point to the importance of increasing the validity of questionnaires by maximizing the response rate and ensuring that respondents complete questionnaires accurately, honestly and correctly. This gave me the opportunity to explore young people's perceptions in depth, as well as enabled me to gather large-scale data. This increased the external validity and allowed me to generalise about the wider population.

The findings of my research are widely generalisable and validity is 'concerned with the generalizability of score meaning' (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007: 30). In my study, the use of the survey questionnaire allows generalisations to be made (Burton, 2000). The sample was large and reflected the target group. It was selected from all five regions (governorates) in Bahrain, i.e. the Middle Governorate, the Capital

Governorate, the Muharraq Governorate, the Northern Governorate, and the Southern Governorate. Gorard (2001: 5) notes that 'if we reject numeric evidence and its associated concerns about validity, generalizability, and so on as the basis for research, then we are left with primarily subjective judgments'.

One way of ensuring validity is by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. I used two different methods of data collection, the questionnaire and the interview. Both qualitative and quantitative methods, when combined, provide a fuller picture of a population than either method separately (Gibson *et al.*, 2004), the biases inherent in any single method can neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods' (Creswell, 2003: 15) and as a result strengthen validity. Thus, triangulation of different data collection methods, which involves 'some aspect of human behaviour' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 112), was used to strengthen the investigation (Woods, 2001). As different methods used in this study triangulate, I can be more confident that my study is valid than if I had arrived at that judgement simply from using one method. This kind of triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating both validity and reliability (Gibson *et al.* 2004; Silverman 2005).

A high level of content validity exists as a large number of independent experts/judges agreed (as stated above) that the questionnaire and the interview schedule items were essential and representative of the domain of citizenship in general, and the content of the Bahraini citizenship curriculum, the aims and objectives and the required competencies in particular. In other words, all the judges indicated that all the items would measure the students' citizenship conceptions (See Section 3.11.1). Moreover, the research instruments, the questionnaire and the interview schedule, were piloted by the researcher and revised in the light of the pilot

study. Piloting ensured that the students were able to understand the questions in the main study.

A conceptual framework guided my study and assured coherence in the argument, and no ambiguities existed while presenting the data. Besides, the data collected through the questionnaire and the interviews were consistent and coherent. No distinction existed in the presentation of evidence between raw data and its interpretation. The questionnaire data was all presented in its statistical form and the interview data was presented in its raw form, as the reader should be allowed to take part in an interpretive dialogue with the data collected in the study (Richardson, 1996).

Efforts were made to obtain more validation. During interviews, I attempted to record as closely as possible how a particular individual perceived certain situations by discussing his or her responses to the questions in the questionnaire. This also gave me a fuller understanding of their views and I was able to interpret the data accurately. Anderson and Arsenault (2001: 13) note that ‘validity generally refers to the extent to which the stated interpretations are in fact true’.

I was aware of an additional issue of validity caused by the use of two languages, i.e. English and Arabic. My research instruments were composed in Arabic as all the participants were Arabs. The questionnaire was phrased and the interviews were conducted in Arabic and the data gathered in Arabic was then translated into English. Back translation was used to check the accuracy of the translation. This helped to minimize the distortion of meanings that might have occurred through translation.



### 3.15 Reliability

Reliability refers to ‘consistency in measurement’ (Anderson and Arsenault, 2001: 12). In common terms reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions (Bell, 1999). This means if it were to be carried out in a similar context, then similar results would be found (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). In other words, a test which is not reliable gives different results every time it is taken. Data, in this study are not based on personal impressions; they relate to objective criteria in data collection and analysis procedures. This tends to extend reliability and we can have confidence in our results. Anderson and Arsenault (2001) note that the data used in educational research must be reliable if the analysis is to have any meaning, and therefore it is essential to have reliable measurement tools. Bell (1999) explains how validity complements reliability, but argues that:

If an item is unreliable, it must also lack validity, but a reliable item is not necessarily also valid. It could produce the same or similar responses on all occasions, but not be measuring what is supposed to measure (p.104).

Opie (2004) maintains that reliability is an indicator of goodness or quality in research. He regards reliability as a property of the whole process of data gathering, rather than a property solely of the results, and argues that both reliability and validity are ‘indicators of goodness, respectively, of data-gathering processes and of the relationship between claims and data-gathering processes’ (p.70).

In my study, the questionnaire was reliable because it was anonymous and thus encouraged greater honesty. It had mostly straightforward questions (e.g. multiple choice) which were answered more consistently (Borg and Gall 1996; Cohen *et al.* 2000; Anderson and Arsenault 2001). Furthermore, reliability is closely tied to the

length of the test. The larger the number of items included in the test, the higher the reliability will be (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). In other words, 'reliability increases as the number of items increases' (Blaikie, 2003: 219). From this point of view, data-collecting instruments used in this study were reliable. The questionnaire had 35 questions, and the semi-structured interview schedule had 30 questions. The questions addressed three different themes and all the interviews were conducted within an hour.

Thus, for data to be reliable there should be a degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category on different occasions (Silverman, 2005). In this sense, for example, conducting an in-depth interview with themes similar to those presented in a questionnaire and at a different time could increase reliability. All the interviews were carried out under the same conditions and in the same setting. The steps taken by the researcher to analyse the data and to interpret it are made explicit. Same person (the researcher) carried out all the interviews. In interviews, as Anderson and Arsenault (2001: 165) note, reliability varies greatly according to the interviewer's skill, training, etc. In this study, I used a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct individual face-to-face interviews with students in the third-level of secondary school. This enabled participants to present their knowledge, understanding, and experience of citizenship and democracy. The semi-structured interview schedule, devised from themes similar to those of the questionnaire are a reliable measurement tool; firstly, because it was used in collecting data from pre-specified criteria, which is important because the extent to which data relates to objective criteria improves reliability (Anderson and Arsenault, 2001); and secondly, because it allowed me to get 'comparable data across subjects' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 95).

In addition, the semi-structured interviews that I conducted were fully tape-recorded which provided a far more reliable record of the interviews than note taking. The data produced by this research was, therefore, not based on personal impressions and recall, so it was more reliable.

Furthermore, a number of statistical methods are commonly used in the measurement of the degree of reliability of the research instrument. In this study, Cronbach Alpha correlation was used to measure the degree of the internal reliability for each of the sub-scales (the 'groupings' of items in the survey questionnaire which represent the three themes I discuss in my thesis. The three themes with their reliability analyses are shown in Table 3.3:

**Table 3.3: Reliability Co-efficient Cronbach alpha**

Theme	No. of items in subscale	Reliability Co-efficient ( Cronbach alpha)
1. Citizenship, Community and Identity	31	0.65
2. Rights, Responsibilities and Law	28	0.76
3. Democracy, Politics and Government	46	0.65

There is some debate about what level of alpha represents an acceptable threshold for internal reliability, and it is accepted that the coefficient obtained is partly dependent on the number of items in the scale. Nevertheless Berthoud (2000:169) suggests a minimum level of 0.60 as 'good'. On this basis, the alpha coefficients obtained for subscales 1 and 3 (both 0.65) and subscale 2 (0.76) are sufficiently high to suggest these groupings of items each constitute a robust and reliable subscale.



### **3.16 Ethics**

Ethics in research are ‘the principles of right and wrong that a particular group accepts at a particular time’ (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 42). All the ethical protocols have a key objective: ‘the protection of individual rights’ (Schostak, 2002: 179). However, Opie (2004) argues that no contract, protocol or code of practice can resolve all problems.

I endeavoured to conduct my research in an ethical manner. The ethical guidelines were drawn from codes of practice for educational research published by research associations including the British Educational Research Association (BERA), American Educational Research Association (AERA), and Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA). These international bodies shared a number of fundamental principles which underpin a set of Ethical Guidelines.

Ethical guidelines and principles include issues such as ‘deception concerning the purpose of investigations, encroachment on privacy; confidentiality; safety; care needed when research involves children – and much more’ (Bell, 1999: 38). Meth and Malaza1 (2003) believe that researchers should be highly concerned about their actions towards the researched, that is to be aware of their obligations to their subjects and also to those areas where there is a general consensus about what is acceptable and what is not (Opie, 2004).

According to BERA (2004) and SERA (2005), these guiding principles should be applied to three key areas of responsibility on the part of educational researchers, namely:

### ***3.16.1 Access to the Sample***

In the present study, permission to conduct the fieldwork was obtained via official channels. The Ministry of Education in Bahrain was made aware of the ethical guidelines that I would follow to gain access to the schools and the students and to carry out my research.

As stated above, the sample schools were accessed ethically. Furthermore, ethical factors were taken into consideration when designing and using questionnaires, as they impact on every stage of the use of a questionnaire in terms of the design of the questionnaire itself, in the approaches to the respondents and the explanations provided to them, and in the data analysis and data reporting (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

I requested permission from the schoolteachers and administrators to administer the questionnaire without their presence in the classroom. Moreover, prior to administering the questionnaire and the follow up interviews, I clearly stated that all information provided was anonymous and confidential so that the schools and young people would not be identified by their real names. Pseudonyms are, therefore, used while reporting the findings of the study.

In interviews, the relationship with subjects can be more like a friendship than a contract and it is therefore the people who have agreed to be interviewed who deserve some consideration (Bell, 1999: 141). As a qualitative researcher, I carried out ethical procedures in my fieldwork during interviewing. For example, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the interviews. I honoured my students' privacy so that their identities were protected and the data that I collected did not embarrass or harm them (Bell 1999; Burton 2000; Bogdan and Biklen 2003). I asked their permission for participating in the interview and for tape-recording it; told them how long the

interview would take, and treated them with respect during the interview. I was truthful when reporting my findings. Furthermore, in the pilot study, for example, volunteer students were chosen to participate in the study and the researcher collected the questionnaires herself during the pilot and the main study.

### ***3.16.2 Responsibility to Participants***

Participants in research ‘include all those involved in the research activity either directly or indirectly and either passively or actively’ (SERA, 2005: 5). An ethical principle governing research is that respondents should not be harmed as a result of participating in the research (Young and Barrett, 2001). Thus, I demonstrated respect for participants in this study regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, lifestyle or any other source of potential discrimination. Neither was discriminatory language used when communicating with participants, in constructing the research instruments, or in the reporting of research (SERA, 2005).

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) note that it is important that participants understand the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved. Cohen *et al.* (2000) maintain that participants should be free to decide whether to become involved or if they want to withdraw from the research (See also SERA, 2005). Ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement the researcher has entered into with the research subjects and involves reaching agreements about the uses of the data and how it is reported (Blaxter *et al.*, 2001). Thus, participants were informed about the aims of the study, the reasons for their participation, the processes in which they needed to be engaged, (i.e. filling in a questionnaire and participating in the interviews), how the information gathered would be used, and to whom the results would be reported.



In addition, complying with Article 12 of the CRC, during data gathering young people were given the opportunity to express their views freely about all issues under study and in all matters that might affect them, bearing in mind that that ‘these views must be listened to’ (SERA, 2005: 7).

I recognised that the participants might experience distress or discomfort in the research process (SERA, 2005) so I tried to put the participants at ease by building a good relationship with them, by explaining the aims of the research, by guaranteeing that the research data were protected and kept securely, that the agreed confidentiality and anonymity would not be breached, and that their responses would be for the purpose of the research only. This is supported by Brownlow and O’dell (2002), who note that the researcher should clearly introduce him or herself as to identity, role, purpose, and intention to the participants of the study.

### ***3.16.3 Reporting the Findings***

AERA (2004) and SERA (2005) recommend that the researcher should employ methods that are fit for the purpose of the study; and report the research conceptions, procedures, results and analyses accurately and sufficiently in detail to allow knowledgeable, trained researchers to understand and interpret them.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) maintain that sometimes for ideological reasons the researcher may not like the conclusions he/she reaches, and although others may put pressure on the researcher to show certain results that data do not reveal, the most important trademark of a researcher should be his or her devotion to reporting what the data reveal. They argue that ‘fabricating data or distorting data is the ultimate sin of a scientist’ (pp.44-45). To avoid this problem, I tried to communicate the findings and the practical significance of the research in clear, straightforward, and appropriate

language to relevant research populations, institutional representatives, and other stakeholders (AERA, 2004), and tried to refrain from selectively communicating the findings of this study.

### **3.17 Data Analysis**

#### ***3.17.1 Analysis of Survey Data***

Data analysis is conducted according to a predetermined set of criteria and hypotheses. The quantitative data, both nominal and ordinal, were obtained from the questionnaire and analysed by using descriptive statistics with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Chi-square test was used to analyse dependent dependency of two variables from the nominal categorized data (Arsham, 2006).

The Chi-square test allows for comparison of observed frequencies between the groups and indicates whether any found differences are statistically significant. In other words, it can be used when a researcher wants to study the relationship between two classified factors (e.g. gender and understanding of politics), and then identify the two discrete variables in the dialog form. In this case the null hypothesis is that the two factors are independent. If the calculated P-value is low ( $P < 0.05$ ), then the null hypothesis is rejected and the researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a relation between the two factors (Bryman and Cramer 2001; Arsham 2006).

In addition to Chi-square, I used the Mann-Whitney U test to analyse the ordinal data that was generated through the questionnaires. The Mann-Whitney Test is one of the most powerful non-parametric tests for comparing two populations with ordinal-level variables. This test is used when members of two categories can be ranked in terms of

their scores on the same variable. Thus, it is a 'distribution-free test' (Blaikie, 2003: 197).

### ***3.17.2 Analysis of Interview Data***

In the in-depth study, I was interested in exploring participants' perceptions of the concepts and themes, which were found to be important when studying their responses to the questions in the questionnaire. The semi-structured interview schedule enabled me to gather rich data. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) maintain that qualitative data, analysed with close attention to detail and understood in terms of their internal patterns and forms, have relevance beyond those data themselves. Such qualitative data need to be sorted and managed into what is useful for the purpose of the study being undertaken. In this research, the data that was generated through semi-structured interviews was analysed manually. Since my qualitative research sample was small, and I had already decided on the themes which emerged from the survey questionnaire, I chose not to use a software package to code the qualitative data. According to Basit (2003: 153), coding is tedious and time-consuming when carried out manually, but it may take several weeks to get acquainted with a software package to code qualitative data electronically.

The tape recorded interviews were transcribed. Notes were taken during or after the interviews to record emotions and other reactions expressed by the interviewees during the interview. The transcripts were studied to explore responses about the key themes presented in the conceptual framework of the study. Further, the responses were examined to bring out the commonalities and the divergences in the young people's understanding of aspects related to citizenship and democracy. While



performing this analysis, the responses of the interviewees were studied in relation to the research hypotheses and the conceptual and theoretical background of the study.

### ***3.17.3 Triangulation of Survey and Interview Data***

After they were analysed, the interview data was triangulated with the survey data. This was done by comparing interview transcripts with written documentation of the quantitative data from the questionnaire. This process helped to establish connections between data sub-sets. These two sources of data were integrated, discussed and interpreted. The data gathered by questionnaires and interviews was analysed. Mason (1996) argues that the role of the researcher is to understand and make interpretations, and to move from these towards an explanation. Furthermore, Basit (2003: 243) maintains that ‘throughout analysis, researchers attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what they have studied and to continually refine their interpretations’. Therefore, apart from analysing the empirical data to derive the conceptions, perceptions and opinions of young people, I studied the social and the political background of Bahrainis via research reports, documents and other relevant literature. This enabled me to understand the background and interpret its relationship to the phenomena under study. Once the analysis was completed, I determined what conclusions might be supported, what limitations were imposed, and what generalisations to the population were justified. The possible meaning of unanticipated results was also considered.

## **3.18 Conclusion**

To sum up, this chapter began with analysis of the nature of my research aims and objectives. It reported the overall design of the research, approaches, processes and

methods of data collection and data processing. The research was guided by a conceptual framework designed by the researcher. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in collecting the data by means of a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule, to accomplish the aims and objectives of the study, and to test the research hypotheses. With regard to sampling, a stratified random sampling technique was used to conduct the survey and a simple random sampling method was used for the semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the issues of validity, reliability and ethics and their relevance to the study were discussed.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter analyses the findings of the empirical research. The empirical data has two components: the quantitative survey data and the qualitative interview data. The statistical analyses of the quantitative data were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). An alpha level of 0.05 was chosen as the level of significance. Cross-tabulation with the Chi-squared test was used to examine relationships between variables for nominal data; and the Mann-Whitney U rank-sum test for ordinal data.

The researcher also aims to apply the method of analysis, suggested above, in sequence to the two research methods, i.e. the questionnaire administered to four hundred and sixty young people, and the semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty-two young people, which was the second method carried out for triangulation purposes. As already discussed, the two research instruments, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview schedule were based on the main themes that emerged from the conceptual framework of the study.

The analysis considers the research hypotheses to find out if young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy, under the structure and framework of this study. As mentioned earlier, the framework I used to help organize my data was based on the scholarly literature on citizenship.

With the help of this literature, I devised my conceptual framework, as explained in chapter three. There were three categories in this framework. These were citizenship, community and identity; democracy, politics and government; rights, responsibilities and the law. Each of these categories will be discussed in three separate sections in this chapter.

## **4.2 Citizenship, Community and Identity**

This section examines young people's conceptions of citizenship and their concerns about community issues, and sets out to gauge how they perceive their identity. Besides the statistical analysis of quantitative data, a range of quotations from the qualitative data are presented in the analysis below in order to provide an indication of the various ways in which young people conceptualise the term 'citizenship' and other themes related to it. It should, however, be borne in mind that the quotations are not representative of all responses to the questions, and thus are used solely for illustrative purposes.

### **4.2.1 Conception of Citizenship**

As stated earlier, quantitative data was gathered from 460 young people to examine their conception of citizenship. The young people were asked to define the term 'citizenship' in the open-ended part of the questionnaire (Appendix II, Q10b). The purpose of such an open-ended approach was to provide the young people with the opportunity to describe, in their own words, the understandings they currently held of the term citizenship. Given that 'citizenship' was not yet a statutory subject, it was probably unsurprising that 21.5 per cent (n=99) of 460 young people stated that they did not know what the term 'citizenship' meant. However, 78.5 per cent (n=361) of

young people provided a definition of this concept, defining ‘citizenship’ in different ways as the following table shows.

**Table 4.1: Conceptions of ‘Citizenship’**

‘Citizenship’ means	Residence		Total	Sig. (Res.)
	Rural	Urban		
Do not know / no answer	12.4	9.1	21.5	*
Feeling of love and affiliation	19.1	15.7	34.8	
Acquiring Rights and performing responsibilities	13.0	11.5	24.6	
Living in Bahrain	4.8	5.4	10.2	
Participating in community	1.3	1.3	2.6	
Having Bahraini nationality/passport	2.8	2.4	5.2	
Getting Freedom	1.1	0.0	1.1	
Total	54.6	45.4	100.0	

\* P<0.05

The Analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant gender difference between young people and their conception of citizenship. In contrast, a statistically significant difference existed at ( $\chi^2=12.768$ , df=6, p=0.047) in young people’s conception of citizenship on the basis of residence.

There were slight differences between both rural and urban young people’s conceptions. However, to more rural young people, ‘citizenship’ meant affiliation and belonging, rights and responsibilities, nationality and freedom. On the other hand, citizenship to more urban young people denoted the status of ‘living in country’.

As stated earlier, although not all young people knew what citizenship meant, those who were able to define it identified meanings and activities similar to the three interrelated strands of citizenship education as set out in the Crick Report (QCA, 1998); these are ‘community involvement, social and moral responsibility, political literacy’ (pp.11-13). Thus, for the purpose of this analysis, responses from young people were grouped into three thematic categories, which correspond to Crick’s three



strands. These categories were citizenship as: belonging and community involvement; rights and responsibilities; democratic values and political awareness. Details of young people's responses in each of these categories are outlined below.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Citizenship as Belonging and Community Involvement***

As observed in Table 4.1 above, the majority of young people related citizenship to a sense of belonging to their nation-state. Citizenship was 'the feeling of love and affiliation towards a country'.

To me citizenship means combinations of sensations that tie individuals to their country. It means to me love, devotion, loyalty and sacrifice to my motherland. It means that we must be proud of being Bahraini (Raquia, rural female).

In the Crick report (QCA, 1998), as stated earlier in Chapter two, one of the three core strands at the heart of citizenship education involves young people 'learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities' (p.40). In this study, a few young people related citizenship to 'participation in community'. The rural male quoted below had a clear community-orientation to the definition of citizenship, which indicates the importance of community involvement:

To me citizenship means participating in developing my country, serving my community in all fields and participating in my community's activities and events. It is how people work together to fulfil the goals of their nation (Hameed, rural male).

Therefore, it can be seen that for young Bahraini people having the feeling of belonging to a specific country and a commitment to community were important. Although more urban young people believed that 'citizenship' meant the status of 'living in a country', to rural young people it meant 'holding a nationality'. Examples

of such definitions included, ‘citizenship means a formal membership to a country, which means having the Bahraini nationality and holding a Bahraini passport’ (Khatoon, rural female), and ‘living in the homeland and acquire citizenship rights and perform duties’ (Khalid, urban male).

In interviews, the majority of young people were aware of the fact that holding a particular nationality/passport was important, but for them helping to improve their nation-state and caring for their community was more significant.

To me citizenship means not only holding a Bahraini nationality, but it also means improving my community and caring about its people by guarding their rights and helping them to perform their duties (Mariam, rural female).

#### ***4.2.1.2 Citizenship as Rights and Responsibilities***

Responsible citizens should have ‘...socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom; both towards those in authority and towards each other’ (QCA, 1998: 11). In this study, young people spoke of ‘getting citizenship rights, taking responsibility, and carrying out duties’ for themselves, their families, local communities, and the state at large. In regard to this, most young people highlighted the importance of caring for and respecting others:

To me citizenship means having rights and being responsible for my family, my country, and myself; respecting the laws of the country... I feel that I have some of my rights, such as the right of education, the right of getting good health services, but I still do not have the right to vote or to participate in political life (Nadeen, urban female).

Others focused on the part that citizens should play in maintaining the welfare of their country:

I am responsible for serving my country, protecting its properties and its environment, and defending it from any danger. I should protect my community values and care about its reputation too (Razan, urban female).

As seen in the quotations above, young people recognised that rights had to be matched by responsibilities. Hence, while being a citizen endows an individual with certain rights, it also means that individuals have to take on responsibility for protecting the rights of others, as is shown below:

Citizenship involves being aware of the rights of Bahraini people, which should be protected. Citizens have the right to live a decent and safe life; to be allowed to express their opinions, and to be offered good education because in doing so the country is receiving its rights in return (Fareed, rural male).

#### ***4.2.1.3 Citizenship as Democratic Values and Political Awareness***

In the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), citizens are responsible for ‘learning about and making themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values – which can be called political literacy’ (p.13). In the survey, young people related citizenship to democracy, some of them mentioned that citizenship meant ‘participation in community affairs’ and caring about people, and a few of them indicated that citizenship meant ‘freedom’. Furthermore, in the interviews, a few young people related citizenship to ‘equality’, which suggests that citizenship can contribute to the reduction of inequalities in society, such as class and racial discrimination:

Citizenship means freedom of expression; it means, also, equality and justice. It makes people equal (Fatma, rural female).

Also, Mooza, an urban female, said:



...I believe that citizens should live equally happily with their family and their community and in their country.

A number of interviewees highlighted citizenship as encompassing both political and democratic awareness. More particularly, young people focused on the need for citizens to understand and participate in the democratic process in the nation state:

Citizenship means the freedom to vote in the elections, to have freedom to express our opinions and to choose our representatives (Salman, urban male).

Most importantly, interviewees recognised that voting in the elections and contributing to democracy was not simply about following government policy. Instead, they recognised the importance of full participation in the democratic process:

Since the citizen is a part of this country, his or her voice can make a big difference. It is very important for people to vote in the elections to choose their representatives, to exercise their political rights and to choose the best people for the national council (Khatoon, rural female).

Also:

Citizenship means knowing about politics and having our own view regarding political matters which should be heard and considered (Mustafa, rural male).

#### **4.2.2 Qualities of a Good Bahraini Citizen**

In the questionnaire, young people were asked about 'the qualities which are important for someone to be considered a competent and responsible Bahraini citizen' (Appendix II, Q11). In this question young people were presented with the option of ticking one box along a three-point scale (very important, somewhat important, and not at all important) for twenty-four different possible qualities of a good citizen

(Appendix V). The Mann-Whitney test was used to find out the statistically significant differences between young people and the qualities for a good citizen.

For the purpose of the analysis of this question, the results presented in this discussion are therefore the responses which were found to be statistically significant and the majority of young people found them to be ‘very important’. Table 4.2 shows young people’s views of the most important qualities of a good Bahraini citizen.

**Table 4.2: ‘The most important’ qualities of a good Bahraini citizen that were found statistically significant.**

Very important qualities for Bahraini citizens	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
	%	%	%	%		
Tolerate others’ opinions	36.3	37.7	51.8	37.6	***	-
Be proud to be Bahraini	35.3	36.7	50.2	34.7	***	-
Obey the laws	34.0	34.9	45.3	35.9	***	-
Be loyal to country’s leaders	18.6	31.2	32.2	34.7	***	***
Struggle for democratic rules and principles.	30.2	18.1	32.7	15.9	-	***
Be interested in public affairs.	21.9	19.5	28.2	12.2	-	***
Follow what is happening in government and politics	21.4	16.7	20.8	7.3	-	***

\*\*\*P<0.001

It can be observed through the findings presented in the above table, that the highest percentage of young people believed that to ‘tolerate others opinions’ was the most important quality for Bahraini citizens. A statistically significant gender difference (p=0.000; U=22265.5) was found for this item. More females indicated that ‘tolerate others’ opinions’ was an important quality for a good Bahraini citizen. When the young people were interviewed, one said:

A good Bahraini citizen should care for others’ feelings and tolerate them. A good citizen should also cooperate with others and care for individuals and for the country’s needs as well (Rehab, rural female).

More females indicated that ‘to be proud of being Bahraini’ was an important quality for a good Bahraini citizen compared to males at a statistically significant gender difference of ( $p=0.001$ ;  $U=22987$ ). On the other hand, no statistically significant relationship was found between young people’s understanding of the importance of this quality and their place of residence. This quality seemed to be important for young people as it came as a priority in almost each question in the survey questionnaire.

With regard to the importance of qualities related to citizens’ responsibilities, the majority of young people thought that a good citizen should ‘obey the laws’. A statistically significant relationship was also found between young people’s understanding of the importance of obeying the laws of their society and their gender at ( $p=0.002$ ;  $U=22956$ ). As seen in Table 4.2., more females believed that it was very important for a good citizen to ‘obey the laws’ as compared with the males. A large proportion of the young people interviewed endorsed qualities related to the ‘rights, responsibilities and the law’ category of citizenship, as can be seen in the comment below:

As a citizen, I should call for my rights, perform my duties perfectly and should not break the law. I have to be, also, loyal to my motherland in order to become a righteous citizen (Ayat, rural female).

One-third of the sample believed that a good citizen should ‘be loyal to the country’s leaders’. Here, a statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.000$ ;  $U=21828.5$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.000$ ;  $U=20024$ ) existed. Males were less likely to believe that to ‘be loyal to country’s leaders’ was an important quality for a good Bahraini citizen. The majority of these young people were from



rural areas. In contrast, those who believed that loyalty to country's leaders was very important were urban females. A large number of young people interviewed said that they loved Bahrain, were loyal to its leaders and were proud of being Bahraini citizens, as this quotation by urban female shows:

I think in order to be a good Bahraini citizen, it is important that I love my country Bahrain, be proud of it, and be loyal to the king and other leaders. In fact, I feel that I belong to this homeland (Safa, urban female).

Furthermore, a highly statistically significant relationship existed between young people's understanding of the importance of practising democratic rules and principles and their residence at ( $p=0.000$ ;  $U=20548.5$ ). Young people from rural areas were more likely to see that 'struggling for democratic rules and principles' was an important quality for a good citizen than urban young people. As seen in the following quotation a good citizen should believe in equality between people, the struggle for democratic rules and principles, and the practise of democratic values.

One rural female said:

I think in order to be a good citizen, and fulfil my responsibilities such as to participate in developing Bahrain, and in trying to make changes in society, it is important that I live in a society which treats all its people equally (Fatma, rural female).

A statistically significant difference existed between young people's understanding of the importance of 'being interested in public affairs' and their place of residence at ( $p=0.002$ ;  $U=22281$ ). Moreover, urban young people were found to be the least inclined to 'being interested in public affairs' as an important quality (See Table 4.2). This suggests that young people from rural areas are more involved in their community and interested in public affairs than young people from urban areas. This

is perhaps because some urban areas in Bahrain are new and people living there are not as close to each other as people from rural areas, who care about each other.

When interviewed, Jaffer, a rural male, said:

Being a righteous citizen means that each individual should be positive, active, loyal, respectful and democratic in dealing with others and thinks of his country's needs in the same way as he thinks of his children's needs.

In addition, about one-third of the sample, the majority of whom were rural males, indicated the importance of being a citizen who 'follows what is happening in government and politics'. However, a statistically significant residence difference also existed at ( $p=0.003$ ;  $U=22348$ ), which suggests that urban young people were less likely to see the importance of being a citizen who 'follows what is happening in government and politics'. The importance of these qualities and other qualities are presented in the following quotation:

Being a good citizen means a lot because having good qualities may correct things and prevent problems from happening (Mariam, rural female).

In addition to these qualities, in an open-ended question, one-third of young people endorsed other important qualities that should be found in a good citizen. These are presented in the following table:

**Table 4.3: Other important qualities of a good Bahraini citizen.**

Other important qualities for Bahraini citizens in young people's views	Place of Residence		Total	Sig.
	Rural	Urban		
Did not know / no answer	31.5	33.5	65.0	*
Avoid intolerance or fanaticism	10.7	1.3	12.0	
Love, affiliation, and loyalty to country	1.3	2.0	3.3	
Participate in developing country	1.1	0.2	1.3	
Be religious	0.4	0.2	0.7	
Protect public welfares	2.2	0.7	2.8	
Express opinion freely	2.6	2.6	5.2	
Speak the truth	1.7	0.4	2.2	
Help in developing public awareness of citizenship	3.0	4.6	7.6	
Total	54.6	45.4	100.0	

\*P<0.05

Here a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.014$ ;  $U=23265.5$ ) existed. The data analysis revealed that rural young people were more likely to endorse the qualities presented in Table 4.3 above compared to urban young people. In spite of some of these qualities mentioned in Table 4.2, young people preferred to endorse the qualities that were important to them. For example, rural young people were more likely to see that a good Bahraini citizen should ‘avoid intolerance and fanaticism’, ‘participate in developing their country’, and ‘protect the welfare of their country’. To urban young people, the person who ‘helps in developing public awareness of citizenship’ is a good citizen.

In contrast, the qualities that young people considered as ‘not at all important’ for a good citizen are presented in the following table.

**Table 4.4. Five qualities not required for a good Bahraini citizens**

Qualities not required for Bahraini citizens	Count	%
Contact a public official to express your views	94	20.4
Work or volunteer in a political campaign	76	16.5
Write an article or ‘letter to the editor’	70	15.2
Join a political party	50	10.9



Although there was no statistically significant gender or residence difference between young people and the qualities presented in table 4.4 above, the findings revealed that these qualities, which were obviously related to politics, were not required for Bahraini citizens. It appears that the young people have less awareness of politics and its role in shaping their life in a democratic state.

### 4.2.3 Young People and National Identity

#### 4.2.3.1 Consider Self as Bahraini Citizens

In the survey, in order to examine young people’s sense of belonging to their nation-state, they were asked whether they considered themselves Bahraini citizens (Appendix II, Q9). A considerable number of young people (17.6%, n=81) did not see themselves as Bahraini citizens. In contrast, more than three-quarters (82.4%, n= 379) of the young people viewed themselves Bahraini citizens. Results are presented in the following table.

**Table 4.5: Considering self as Bahraini citizens**

Considering self as Bahraini citizens	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban		
Yes	82 (77.4%)	86 (78.9%)	116 (80.0%)	95 (95.0%)	*	*
No	24 (22.6%)	23 (21.1%)	29 (20.0%)	5 (5.0%)		
Total 460 (100%)	215 (100%)		245 (100%)			

\*P<0.05

A statistically significant gender difference existed at ( $\chi^2 = 5.030$ , df=1, p=0.025), suggesting that young females were more likely to consider themselves as Bahraini citizens. In addition, a statistically significant residence difference existed at ( $\chi^2 =4.683$ , df=1, p=0.03), suggesting that urban young people were more likely to see

themselves as Bahraini citizens. The data was further examined to investigate the interaction between gender and place of residence.

This revealed that it was almost all (95 out of every 100) of the urban females who are significantly more likely to identify themselves as Bahraini, than any of the other groups of the rural males, urban males and rural females who consider themselves to be Bahraini with approximately the same proportion (roughly 80 out of 100).

The results indicated that the vast majority of young people considered themselves Bahraini for reasons such as 'loving Bahrain and having a sense of belonging to their nation state', their belief about 'getting their rights' in their country, being 'born in Bahrain', 'living in Bahrain'; and 'holding Bahraini nationality'. This theme was elaborated further in interviews:

I am Bahraini and I am proud of that. I was born in this land and I live in it. I love Bahrain and I belong to it. When I travel away, I feel that I miss Bahrain and its people. I miss my family, my school, and my friends. I do not feel that I belong to any other place where the culture, language, and religion are different from mine (Nadeen, urban female).

Also:

I love Bahrain, this is my homeland; I acquire my rights and I perform my duties too. I would provide all that I have in order to develop my homeland (Mazin, urban male).

On the other hand, the reasons stated by those who did not consider themselves as Bahraini were 'not getting their civic rights', and facing 'discrimination', which made them 'feel like foreigners in spite of holding Bahraini nationality', as one said in the interview:

In Bahrain, we are not treated equally; people are demonstrating and protesting almost every day. There are some important issues that Bahraini citizens have are not resolved (Ali, rural male).

As we can see, these reasons correspond to their definitions of the term ‘citizenship’, which indicate that they believe that the feeling of belonging, and having rights and responsibilities are the most important reasons for being a citizen.

**4.2.3.2 Young People and National Anthem**

The young people were asked ‘how often they sang the national anthem in their school’ (Appendix II, Q12). The results are presented in the following table.

**Table 4.6: How often young people sing the national anthem in their school**

Young people sing the national anthem in their school	Percentage	Male	Female	Sig. Gen.
		%	%	
Daily	31.1	10.4	20.7	***
Sometimes	39.6	15.9	23.7	
Never	29.3	20.4	8.9	
Total	100	46.7	53.3	

\*\*\*p<0.001

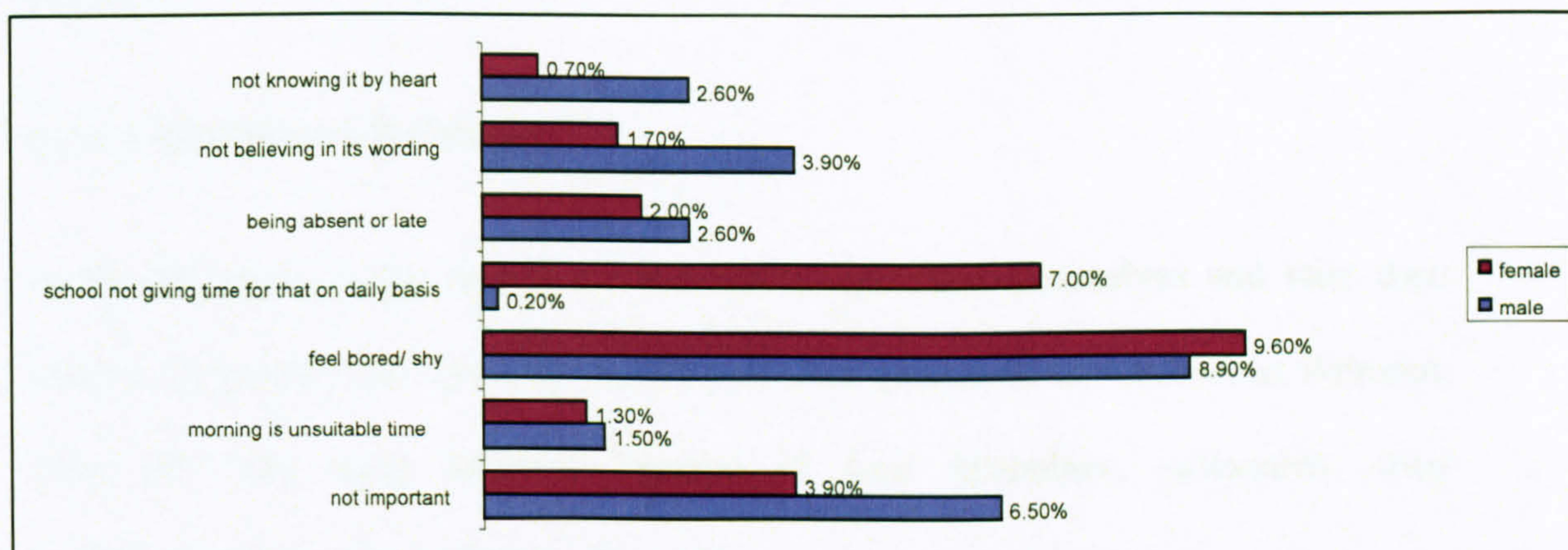
A statistically significant gender difference existed at (p=0.000; U=18378.5) showing that females were more likely to sing the national anthem and understand the importance of it as a national symbol while a large number of those who never sang the national anthem were males.

To investigate this issue further, young people were asked to give reasons for singing or not singing the national anthem. More females as compared with males believed that their main reasons for singing the national anthem in their school were related to their ‘love and affiliation to Bahrain’ and their ‘respect and appreciation for their country’ and because it symbolised that ‘Bahrain was an independent country’. Some of them stated that ‘it was an obligation’ and their ‘duty’ to do so.



On the other hand, some young people gave reasons for not singing the national anthem. Some reasons related to their personal characteristics, and other reasons were related to their schools or to the national anthem itself. They are presented in figure 4.1.

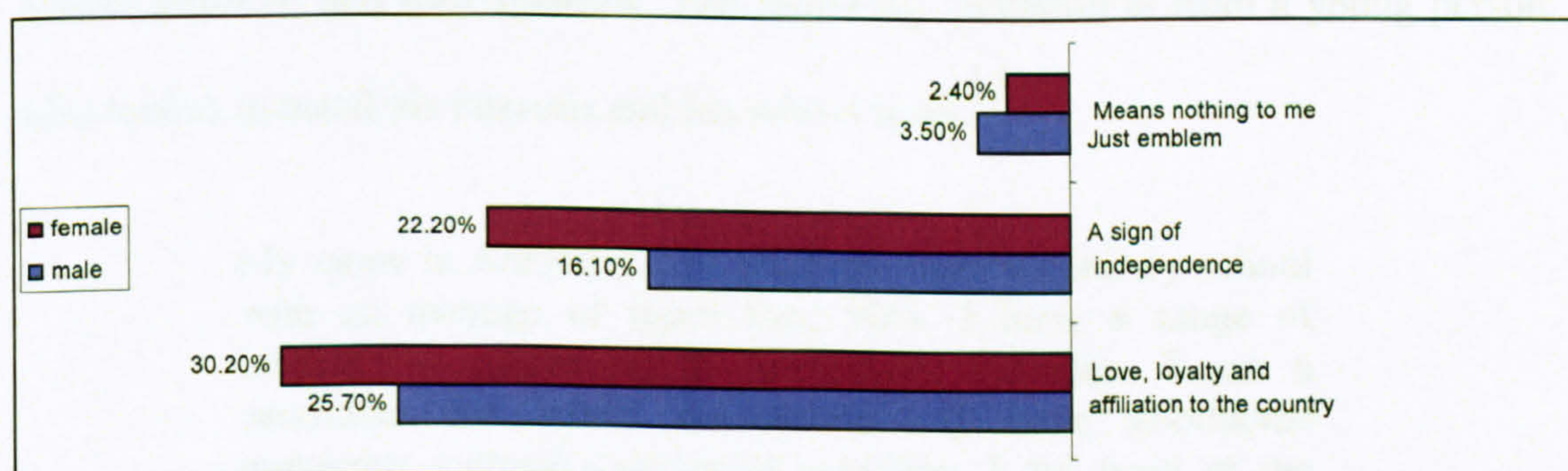
**Figure 4.1: Reasons for not singing the national anthem in their school**



#### 4.2.3.3 Young people and Bahraini flag

Young people were asked what the Bahraini flag meant to them (Appendix II, Q13). The following figure represents their answers.

**Figure 4.2: What the Bahraini flag meant to young people?**



The data analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between young people's gender and/or their residence and their feeling towards the Bahraini flag. As seen in this figure, Bahraini flag signified 'love, loyalty and



affiliation to country' to the majority of young people. It was also considered a 'sign of independence'. Females were more likely to have positive attitudes towards the flag, while the few negative responses were given mainly by males who stated that the flag 'meant nothing' to them and it was 'just an emblem', i.e. a symbol for the country.

#### ***4.2.3.4 Identity and Self Image***

In the interview, young people were asked to introduce themselves and state their identity (Appendix III, Q1). The majority of them perceived themselves as Bahraini. They felt they were Bahraini because of their birthplace, nationality, their background, culture and religion. One said:

I am a Bahraini citizen who was born in Bahrain. My aim is to work to enhance the life of my nation (Ayat, a rural female).

Some young people identified themselves as students because they were still receiving their secondary schooling. Some of them listed their participation in the school activities and their interests. The following quotation is from a young person who told us in detail his interests and his school level:

My name is Ahmed. I will graduate from secondary school with an average of more than 90%. I have a range of interests. I participate in numerous activities. I am a candidate for youth parliament and have conducted numerous cultural and social activities. I am head of the School Advisory Committee, member of The General Organization for Youth and Sport, a trainee of a leadership programme in the organization, and a trainee in leadership program for distinguished students in the Crown Prince Scheme (Ahmed, urban male).

Most of the young people described their personalities either positively or negatively. Some of them projected a positive image about themselves when they said ‘I am relatively generous, straight-forward, peaceful and forgiving’ (Ali, rural male). ‘I am social. I like volunteer work and I have an interest in knowing my community’s programs and events (Mustafa, urban male). ‘I am a human being. I like myself and I’m proud of it’ (Hasan, a rural male). ‘I am a precious thing that has been assigned by God to my parents’ (Safa, urban female).

On the other hand, some young people signalled negative parts of their personality along with the positive. For example, this rural female said:

I am a kind and simple person who gets fooled easily. Sometimes I’m a hot-tempered person. I like people and I don’t like to offend others. I am very much interested in political issues (Raquia, rural female).

It is evident that the identity that these young people have created for themselves is very much shaped by the way they perceive themselves.

#### **4.2.4 Involvement in Community Affairs**

##### ***4.2.4.1 Young People and Community Problems***

In order to identify how much young people were involved in and aware of community issues, they were asked to mention the main problems in their community in an open-ended question (Appendix II, Q15). Thirty-two different problems were mentioned by them, which were classified into categories and sub-categories. They are shown in the following table:



**Table 4.7: Main problems in community perceived by young people**

Community Problems	Frequency	%
1. Economic problems	592	38.6
2. Political problems	518	33.8
3. Social problems	289	18.8
4. Religious problems	66	4.3
5. Educational Problems	53	3.5
6. Environmental problems	16	1.1
Total	1534	

As seen in this table, more than a third of the problems noted by young people were economic problems. They were unemployment, poverty, low salaries, and increasing living costs. One-third of the problems mentioned were political problems, they were discrimination, oppression, demonstrations, lack of democracy, not getting their rights, lack of unity in society, and ineffective parliament. Some of the problems mentioned were social problems, such as drugs, crimes, robbery, housing, family problems, lack of entertainment programmes and places for youth. Other problems noted were educational problems, such as weak curricula, illiteracy, lack of counselling and lack of programmes directed towards developing citizens' knowledge and awareness. A few religious problems were stated such as not following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the existence of moral problems, such as drinking and adultery. Only a few mentioned environmental problems such as air pollution and sea pollution. In general, the results indicated that more females were aware of social problems and environmental problems in their community than males while males were more aware of religious and educational problems.

It also needs to be pointed out that there was an overlap between some of these classifications as some economic problems, for example, can also be seen as social or political problems. The following table shows the problems that were found statistically significant according to gender and place of residence:

**Table 4.8: Community problems that were found statistically significant.**

Community Problems	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
Unemployment	76 (35.3)	60 (27.9)	106 (43.3)	66 (26.9)	-	**
Lack of proper housing	12 (5.6)	4 (1.9)	20 (8.2)	6 (2.4)	-	**
Discrimination	54 (25.1)	34 (15.8)	51 (20.8)	31 (12.7)	-	*
Oppression	22 (10.2)	12 (5.6)	21 (8.6)	5 (2.0)	-	**
Demonstrations	2 (0.9)	3 (1.4)	5 (2.0)	13 (5.3)	*	*
The lack of civic and political awareness	5 (2.3)	2 (0.9)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.4)	*	-

\*\*\*P&lt;0.001

\*\*P&lt;0.01

\* P&lt;0.05

Significant statistical differences existed between some of the community problems noted above, and young people's gender and/or place of residence. 'Unemployment' was one of the economic problems which was found to be statistically significant with a statistically significant residence difference at ( $\chi^2=7.701$ , df=1, p=0.006). Two-thirds of young people believed that unemployment was a problem. Significantly, young people from rural areas were more likely to be aware of the existence of unemployment. Another problem which was found statistically significant was the social problem of 'housing' with a statistically significant residence difference existed at ( $\chi^2=8.719$ , df=1, p=0.003). More rural young people were aware of the problem of the 'lack of proper housing' in their community compared to urban young people.

Regarding political problems, one-quarter of young people indicated that 'discrimination' was a problem in the Bahraini community. A statistically significant residence difference ( $\chi^2=5.638$ , df=1, p=0.018) was found between young people and the problem of 'discrimination'. Data analysis revealed that it was mostly rural young



people who indicated discrimination as a problem in the Bahraini community. Another political problem which was found statistically significant was 'oppression' with a statistically significant residence difference at ( $\chi^2=8.140$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Data analysis revealed that rural young people were more likely to view 'oppression' as a problem and believe that this problem existed in their community whilst more urban young people thought the opposite. On the other hand, young people indicated that 'demonstrations' were a problem too. A statistically significant gender difference ( $\chi^2=6.078$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.014$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $\chi^2=5.686$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) were found between young people and demonstrations. Young females were more likely to find 'demonstrations' a problem and a great proportion of them were from the urban areas. Urban females believed 'demonstrations' were a problem in the Bahraini community.

In addition, very few young people indicated that 'the lack of civic and political awareness' was a problem for Bahraini people. Although very few young people mentioned it as a problem, it was considered to be an important point of discussion with an approaching statistically significant gender difference at ( $\chi^2=3.553$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.054$ ). More males mentioned the importance of developing programmes which were directed towards developing citizens' civic and political awareness, compared to females.

The following quotation illustrates young people's perceptions of their community problems:

In our community, there is poverty, drug addiction, low standards of living, low income, people are calling for employment and some are calling for their rights. There are also conflicts between people and government, divorce is a family



problem, and there are no counselling programmes (Jaffer, rural male).

#### **4.2.4.2 Ability to Solve Problems and Help the Community**

Young people were asked if they considered themselves capable of solving the problems of their community (Appendix II, Q16). The following table shows the results:

**Table 4.9: Young people's ability to solve community problems**

Solving the problems of community	Frequency	Percentage
To a great extent	50	10.9
To some extent	226	49.1
Not at all	184	40.0
Total	460	100.0

No statistically significant differences were found between young people's gender or residence and their ability to solve their community's problems. They believed that they 'had the ability to solve problems'; and to 'defend others' rights'. For young people, it was 'a right' as well as 'a duty'.

For those who believed that they could help solve the problems of their community, the majority indicated that they could help 'to some extent' and that solving problems 'needed group work, unity and cooperation'. On the other hand, more than one-third of young people thought that they could not solve their community problems for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons was their belief that they were 'not important' people. Another interesting reason was that some young people thought that their 'opinions were not heard', so if they suggested a solution, their suggestions would not be taken

into account. This indicates that young people do not perceive a role for themselves in decision-making or even in suggesting solutions to their community problems.

#### ***4.2.4.3 Ability to Bring about Change in Bahrain***

To investigate their previous responses further, young people were asked in the interview if they could make their country a better place for their generation and for future generations (Appendix III, Q30). Almost all young people indicated that they could participate in making changes in their country. In general, their responses focused on developing Bahrain in different ways. Mustafa, an urban male, said:

To make Bahrain a better place to live, we can create different programs to help youngsters in solving their problems, enrolling in political societies, and participating in numerous activities and events.

Some young people indicated that they could help to make Bahrain a better place to live by improving the level of education, as mentioned earlier. This could be achieved if they worked hard and became good young people. The young people made a range of comments concerning how to make Bahrain a better place to live, for example, ‘we have to study, learn, work, give a good impression about Bahrain and enhance our country’ (Hasan, rural male); ‘as a student, I have to graduate first, to be assiduous in my studies and then work to help my community’ (Nadeen, an urban female); ‘as a student, I have to endeavour to develop my country and to specialize in a subject that is needed by the country’ (Mazin, urban male).

Additionally, another student believed that she could make a difference by becoming a member of political or youth associations, she said:

I can make changes by being a member of a political or youth association which cares about educating young people about democracy and citizenship. They try to find solutions for youth problems and make the voice of youth heard. They prepare young people for the future. For example, the 'Bahrain Youth Institution' has recently developed programmes like 'The Achieving Youth' and 'Youth parliament project', which prepares the youth to become future leaders (Fatma, a rural female).

#### 4.2.4.4 Community and Crime

Young people were asked to rank the main causes of crime, from (1-3), in order of significance and to add some reasons for their choices (Appendix II, Q19). The following table shows the major causes of crime that were chosen in the first place.

**Table 4.10: Causes of crime**

Causes of Crime	Place of Residence		Total	Sig.
	Rural %	Urban %		
Do not know / no answer	2.0	1.3	3.3	-
Poverty	21.3	17.8	39.1	-
Oppression	19.6	11.1	30.7	*
Society	4.8	5.4	10.2	-
Family	3.5	3.0	6.5	-
Friends	1.5	3.3	4.8	-
Mass media	2.0	3.5	5.4	-
Total	54.6	45.4	100.0	

\* P<0.05

Although no statistically significant gender or residence differences existed regarding poverty, society, family, friends and mass media as causes for crime in Bahraini society, most of the young people agreed that 'poverty' was the main cause of crime, and that 'mass media' was the least important cause of crime.

No statistically significant gender difference existed between young people in terms of considering 'oppression' as a cause of crime in Bahrain, however a statistically significant residence difference existed at (P=0.013; U=22981.5). Rural young people were more likely to believe that 'oppression' was a cause of crime in Bahrain



compared to urban young people. This result corresponds with the previous result when ‘oppression’ was considered one of the Bahraini community’s problems mentioned by more rural young people as well.

In addition, young people mentioned other causes like unemployment, not having a strong faith and not following religious principles, the government’s ignorance (not solving problems), psychological problems, drugs, and the Internet.

#### **4.2.4.5 Criminals and Rights**

The majority of young people believed in the rights of criminals (Appendix II, Q20).

The results are reported in the following table:

**Table 4.11: Criminals have rights**

Criminals have rights	Count	Percentage
Yes	299	65
No	154	33.5
Not sure	7	1.5
Total	460	100%

No statistically significant gender or residence differences existed concerning young people’s awareness of human rights. Young people stated, in answer to an open-ended question, the rights that criminals should have as, ‘being respected and treated as humans’, ‘getting their citizenship rights’, ‘be defended by a lawyer’, ‘getting a just jury’, ‘getting good counselling and guidance’, ‘getting good and suitable training’ and ‘being able to contact the outside world’. On the other hand, a large proportion thought that criminals should not have rights because they ‘broke the law’ and did not respect it, and by doing so they ‘offended other people's rights’.

#### 4.2.4.6 Young people and Terrorism

Young people did not think crime was justified. The majority of them ‘agreed’ with this statement ‘Terrorism is never justified’ (Appendix II, Q29L). This is made clearer in the following table:

**Table 4.12: Views on the justification of crime.**

‘Terrorism is never justified’	male	female	Sig. (Gen.)
Agree	129 (60%)	139 (56.7%)	*
Disagree	41 (19.1%)	31 (12.7%)	
Not sure	45 (20.9%)	75 (30.6%)	
Total 460 (100%)	215 (100%)	245 (100%)	

\*P<0.05

Data analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant gender difference ( $\chi^2=7.337$ , df=2, p=0.026) between young people and the justification of crime and that more males ‘agreed’ with the above statement compared to females.

To sum up, findings of this section revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship at the p<0.05 level, between young people’s background characteristics (i.e. gender and place of residence) and their conceptions of citizenship, involvement in community affairs and perception of identity. To young Bahraini people in general ‘Citizenship’ signified ‘belonging, rights and responsibilities’, while it signified ‘freedom’ to young people from rural areas. Most young people considered themselves Bahraini, particularly the urban females who almost universally saw themselves as Bahraini citizens.

The most important problems of the Bahraini community, mentioned mainly by young rural young people, were, for example, unemployment, poverty,

discrimination, oppression, housing, etc. The majority of young people believed that they had the ability to solve their community's problems 'to some extent'.

Young people did not justify crimes. The main causes of crime were thought to be poverty, oppression, and social conditions. Rural young people were more likely to believe that 'oppression' was a cause of crime than urban young people.

### **4.3 Rights, Responsibilities and the Law**

This section investigates the extent to which young people are aware of their rights and their responsibilities in a democratic society, looking specifically at their rights and responsibilities to society, home, and school. In addition, this section explores young people's awareness of the need for laws in their society. Besides the statistical analysis derived from the survey data, a range of quotations, derived from the qualitative interview data, are presented in the analysis below in order to provide an indication of the various ways in which young people conceptualise their rights and responsibilities in a democracy.

#### **4.3.1 Rights and Responsibilities**

##### **4.3.1.1 *In Society***

In interviews, young people were asked if they thought that citizens should have rights and to state the rights young Bahrainis should have (Appendix III, Q9-10). All the young people who were interviewed agreed that 'all citizens should have rights' (Zain, urban female); 'every creature on this earth has rights' (Mustafa, rural male); 'any relationship has rights and obligations' (Raquia, rural female); 'of course each individual has rights and since I belong to this country, it means I have rights and



without my rights my life would not be right' (Khatoon, rural female); 'without these rights how can citizens achieve their happiness and stability and fulfil their needs' (Hameed, rural male).

Young people pointed out that citizens should have rights because 'they belong to this land' (Salman, urban male), 'citizens deserve to have rights because they have given whatever they can to the country and have served it' (Razan, urban female), and 'that is what democracy is about' (Rehab, rural female). A young male said 'because God created human beings and gave them their rights, and not admitting this truth means not recognizing that human beings are the power on this earth' (Hasan, rural male).

Here are some of the specific rights of citizens that were indicated in young people's responses:

Citizens must have the right to fulfil their basic needs. They should live safely in their country; have opportunities for getting a good job; they need protection, good health and good education. I believe that citizens should live happily in their family, in their country, and amongst their people (Reem, urban female).

Another student added political, social, and economic rights and related them to good citizenship, he stated:

Citizens should have rights such as political rights, social rights and economic rights. They have the right of freedom, of education, and of health-care. These rights are related to good citizenship. When they get their rights, they will fulfil their responsibilities (Mazin, urban male).

A student who was not sure if he knew the rights of citizens pointed out some important rights, he said:

I do not know those rights. Umm... perhaps as a citizen, I have the right to get my basic needs. I have the right to learn and to get a good education, the right to feel safe and be secure, and the right to have freedom of expression. As a young citizen aged 18, I should have the right to express my opinion, and my voice should be heard. I think it is important to get all my citizenship rights (Jaffer, rural male).

Some young people mentioned other rights citizens in a democratic society should have. For example, they believed that citizens in a democracy should have the right of freedom, to be allowed to express opinions and to live a decent and safe life. Mariam, a rural female said ‘citizens should have the right of education and to get a political education’; ‘to enable them to live a stable life so as to serve their country in a better way’ (Khalid, urban male), ‘citizens needs to lead a fair life where there is equality, to be offered their basic rights, suitable housing, and a stable income because it’s one of the major needs of citizens’ (Raquia, rural female), ‘citizens need secure job opportunities and high standards of living’ (Zain, urban female). Another student said ‘to criticize the head of the country, and have the right to express their points of view’ (Ali, rural male); ‘citizens have their rights and if they don’t receive them, they will not work for the country’s benefit’ (Mustafa, rural male).

As can be seen, young people’s responses indicated that the majority of them understood their rights as citizens. They mentioned rights such as the civil, social, and political rights that any citizen needs in order to perform his/her responsibilities. Moreover, the majority of young people recognized their responsibilities as citizens as well. For example, one stated:

Bahraini citizens have responsibilities; they are citizens in their homeland and should participate to make their country a better place. Without responsibilities we cannot develop our country. Citizens are responsible for making changes in society (Safa, urban female).



Furthermore, other young people argued that a Bahraini citizen had responsibilities towards his/her homeland: 'A citizen can work at developing it, protecting its properties, trying to work hard with other citizens to fulfil its needs, and enhance high standards of living' (Mustafa, rural male). Another student mentioned another kind of responsibility: 'citizens can protect their homeland and defend it from danger and from any external threat, they should protect its reputation and values too' (Khatoon, rural female); 'they should 'be loyal, keep the country safe and not break the law' (Razan, urban female). Another young person asserted:

In a democracy, it is our responsibility to be active and participate in making decisions. If we are not allowed to do so, then we can let our voice be heard by various means; by demonstrations for example (Ali, rural male).

#### **4.3.1.2 *At Home***

A large proportion of young people pointed out that they had rights at home as well (Appendix III, Q11). They said they had the right to freedom, to be loved and respected, to feel equal to other members of their family, and to enjoy their life. Reem, an urban female, said: 'my rights at home are to have the freedom of expression, and to fulfil my needs' (Mustafa, urban male); 'to be offered with good education and good treatment' (Qassim, rural male), 'also, my opinion has to be respected and taken into consideration' (Ayat, rural female), 'I want a life full of love, passion and respect, without interference in my personal life' (Jaffer, rural male).

In addition, young people indicated their right to get their basic needs. They stated they need to live a decent life in which all their basic needs are fulfilled. 'I have the right to get my basic needs, to be offered good food and clothing, a place to live in



comfort' (Khalid, urban male), 'including getting a good education' (Mooza, urban female).

Furthermore, young people mentioned that they needed a suitable milieu for living. Some stated: 'at home, I have the right to have a suitable environment to study in my own room, to access the Internet and have a telephone' (Salman, urban male); 'to be called by a suitable name and to get a suitable milieu for living' (Ahmed, urban male); and 'to live in a proper and calm atmosphere' (Khatoon, rural female). On the other hand, most of the young people pointed out that they were responsible for showing respect to their parents and helping their family:

I have a responsibility to respect my parents, to be obedient to them, to take their advice into consideration, and to appreciate their efforts for what they do for me, to be ready to help them whenever they need me (Mustafa, urban male).

Young people also recognised their responsibilities towards their brothers and sisters and a considerable number of them stated that they were responsible for giving help to all their family members especially their brothers and sisters: 'I am responsible for teaching my little brothers and sisters and helping them with their studies' (Zain, urban female); and 'to help my mother in raising my siblings' (Ahmed, urban male).

On the other hand, young people indicated some responsibilities related to their family as a whole. For instance, some young people said 'at home I am responsible for respecting my family' (Nadeen, urban female), and 'to participate in the housework' (Salman, urban male).

#### ***4.3.1.3 At School***

Almost all the young people indicated that they had rights at school (Appendix III, Q12). Their rights at school were classified into two parts: receiving a good education and having a healthy school environment. This included access to qualified teachers, good textbooks with interesting subjects, and having a stimulating curriculum:

I have the right to get a proper education, to have good textbooks, to have devoted, qualified and professional teachers whose performance is of a high standard (Hasan, rural male).

A number of young people agreed with Hasan, and stated: ‘at school, I have the right to receive comprehensive school textbooks’ (Mooza, urban female); and ‘to be offered a proper syllabuses’ (Khatoon, rural female). One student mentioned the grading system and said, ‘we have the right to have a grading scheme that distinguishes talented young people from others’ (Mustafa, urban male). Safa, an urban female, stated ‘at school, I should have the opportunity to develop my personality, to study and to get a good education within a good school curriculum’. Ahmed, an urban male, mentioned the importance of school facilities by saying ‘schools must offer suitable educational facilities, professional teachers, good classrooms, good tables and chairs, and provide computers in every classroom’. Another student also mentioned that ‘schools should teach politics and make time for political activities’ (Raquia, rural female).

A large proportion of young people mentioned the school environment and suggested that it was their right to have a healthy environment, where they have freedom to express their own views, and where their voice is heard and respected. For instance, this student said:



I have the right to express my opinion freely, whether it is negative or positive, and to participate in decision-making and in school activities and programmes; I have the right to vote in school elections, and to be treated fairly in school (Qassim, rural male).

Other young people asserted that: 'at school, I have the right to have a healthy school environment' (Reem, urban female); 'to enjoy a proper school atmosphere' (Fatma, rural female); 'to be provided with a clean school with healthy food' (Khatoon, rural female); 'to get fair treatment from teachers and all school members' (Rehab, rural female); 'a suitable atmosphere for studying and freedom to express my opinions' (Jaffer, rural male), and 'to be free to choose the subjects I want to study' (Salman, urban male). They also wanted to be respected and recognised for their achievements in school:

My rights at school are to receive a good education, to express my ideas freely, to be respected by teachers and students, and to be recognized and appreciated for the things I do (Ayat, rural female).

Another student said: 'my voice should be heard and considered, I need equality with other students and want to be loved and respected' (Mazin, urban male) while another thought she was entitled 'to be provided with an appropriate environment for study, and to receive encouragement and justice' (Rehab, rural female). Moreover, another student indicated that 'the school principal and teachers should always speak the truth and not lie to students' (Ahmed, urban male). Finally, Hameed, a rural male, said 'I need to be allowed to perform my role in a healthy school climate'.

On the other hand, a large number of young people believed that they also had responsibilities towards their school. They thought they were responsible for keeping the school clean and participating in different school activities and in improving



school programmes. Nadeen, an urban female said ‘I have to contribute to the school committees, events and activities and advise students and administration about problems’. Another stated ‘I have to show respect towards my teachers and school management, appreciate their efforts and contribute to school events’ (Khalid, urban male). In addition, others stated ‘I am responsible for not breaking the school rules and working hard to protect school property’ (Razan, urban female); ‘I should be committed to the school rules and regulations’ (Mariam, rural female); and ‘to do my homework, respect my teachers and the school administration, and listen to their advice’ (Mustafa, urban male). Zain, an urban female, commented on the importance of respect in school:

I have a responsibility to respect everyone surrounding me I mean all school members, from the principal, the teachers, and the students to the cleaners and gardeners.

Ali, a rural male, added ‘I am responsible for respecting the educational authority, cooperating with other students, and performing my duties in a comprehensive way’. Another added ‘I should give my school everything I can to help in its development and to enhance its reputation’ (Mooza, urban female). Khatoon, a rural female, said:

My duties are to study hard, to do my homework, to protect the school’s facilities, to follow the school laws, and to help in making the classroom atmosphere quiet and comfortable for other students.

#### **4.3.2 Role of Citizens in a Democratic Society**

In the survey questionnaire, young people were presented with the option of choosing more than one answer for a set of eight items relating to ‘the role of Bahraini citizens in a democratic system of government’ (Appendix II, Q23). Here the young people

indicated that, in a democracy, Bahraini citizens should: enjoy the freedom of expression, practise their rights, perform their responsibilities, participate in decision-making, accept others’ opinions, and govern themselves. The majority of young people believed that all of these roles were important for Bahraini citizens in a democracy, while only a few young people indicated the opposite. Responses that showed statistically significant differences because of gender and/or place of residence are shown in the table below.

**Table 4.13: The role of Bahraini citizens in a democracy**

The role of Bahraini citizens in a democracy	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban		
	%	%	%	%		
Perform responsibilities	24.2	20.0	32.2	12.7	*	***
Participate in decision-making	24.7	22.3	26.1	12.2	*	*

\*\*\*P<0.001  
 \*P<0.05

Data analysis revealed that a statistically significant gender difference (U=23897.5, p=0.045) and a statistically significant residence difference existed at (U=21827.0, p=0.000) between young people and ‘performing responsibilities’ in a democracy. As can be observed in Table 4.13 above, rural females were more likely to indicate that citizens should perform their responsibilities in a democracy compared with the other young people.

Furthermore, data analysis showed that a statistically significant gender difference (U=23897.5, p=0.05) and a statistically significant residence difference (U=23792.0, p=0.045) existed between young people and ‘participation in decision-making’ as an important responsibility of a citizen in a democracy. It was the urban females who were less likely to see the importance of participation in a democratic society



compared with the rural males, rural females and urban males, as Table 4.13 shows. A large number of the rural females believed the same as this rural female:

As a young citizen, I can help my country by doing many things such as performing my duties towards the family, school and society, protecting the environment, keeping it clean and participating in its development (Ayat, rural female).

Findings revealed that it was the rural females who were more likely to endorse the idea that in a democracy citizens should be responsible and participate in decision-making. They show a better understanding of their role as a Bahraini citizen in a democratic society than the other young people in the study. This implies that the young people in general, and the urban young people in particular, need to develop their knowledge of their role in a democratic society.

#### **4.3.3 Protection of Citizens' Rights**

The young people were asked to mention organisations and institutions, formal or informal, national or international, which are responsible for protecting their rights as citizens (Appendix III, Q13). A considerable number of young people did not know who was responsible for protecting their rights, and therefore did not answer this question. Some of them were not sure, but tried to answer. One student said:

I do not know. Perhaps the police, the king, and the government can protect my rights in Bahrain, but I do not know if there are any others (Mooza, urban female).

The majority of young people mentioned that 'the government' should protect their rights: 'officially, the ministries should protect my rights, such as the Ministry of Interior, which should provide security, or the Ministry of Housing which should offer houses' (Khalid, urban male). In addition, some young people mentioned some other



ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Education.

Some other young people indicated that it was the duty of the National Council, Municipal Councils, the Judicial Council, and the Supreme Council for Women to protect the rights of a citizen. One young citizen said: 'protecting a citizen's rights can be done through the Council of Representatives, the parliament, where they discuss the community's problems, convey the citizens' views and problems and working to resolve them (Nadeen, urban female).

Other young people indicated that some non-government institutions and organisations (NGO's) could protect the rights of a citizen. They said 'some political societies such as Alwifaq, youth associations, and charity associations are fighting for citizens' rights (Jaffer, rural male). Most of the young people agreed that the political societies could play a major role in protecting citizens' rights: 'political societies are protecting people's rights, through peaceful demonstrations by citizens' (Raquia, rural female). Other young people pointed out that: 'international political organisations and human rights societies are the bodies which can protect the rights of citizens when they are violated by their own government' (Ahmed, urban male). A few young people mentioned their parents and others indicated the police as being able to protect their rights.

Other young people were not certain about the institutions that could protect their rights. 'I have no idea, but I think there is a human rights committee in the National council of Bahrain, which can discuss the infringements of the rights of the citizens and tries to solve them (Mustafa, urban male); 'I think having a society, organisation or even committee, which defend human rights in any country is an international

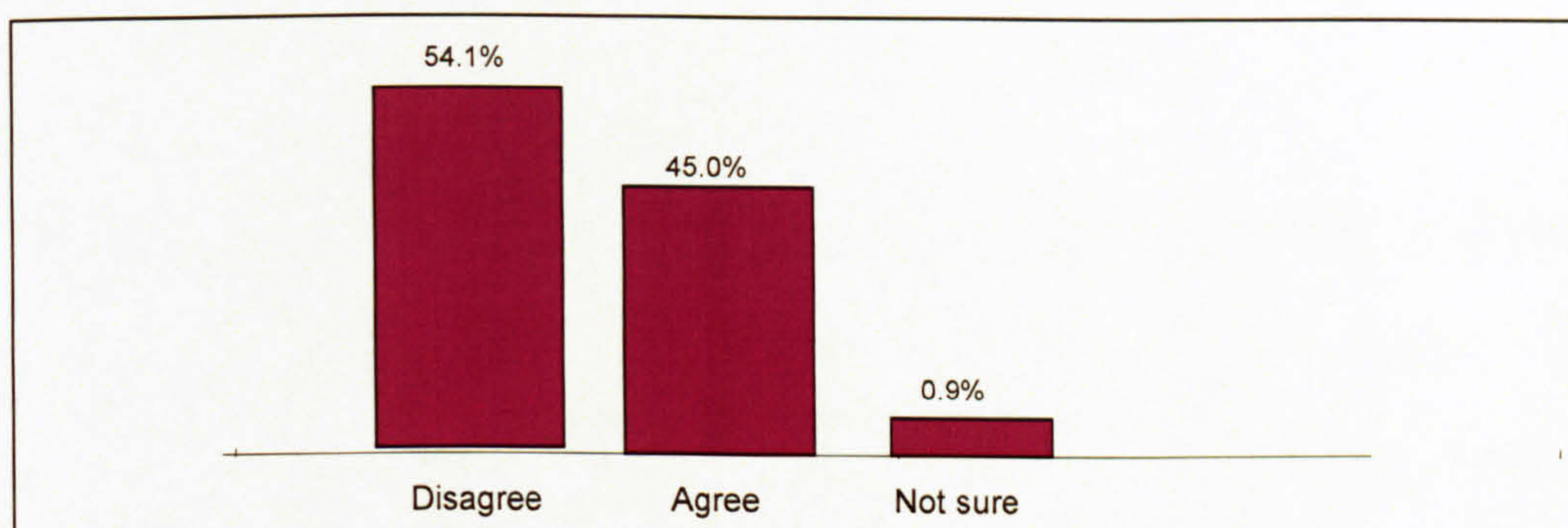
requirement' (Hameed, rural male). Another student said 'I don't think that there is anybody or any institution which could protect our rights in Bahrain, but by introducing laws in society, citizens' rights would be protected' (Mariam, rural female). Safa, an urban female, suggested that 'women's rights could be protected through setting up women's associations to give the women confidence and hope that their rights would be protected'.

#### **4.3.4 Responsibilities towards Society**

In the questionnaire, the young people were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement 'it was the responsibility of the government not individual citizens to create a better society' (Appendix II, Q29p). No statistically significant gender or residence differences existed between young people and the awareness of their responsibility towards their society. However, it is important to highlight that more than a half of young people disagreed with this statement and thought that it was not only the responsibility of the government to create a better society, but also the responsibility of individual citizens. On the other hand, more than one-third of young people agreed and thought that the government was totally responsible for making Bahrain better. This implies that the majority of young people were aware of their responsibility and the government's responsibility as well towards making Bahrain a better society. The findings are presented in the following figure:



**Figure 4.3: The government is responsible for creating a better society**



### 4.3.5 Young People and the Law

#### 4.3.5.1 The Need for Laws

In the questionnaire, young people were asked to give reasons for ‘the need for laws in society’ (Appendix II, Q17). The majority of young people believed that laws were needed to protect people’s rights, organise the relationship between people and society, determine people’s responsibilities, and to practise democracy. The following table presents the results in detail:

**Table 4.14: The needs for laws in society**

The needs for laws in society	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
Protect people’s rights	40.9	40.9	47.3	33.9	-	-
Organise the relationship between people and society	29.8	34.4	40.0	31.8	-	-
Determine people’s responsibilities	27.4	23.7	28.2	18.4	-	-
Practise democracy	29.8	21.4	26.9	16.7	-	*

\*P<0.05

A statistically significant residence difference existed (U=23563.0, p=0.030) between young people and their understanding of the need of laws in society. Data analysis revealed that it was the rural young people who were more likely to indicate that a



democratic society needed laws to ‘practise democracy’ compared to urban young people.

Young people stated further reasons for the need for laws in a community. These were to ‘control and protect the community’; ‘guarantee getting rights’; ‘prevent oppression’, and ‘protect Islamic principles’. Results also showed that young people from rural areas had a better understanding of the need for laws in a democratic society as compared with those from urban areas.

In the interview, most of the young people argued that laws were important to organize the relationship between people and the state and to guarantee the rights of the citizens. This is evident in the quotation below:

Laws are the foundation of society. The good citizen is the one who obeys the laws. They are important in giving rights. I feel that the existence of laws defends my rights when I face any problem in my life (Hasan, rural male).

Another student confirmed that laws make the country a better place to live in. They were seen to be important for the stability of society and to solve conflicts between people:

Laws are important for the stability of the state. Laws can provide security and comfort to its people. If there were no laws in society, there would be conflicts between people, and society would be a mess (Safa, urban female).

#### ***4.3.5.2 Young People’s Perceptions of Bahraini Laws***

When the young people were asked about Bahraini laws and if they disagreed with any of them (Appendix II, Q18), it was found that the majority of young people disagreed with some of the Bahraini laws. A considerable number of young people

were not sure, and had no idea about the laws or whether they agreed or disagreed with them. On the other hand, there were only a few young people who agreed with all the laws in their country. The following table shows their responses in detail.

**Table 4.15: Laws in Bahrain and young people**

‘In Bahrain, are there any laws that you disagree with?’	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
	%	%	%	%		
Yes	63 (59.4)	45 (41.3)	67 (46.2)	27 (27.0)	**	***
No	11 (10.4)	23 (21.1)	20 (13.8)	14 (14.0)		
Not sure	32 (30.2)	41 (37.6)	58 (40.0)	59 (59.0)		
Sub-Total	106 (100)	109 (100)	145 (100)	100 (100)		
Total – 460 (100%)	215 (100%)		245 (100%)			

\*\*\*P≤0.001  
 \*\*P<0.01

A statistically significant gender difference ( $\chi^2=9.243$ , df=2, p=0.010), and a statistically significant residence difference ( $\chi^2=13.991$ , df=2, p=0.001) was found between young people and their awareness of laws of their society. Data revealed that young females were less likely to disagree with laws in the society, and the majority of young people who were less likely to disagree were from the urban areas. Hence, it was the urban females who were less likely to disagree with laws in the society. In contrast, more young males disagreed with certain laws and they were mostly from rural areas.

Young people disagreed with some of the laws in their country, for example, family law, nationality law, property law and the driving license law. Rural young people listed most of the laws which are debated by most Bahraini people, and which are causing problems in Bahraini society. This suggested that rural young people had

more awareness of laws and issues in Bahraini society and, therefore, were more involved in their community compared to urban young people.

#### 4.3.5.3 Law and Human Rights

No statistically significant difference was found between young people and their perception of the statement ‘People should obey a law that violates human rights’ (Appendix II, Q29i). However, it is important to mention that 83.7 per cent of young people believed that people should not obey a law that violates human rights. On the other hand, only 8.0 per cent of young people ‘agreed’ with this statement, and 8.3 per cent did not know or were ‘not sure’.

Furthermore, when young people were asked about their views on whether ‘people should protest peacefully against a law that they believed to be unjust’, most young people ‘agreed’ with this statement; they were mostly young females (See Table 4.16 below), while most males ‘disagreed’ and more females were ‘not sure’ about this.

**Table 4.16: Young people and protesting against law**

People should protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
Agree	89 (84.0)	73 (67.0)	117 (80.7)	68 (68.0)	**	***
Disagree	10 (9.4)	24 (22.0)	11 (7.6)	10 (10.0)		
Not Sure	7 (6.6)	12 (11.0)	17 (11.7)	22 (22.0)		
Total – 460 (100%)	215 (100%)		245 (100%)			

\*\*\*P<0.001

\*\*P<0.01

A statistically significant gender difference ( $\chi^2=9.578$ , df=2, p=0.008) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $\chi^2=13.248$ , df=2, p=0.001) were found between young people on protesting peacefully against a law that they believed to be



unjust. As observed, the urban males were more likely to disagree with protesting peacefully against any unjust law in the society when compared to rural males, rural females and urban young females.

To sum up, the findings of this section revealed that there is a statistical significant relationship at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young citizens' background characteristics (i.e. gender and place of residence) and their understanding of their rights, responsibilities and the need of laws. All young people agreed that they should have rights in society, at home and at school as well and mentioned some civil, social, and political rights that they needed in order to fulfil their responsibilities. However, a considerable number of them did not know who was responsible for protecting their rights in their country. The majority of young people believed that it was not only the responsibility of the government to create a better society, but also it was the responsibility of individual citizens.

A large number of young people believed that laws were needed to organise the relationship between people and society, protect people's rights and determine people's responsibilities. Urban females were less likely to disagree with laws in their society and the urban males were more likely to think that people should not express their opinions by protesting. They disagreed with 'protesting peacefully against any law that people believed to be unjust in their society' compared to other groups.

#### **4.4 Democracy, Politics and Government**

This section explores young people's understanding of the term 'democracy', their awareness of their political role in a democracy, and investigates if young people view their school as a democratic institution. Besides the statistical analysis derived from the survey data, a range of quotations are presented in the analysis below in order to

provide an indication of the various ways in which young people conceptualise the term ‘democracy’ and some other themes related to the democratic process. This is done by analysing the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires and the qualitative data collected through interviews and questionnaires.

#### 4.4.1 Young People’s Conceptions of Democracy

In the survey questionnaire, young people were asked about the meaning of the term ‘democracy’ in an open-ended question to provide them with the opportunity to describe, in their own words, any understandings they currently held of the term (Appendix II, Q22). Given that the political reform movement and the transition towards democracy in Bahrain occurred in 2002, people (adult citizens) had been able to practise their political rights for four years only at the time of this survey (See Chapter One). It was probably unsurprising that some young people (14.1%) stated that they did not know what the term ‘democracy’ meant. However, the vast majority (85.9%) of young people provided a definition of this concept. Table 4.17 below presents young people’s conceptions of the term ‘democracy’.

**Table 4.17: Young people’s conceptions of ‘Democracy’**

Democracy means:	Rural %	Urban %	Sig. (Res.)
Do not Know/ no answer	35 (13.9)	30 (14.4)	*
Freedom	129 (51.4)	121 (57.9)	
Rights and responsibilities	30 (12.0)	8 (3.8)	
Participate in decision-making	20 (8.0)	20 (9.6)	
Equality	28 (11.2)	18 (8.6)	
Rule of people	9 (3.6)	12 (5.7)	
Total 460 (100 %)	251 (100%)	209 (100%)	

\* P<0.05

Statistically, a significant Residence difference ( $\chi^2=12.247$ , df=5, p=0.032) existed between young people and their conception of democracy. Rural young people were

more likely to define democracy as rights and responsibilities and equality. In contrast, to more urban young people, democracy meant the rule of people.

For the purpose of analysis, responses from young people in the survey questionnaire and those from the interviews were grouped into five thematic categories, which represented what democracy meant for young people. These were: freedom, equality, participation, rights and responsibilities and rule of people. Details of young people's responses in each of these categories are outlined below.

#### ***4.4.1.1 Freedom***

To more than a half of the sample, the majority of whom were females, 'democracy' meant 'freedom'. Young people noted that:

Democracy means freedom of thinking as well as freedom of expressing opinions, and most importantly, freedom in choosing our religion and in having our own faith (Mariam, rural female).

Moreover, democracy meant: 'to be free in choosing anything in life and saying anything without fear' (Hasan, rural male), 'exchanging viewpoints with others and taking the best out of it' (Mooza, urban female) and 'no dictatorship' (Jaffer, rural male).

#### ***4.4.1.2 Equality***

To a few young people, democracy meant equality. In interviews, some young people said:

Democracy means to me justice and equality between people and that all citizens have a voice (Hasan, rural male).

And, also:



In a political or economic democracy, the people have a voice (Zain, urban female).

#### ***4.4.1.3 Participation***

It was found that more males recognised the importance of participation in the democratic process, and stated that democracy was ‘participating in decision-making’.

This was elaborated further by one student:

In a democracy, people should participate in the affairs of the country and get involved in everything related to their life in this land. They should have a say in what happens instead of going along with the government’s decisions. These decisions should be discussed and evaluated (Hameed, rural male).

Other young people understood ‘democracy’ as sharing their views with other citizens:

Democracy is about understanding, sharing different ideas with others, and accepting others’ opinion even if this opinion is different from mine (Razan, urban female).

#### ***4.4.1.4 Rights and Responsibilities***

The young people also recognised that their participation in the democratic process was motivated by a sense of personal responsibility for promoting and protecting the rights of all citizens. As indicated in Table 4.15, almost the same proportion of both male and females indicated that democracy also meant ‘rights and responsibilities.

One student stated:

Democracy is giving and taking; it is about taking rights and giving responsibilities. Everyone in this country should have the right to express their views freely (Nadeen, urban female).

#### ***4.4.1.5 Rule of the People***

Very few young people, the majority of whom were male, indicated that democracy was ‘the rule of the people’. One interviewee stated that democracy meant that:

The nation governs itself. That means the people in a nation rule themselves, work with each other, and deliberate their views before taking decisions (Safa, urban female).

Another student also recognised this and went on to say:

Democracy means considering people’s views more than the government’s views (Mazin, urban male).

#### **4.4.2 Perceptions of Bahrain as a Democracy**

In interviews, young people were asked whether they thought Bahrain was a democratic country and to give reasons for their answer (Appendix III, Q18a). Interestingly, almost all young people from the urban areas thought that Bahrain was democratic while, contrarily, almost all young people from the rural areas thought that Bahrain was not democratic. To urban young people, Bahrain was democratic because of the freedom that the citizens had. This quotation summarizes the perception of most young people from urban areas:

Yes, Bahrain is democratic; it has a parliament; 98% Bahraini citizens voted for the national charter in 2002. There is a big difference between what Bahrain was and what it is now. There is freedom of expression. People can comment on anything and newspapers can present different topics, like political and youth debates without hesitation (Razan, urban female).

On the other hand, almost all young people from rural areas had different views and thought that Bahrain was not democratic for various reasons, such as:

Theoretically Bahrain is a democratic country, but in reality it is not because citizens' basic rights are not granted. There is inequality as some ministries are serving only one group of citizens (Rehab, rural female).

Other reasons that the young people mentioned for not viewing Bahrain as democratic included the fact that 'the ruling regime is hereditary and not elected' (Qassim, rural male); 'it doesn't offer a decent standard of living to its citizens' (Ali, rural male); and 'we cannot express our opinions freely' (Fatma, rural female). Moreover, Jaffer, a rural male, said 'there is no democracy and absolute authority is given to the ruler's family'. One student was hopeful about Bahraini democracy and said:

Inshallah [God willing], Bahrain will be more democratic because our democracy has just begun and we can't judge it yet (Salman, urban male).

#### ***4.4.2.1 Their Chosen Country***

Young people were asked if they had a choice to be a citizen of any country in the world, which country they would choose (Appendix III, Q18b). Almost all of young people chose their country 'Bahrain' except five young people who chose other countries. To shed light on this finding, the responses of the young people, who chose Bahrain as the country they felt happiest belonging to and who wanted to remain as its citizens, are presented as follows:

'I will choose no other country; I am Bahraini. I like Bahrain because it is my homeland, I have lived here for 18 years and it is the place where I was born' (Ayat,



rural female); ‘because my family, friends and everybody that I know lives in Bahrain’ (Hameed, rural male); ‘it is a country that is trying to improve in all sectors’ (Mariam, rural female); ‘I prefer to be a Bahraini citizen, because of the feeling of love that I have for my homeland’ (Zain, urban female).

On the other hand, interestingly, all urban males who were interviewed chose other countries. The countries they chose, and the reasons for choosing them, are as follows: ‘I would choose to live in Canada, because I have lived there for sometime, and I have visited it so many times’ (Khalid, urban male); ‘I would choose to live in the United Arab Emirates, because it gives its people more rights than anywhere else’ (Ahmed, urban male); ‘I would choose Qatar, because their standard of living is higher’ (Mustafa, urban male); ‘I would choose Japan, because it is an advanced country. It is peaceful, and its people have a decent life style’ (Salman, urban male); and finally, ‘I would choose Switzerland, because it’s safe and one could live there peacefully’ (Mazin, urban male).

#### **4.4.3 Young People in a Democracy**

##### ***4.4.3.1 Self Image about Being Democratic***

Most young citizens perceived themselves as democratic people, a considerable number of them saw themselves as undemocratic, and a very few saw themselves as being both (Appendix III, Q8). Those who saw themselves as democratic believed that they were so because; ‘I listen to my friends’ opinions; I understand the problems, and I discuss the problems or any issues that may arise between us with them’ (Mooza, urban female); ‘I participate in my school’s activities, and the activities and programmes of my community. I fight for my rights and rights of others’ (Ayat, rural female); ‘I do not participate in the vandalism that is sometimes

carried out by young people, and I serve my country' (Mustafa, urban male) and 'I don't impose my viewpoint on others and I accept others' viewpoints' (Mazin urban male).

Young people, who perceived themselves as undemocratic, thought that mainly for the following reasons:

I'm not a democratic person, because I take decisions on my own without referring to, or consulting with, anyone and because I have not voted at the elections yet (Ali, rural male).

The young people who could not decide if they were democratic or not, saw themselves as being both, for Example:

Sometimes I consider myself as a democratic person, because I respect my community's viewpoints and I practise democracy with my colleagues, and sometimes I'm not because sometimes I force my ideas on others, and I sometimes do wrong things; this is the reality (Zain, urban female).

#### ***4.4.3.2 Models of Democracy***

The young people were asked if they had met any democratic people in their life or if they had found any institutions that practised democracy (Appendix III, Q18c). Some of their comments were 'my family is democratic. We understand each other, discuss our problems and consult each other in decision making, we can express our opinion freely whether it is right or wrong' (Safa, urban female); 'my father is a democratic person; he lets us express our opinions without restrictions' (Raquia, rural female); 'my school principal is democratic with us as young people, she tries to find out our needs and finds suitable solutions. She is like a mother to all students' (Reem, urban female); 'our teachers are practising democracy because we have freedom of

expression' (Salman, urban male). Other young people mentioned particular people such as, 'the King is also democratic; he tries to find out about the needs of the Bahraini people's (Nadeen, urban female); 'Sayed Al Ghurafi, one of the religious leaders and Shaikh Ali Salman, one of the most prominent activists in Bahrain who are calling for citizen's rights and trying to solve different problems' (Jaffer, rural male).

Those who referred to particular institutions and societies as democratic thought that 'there are some democratic models such as Alwifaq, a political society that is really practising democracy, taking decisions only after consulting its members and, in addition, the board members are elected' (Ali, rural male) and 'The Islamic Awareness Society and The Islamic Scholars Council both have an electoral system' (Hameed, rural male).

One young citizen mentioned a training programme he had participated in and found it to be democratic. Ahmed, an urban male, said:

Yes, there is the Youth Achievement Program, which I think is democratic. In this particular program, no one dictates his/her point of view on others. There is a democratic consultative committee, and everyone expresses his/her viewpoints freely.

#### **4.4.4 Democracy and Government**

##### ***4.4.4.1 The Role of the Government***

In order to identify what young people knew about the role of the 'government', they were asked to comment on their knowledge in an open-ended question (Appendix II, Q24b). A total of 132 young people (28.7%) did not answer this question. However,



71.3 per cent of young people attempted to identify the role of the ‘government’. Their responses are presented in the table below.

**Table 4.18: Conceptions of the role of the ‘government’**

Q24b- Government	Male %	Female %	Sig. (Gen.)
Do not know / no answer	79 (17.2)	53 (11.5)	**
Devise laws	54 (11.7)	78 (17.0)	
Fulfil citizens needs / Protect their rights	35 (7.6)	41 (8.9)	
Organize country’s affairs	16 (3.5)	36 (7.8)	
Take rules in action	16 (3.5)	23 (5.0)	
Force people to follow the rules	9 (2.0)	6 (1.3)	
Punish those who break the law	6 (1.3)	8 (1.7)	
Total 460 (100%)	215 (46.7)	245 (53.3)	

\*\*P<0.01

Data analysis revealed a statistically significant gender difference at ( $\chi^2=17.913$ , df=6, p=0.006) between young people and their conception of the role of the ‘government’. A large proportion of young people, the majority of whom were female, indicted that the role of the government was to ‘devise laws’. Only about one-third of young people, the majority of whom were female, mentioned that the role of government was to fulfil a citizen’s needs, to organize the country’s affairs and to implement the laws. In general, young females showed more understanding of the role of the government compared to young males; the majority of whom were from rural areas. This result indicates that, in general, young people still do not have a clear picture of the role of government in their country.

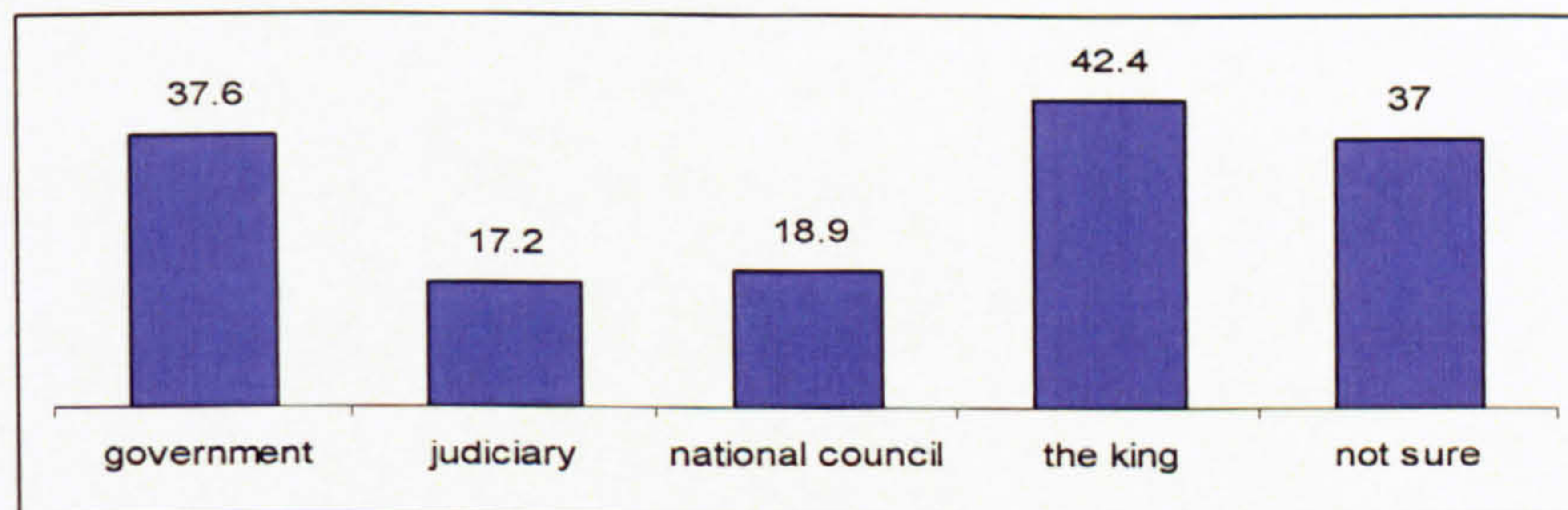
**4.4.4.2 Laws and Bahraini Constitution**

In order to explore the young people’s understanding of Bahraini political system further, and their knowledge about the Bahraini constitution, they were asked to indicate ‘who devises the laws according to the Bahraini constitution’ (Appendix II,



Q21). According to the Bahraini constitution, laws are formulated by the ‘national council’ and approved by ‘the King’. The responses to this question are illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 4.4: Who should devise the laws in Bahrain?**



Data analysis showed no statistically significant gender or residence differences between young people and their knowledge about the Bahraini constitution. However, it seemed important to go through the results to further illuminate young people’s knowledge about the Bahraini constitution. As shown in Figure 4.4, more than one-third of the young people had no knowledge about who devised laws in their country. However, ‘the King’ was the most popular response among young people. More than one-third of young people indicated that the ‘government’ formulates the laws, which supports the young people’s response in the previous question. A considerable number indicated that the ‘national council’ and ‘Judiciary’ devised the laws.

In a further exploration of young people’s knowledge about who devised laws according to Bahraini constitution, the results showed that only a few young people knew the right answer and chose both the king and the national council. This suggests that young people need to expand their knowledge of the Bahraini constitution to understand who devises laws in their country in order to have a clear understanding of the political process in Bahrain.



These results indicated young peoples' lack knowledge about these institutions and their role in a democracy. Young people did not know the content of the Bahraini constitution and perhaps did not even read it, or did not have the chance to see it either in their school or at home.

#### ***4.4.4.3 The Role of the 'National Council'***

No statistically significant difference was found between young people's gender or residence and their understanding of the role of the national council (Appendix II, Q24a). However, it is important to mention that when young people were asked about the role of the 'National Council', 40.7 per cent of young people did not answer the question and wrote that they did not know the role of the national council, while 24.1 per cent of them indicated that the national council 'discusses peoples' problems', 20.9 per cent of young people indicated that this council 'makes decisions and devises the laws', 6.5 per cent of young people suggested that the national council 'defends people's rights through censorship', 5.4 per cent of young people thought that the national council 'devises the laws and the government implements them' and only 2.4 per cent of young people thought that the national council 'organizes the state's affairs'. Interestingly, at the time this study was conducted, the National Council in Bahrain had been working for about four years and the young people still did not have enough knowledge about its role.

#### ***4.4.4.4 Trust in Government and Other Civic Institutions***

Young people were additionally asked to comment on two statements related to the government in a democratic society (Appendix II, Q29a-j). Table 4.19 sets out the total percentages of all young people who responded to these statements.



**Table 4.19: Trust in government.**

Statements		Rural %	Urban %	Sig. (Res.)
People should not criticize the government.	agree	29 (6.3)	48 (10.4)	***
	disagree	199 (43.3)	115 (25.0)	
	not sure	23 (5.0)	46 (10.0)	
Total 460 (100%)		251 (54.6)	209 (45.4)	
Government leaders should be trusted without question.	agree	35 (7.6)	64 (13.9)	***
	disagree	144 (31.3)	73 (15.9)	
	not sure	72 (15.7)	72 (15.7)	
Total 460 (100%)		251 (54.6)	209 (45.4)	

\*\*\*P<0.001

As seen in the table above, a large proportion of young people ‘disagreed’ with the statements ‘people should not criticize the government’ and ‘Government leaders should be trusted without question’. Data analysis showed a statistically significant residence difference at ( $\chi^2 = 31.252$ , df=2, p=0.000) for trust in the government. Young people, the majority whom were rural young people, ‘disagreed’ and thought that people should criticize their government, while more urban young people ‘agreed’ with it.

In addition, some young people ‘disagreed’ with the statement that ‘government leaders should be trusted without question’ with a statistically significant residence difference at ( $\chi^2 = 28.125$ , df=2, p=0.000). Data analysis revealed that the young people from rural areas were more likely to ‘disagree’ with this statement compared with urban young people who thought that government leaders should be trusted without question.

**4.4.4.5 Voting and Elections**

Young people were asked about ‘the age at which people are eligible to vote in Bahrain’ (Appendix II, Q26). According to the Bahraini constitution, young people can vote at age 21. Since most young people in the sample were aged 18, they could not vote. The majority of young people (62.0%) knew the right answer which is at the

age of 21, while 32.6 per cent thought that people are eligible to vote at the age of 18. A few young people (5.4%) thought it was at the age of 23.

**Table 4.20: The age at which people are eligible to vote in Bahrain**

Q25- People are eligible to vote in Bahrain at	Count	Percentage
The age of 18	150	32.6
The age of 21	285	62.0
The age of 23	25	5.4
Total	460	100%

No statistically significant gender or residence difference existed between young people and their knowledge about the right age for voting. As stated earlier, about two-thirds of the young people knew the right age for voting. In the survey, young people were asked to choose the ‘reasons for voting’ from a list (See Appendix II). The highest percentage of young people believed that the reason for voting was to ‘choose community representatives’, and more than a half of them thought that the reason for voting was that citizens could ‘exercise their political rights’. More than one-third of them thought that it was only ‘to show that people live in a democratic society’, while, a few of the sample believed that ‘it is an obligation’.

The young people were asked if they thought women could vote in Bahrain. Results showed that a great proportion of the young people (87.6%) believed that ‘women could vote’. Only 5 per cent thought that ‘women could not’ and 7.3 per cent of young people did not know the answer.

When young people were asked to give their opinion (agree or disagree) about whether ‘It is every adult's duty to vote at the elections’ (Appendix II, Q29g), the

majority of young people ‘agreed’, around one-quarter of young people ‘disagreed’ and a few of them were ‘not sure’. Results are presented in the table below:

**Table 4.21: Young people and the duty of voting at the elections.**

It is every adult's duty to vote at the elections	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Total	Sig. (Gen.)
Male	119 (55.3)	61 (28.4)	35 (16.3)	215 (100%)	**
Female	169 (69.0)	43 (17.6)	33 (13.5)	245 (100%)	
Total	288 (62.6)	104 (22.6)	68 (14.8)	460 (100%)	

\*\*P<0.01

A statistically significant gender difference existed at ( $\chi^2 = 9.941$ , df=2, p=0.007) between young people and their knowledge about voting at the elections. The majority of young people who agreed were females. In interviews, the young people were also asked if voting at the elections was important. The majority of them felt the same way as this young person:

I believe that voting at the elections is important. Since the citizen is a part of this country, his or her voice can make a big difference. It is very important for us as citizens to vote at elections to choose our representatives, to practise our political right and to choose the best people for the national council (Reem, urban female).

Some young people endorsed the view that at the elections people need not just vote but also to choose the right people:

Sure, voting at the elections is important because it is necessary to elect suitable members with whom people are satisfied (Khalid, urban male).

This was elaborated further by another student:

It is very important to vote at the elections to choose our representatives and to get the right person, who is qualified to be in this position. This elected person should discuss people's



problems and not think of his or her own benefit (Ali, rural male).

#### ***4.4.4.6 Bahraini Citizens and Minority Ethnic Groups.***

When the young people were asked if they thought that ‘different ethnic groups could unite to fulfil the national goals and purposes’ (Appendix II, Q14), the majority of them (53.5 %) thought that this unity was possible, while 46.1 per cent of them thought that this unity was impossible and would not happen. The young people gave different reasons for their answers. They suggested that Bahraini people could unite by sharing common things, respecting others’ opinions, loving their country, developing it, practising democracy, following the Holy Quran and having a good constitution. Some of them elaborated this further:

Our unity can be only possible if we all work together hand in hand, avoiding fanaticism, and calling for equality and justice and trying to solve the problems all Bahrainis face (Ayat, rural female).

On the other hand, young people, who thought that it was impossible for different groups to unite, believed the reasons for this to be different opinions; different religions; different sects within the same religious group; discrimination; fanaticism and intolerance. It was clear that some young people felt that unity was impossible between different groups. This theme was followed up in the interviews and is illuminated by comments such as:

Unity is impossible and the one who thinks it is possible is dreaming. I do not think that this can happen. We are different groups with different beliefs. What we suffered and experienced in the past was different from their experiences (Jaffer, rural male).

### 4.4.5 Young People and Politics

#### 4.4.5.1 The Role of Political Parties in a Democracy

Young people were asked to give their opinions about two statements related to the political parties (Appendix II, Q29c-d). These statements and young people responses are presented in the following table:

**Table 4.22: Young people’s opinions about statements related to politics**

Statements		Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
		rural	urban	rural	urban		
		%	%	%	%		
Political parties are an important way for people with similar views to make their opinions known.	agree	67 (31.2)	48 (22.3)	100 (40.8)	62 (25.3)	*	***
	disagree	8 (3.7)	22 (10.2)	8 (3.3)	12 (4.9)		
	not sure	31 (14.4)	39 (18.1)	37 (15.1)	26 (10.6)		
	Sub- Total	106 (49.3)	109 (50.7)	145 (59.2)	100 (40.8)		
Total - 460 (100%)		215 (100%)		245 (100%)			
Political parties/associations do more harm than good.	agree	19 (8.8)	37 (17.2)	31 (12.7)	18 (7.3)	**	-
	disagree	49 (22.8)	34 (15.8)	47 (19.2)	26 (10.6)		
	not sure	38 (17.7)	38 (17.7)	67 (27.3)	56 (22.9)		
	Sub- Total	106 (49.3)	109 (50.7)	145 (59.2)	100 (40.8)		
Total - 460 (100%)		215 (100%)		245 (100%)			

\*\*\*P<0.001  
 \*\*P<0.01  
 \*P<0.05

A considerable number of young people ‘disagreed’ with the statement that ‘political parties are an important way for people with similar views to make their opinions known’ with a statistically significant gender difference at ( $\chi^2 = 8.422$ , df=2, p=0.015) and a statistically significant residence difference at ( $\chi^2 = 14.564$ , df=2, p=0.001).

More young males who disagreed with this statement were from urban areas compared to others.

On the other hand, a statistically significant gender difference ( $\chi^2 = 10.295$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.006$ ) was found between young people and their perception about the importance of political parties. Young males were more likely to ‘disagree’ with the statement ‘political parties/associations do more harm than good’, and thought that political parties/associations could be good for the people.

As can be seen in the table above, young people from urban areas had different views from those who were from rural areas, and that rural young people had a better understanding of the role of political parties in a democratic society.

#### ***4.4.5.2 Attitude towards Politics***

In interviews, young people were asked whether they were interested in politics (Appendix III, Q27). Analysis revealed that a considerable number of young people, the majority of whom were from rural areas, showed an interest in politics. They expressed sentiments similar to those quoted below:

Yes, as a citizen, I should be interested in politics. Without politics we cannot make changes in our country Bahrain, or in the world. Politics make us reach our goals for a better life and solve our different political problems (Raquia, rural female).

Similarly, other young people stated ‘I would like to know more about politics and I care about our political problems’ (Hameed, rural male); ‘I have a great deal of interest in politics because it enables us to get our rights’ (Mazin, urban male); and ‘as a woman, I have an interest in politics and I support it strongly because I think politics



is not only related to the government or the people's situation, but is also connected to so many things in our daily life' (Khatoon, rural female).

On the other hand, some young people, the majority of whom were from urban areas, did not have an interest in politics. They referred to the political problems in society, to some political parties and leaders, and some referred to the complexity of politics:

I am not involved in politics as I'm a simple person, who follows his superiors and community's symbols, but I do not follow them in everything, and there is no political party that suits me (Salman, urban male).

Another student referred to his youth, and believed that his voice would not be heard:

Actually, I have some political knowledge, but I have no interest in politics because I'm still quite young for all this, and also the elders will not accept our ideologies and beliefs or even opinions (Mazin, urban male).

Some pointed to the complexity of politics:

I am not interested in politics. I do not understand politics. Politics is something boring, tiring and very much complicated (Reem, urban female).

Others felt that politics generated conflict in society:

I don't like politics. Politics makes conflicts between people, and there are too many political problems, I prefer to stay away from it (Mariam, rural female).

This lack of interest in politics could explain their low political knowledge and the lack of understanding of the role of politics in a democratic society.

4.4.6 School and Democracy

4.4.6.1 Participation in School Activities

The young people were asked ‘about their participation in a number of extra-curricular activities in school’ with the option of ticking one box on a three point scale (never, sometimes, often) (Appendix II, Q31). At school, the young people never had the opportunity to practise some activities related to democracy. The table below presents the ones which were found statistically significant.

Table 4.23: Activities young people ‘never’ had the opportunity to practise

At school, young people NEVER had the opportunity to:	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
Form political groups/clubs	45.1	42.8	54.7	36.3	-	-
Form human rights groups/clubs	42.8	40.5	50.2	30.2	-	*
Participate in the student council	19.5	24.7	33.9	20.0	*	*
Express your opinion freely	16.7	16.3	18.8	9.0	*	*
Research and analyze information from different sources	11.2	15.8	9.0	10.2	*	-
Participate in debates or small group discussions in class	12.6	12.1	9.8	6.1	**	-

\*\*P<0.01

\*P<0.05

As we can see, in the table above, a large proportion of young people ‘never’ had the opportunity to practise the activities that were mainly related to politics. Statistically significant residence differences at (p=0.013; U=23765.5) were found between the young people and their endorsement of ‘forming human rights groups’. It was found that the highest proportion of young people who indicated that they never had the chance to practise these activities were from rural areas.

Furthermore, a statistically significant gender difference (p=0.039; U=23696.5) and a statistically significant residence difference existed at (p=0.014; U=23516.5) between

young people and their views on participating in the student council. It was the rural females who were more likely to indicate that they never had the chance to participate in the students' council.

A statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.028$ ;  $U=23693.5$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.019$ ;  $U=23548.5$ ) were also found between young people and their attitudes about 'expressing their opinions freely' in school. Data analysis revealed that it was the females from urban areas who were the least likely to participate in this activity compared to other young people, i.e. rural males, urban males and rural females. Furthermore, some young people indicated that they never had the chance to 'research and analyze information from different sources' in their schools with a statistically significant gender difference at ( $p=0.027$ ;  $U=23463.5$ ). More males indicated that they never had the chance to practise this activity compared with females.

Finally, a statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.009$ ;  $U=22920.5$ ) showed that males were less likely to 'participate in debates or small group discussions in classes' than females. These findings were endorsed by the young people in the interviews.

These young people believed schools could become democratic institutions:

Schools can be democratic by forming a student council through real voting and elections, rather than choosing them without any valid criteria. This will allow the students to vote for their representatives and choose the one who is more qualified, has a strong personality, and is able to make changes (Safa, urban female).

They also stated that:



Schools can be democratic by listening to students’ opinions about school matters like exam timetable and the extra-curricular activities and programmes (Rehab, rural female).

4.4.6.2 School Curriculum

In the survey questionnaire, young people were asked how often the school curriculum allowed them to learn about and discuss the topics presented in the figure below (Appendix II, Q30). Table 4.23 presents the topics that were ‘never’ presented in the school curriculum from young people’s perspective:

Table 4.24: The topics that were ‘never’ presented in school curriculum.

The topics that were ‘never’ presented in school curriculum	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %		
Politics and government	40.9	35.8	44.5	27.3	*	-
Voting and elections	38.6	35.3	42.4	29.4	-	-
Democracy	35.3	30.7	30.6	20.8	***	-
Laws	26.5	24.7	19.6	14.7	***	-
Human rights	32.6	21.9	18.8	11.0	***	*
Role of media	20.5	20.5	13.9	11.0	***	-

\*\*\*P<0.001  
\*\*P<0.01  
\*P<0.05

A large proportion of young people mentioned that the school curriculum ‘never’ encouraged them to find out about and discuss ‘politics and government’. A statistically significant gender difference (p=0.024; U=23775.5) was found between young people and their perception about this topic, as males were more likely to indicate that the school curriculum ‘never’ encouraged them to know or discuss topics related to ‘politics and government’. A large number of young people also indicated that the school curriculum ‘never’ encouraged them to discuss topics related to ‘democracy’. A statistically significant gender difference (p=0.003; U=22586.5) existed as males were more likely to indicate that the school curriculum ‘never’

encouraged them to discuss topics related to 'democracy' compared to other young people. 'Laws and responsibilities' was a topic that was not seen to be encouraged by the school curriculum with a statistically significant gender difference at ( $p=0.000$ ;  $U=21507.5$ ). More males believed topics related to teaching 'laws' were not encouraged or discussed in the school curriculum.

Another topic that young people found was not encouraged in the school curriculum was 'human rights' with statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.000$ ;  $U=19367.5$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.043$ ;  $U=23597$ ). Data analysis revealed that more males indicated that the school curriculum 'never' encouraged discussion of topics related to 'human rights'. Further analysis revealed that more rural males indicated that the school curriculum 'never' encouraged them to discuss topics related to 'human rights'. Finally, a statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.002$ ;  $U=22337.5$ ) was found between young people and their views on whether or not they were encouraged to discuss the 'role of media' as a topic in the school curriculum. Analysis revealed that more males indicated that the school curriculum 'never' encouraged them to discuss topics related to the 'role of media' compared with females.

In the interviews, young people suggested some subjects that the school should teach. A large proportion of young people suggested subjects related to politics, democracy and the quotation below expresses the sentiments of the majority of young people:

I think that there are many subjects that are more important than others. School subjects like Physics, Chemistry, and Geography are not important and should be substituted by subjects related to citizenship and democracy. For example, The Constitution, The National Charter, and The Parliament (Fatma, rural female).



Some young people suggested that schools should pay more attention to Bahraini history, culture, and political system. Jaffer said:

The school has to teach its students about Bahrain's constitution and how to conduct political and historical lectures about Bahrain (Jaffer, rural male).

Some suggested the strategy the schools should follow when teaching these subjects:

Teaching politics and citizenship is important, but teaching these subjects should be different from others, which means no examinations should be held for them and they should not be limited to support classes. Schools should help in forming groups and going for tours throughout the country (Ahmed, urban male).

A few young people suggested that areas such as 'ethics and good behaviour' should be optional subjects that the students themselves could choose (Zain, urban female).

#### ***4.4.6.3 Time Spent in Teaching about Citizenship***

Young people were asked about 'the time spent in teaching about citizenship and democracy' in their school (Appendix II, Q32). The majority (78.5%) of young people believed that 'no time' was spent on teaching these topics while a few (10.9%) of young people thought that 'adequate time' was spent and almost the same proportion (10.7%) of young people thought that 'too little time' was spent in teaching these topics. Table 4.24 below presents the results.

**Table 4.25: Time spent in teaching about citizenship and democracy**

Time spent in teaching about citizenship and democracy	male	female	Percentage	Sig. (Gen.)
	%	%		
Adequate time	3.	7.8	10.9	**
Too little time	5.0	5.7	10.7	
No time	38.7	39.8	78.5	
Total	46.7	53.3	100.0	

\*\*P≤0.01



The results show that there was a statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.01$ ;  $U=23973$ ) between young people and their responses to this question regarding the time spent on teaching citizenship. More than three-quarters of the young people, the majority of whom were female, thought that ‘no time’ was spent on teaching citizenship and democracy, while very few of them thought that ‘adequate time’ was spent on teaching these topics.

Moreover, when young people were asked about ‘the importance of secondary schools in teaching about citizenship and democracy’ (Appendix II, Q33), the majority did not know. Very few thought it was ‘not at all important’, and, about one-quarter of them thought that it was ‘very important’. Table 4.26 presents the findings of the young people’s responses to this question according to the place of residence.

**Table 4.26: The importance of secondary schools in teaching about citizenship and democracy**

The importance of secondary schools in teaching about citizenship and democracy.	Place of Residence		Total	Sig. (Res.)
	Rural	Urban		
Do not know / no answer	33.9	22.2	56.1	**
Very important	14.1	15.7	29.8	
Somewhat important	4.8	3.3	8.0	
Not at all important	1.7	4.3	6.1	
Total	54.6	45.4	100.0	

\*\* $P<0.01$

A statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.005$ ;  $U=22671$ ) was found between young people’s beliefs about the importance of teaching citizenship and democracy. Rural young people were more likely to acknowledge teaching citizenship and democracy compared to other young people.

In the interview, the young people indicated the importance of teaching these issues in order to improve their knowledge about citizenship and democracy, the majority had opinions similar to the young people quoted below:

Schools should teach citizenship and politics in order to give us the chance to know our rights and responsibilities, our political role and our political system. It should teach us the national charter and the constitution (Ayat, rural female).

Also:

Schools should teach democratic values, such as accepting others' opinions, and tolerance (Khalid, urban male).

#### **4.4.7 Young People's Views about their Civic and Political Knowledge**

Young people were asked to 'rate their knowledge' about some topics relating to democratic citizenship by using a scale of (1-4) 'none; very little; average; extensive' (Appendix II, Q35). The analysis of the findings is discussed below:

##### **4.4.7.1 Rights**

A statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.001$ ;  $U=22100$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.002$ ;  $U=2254$ ) was found between young people and their knowledge about their rights. Analysis revealed that rural females were more likely to rate their knowledge about their rights from 'average' to 'extensive'. Urban males thought that they had 'very little' knowledge about their rights and only one per cent of young people, most of whom were rural males, thought that they 'did not have' any knowledge about their rights.

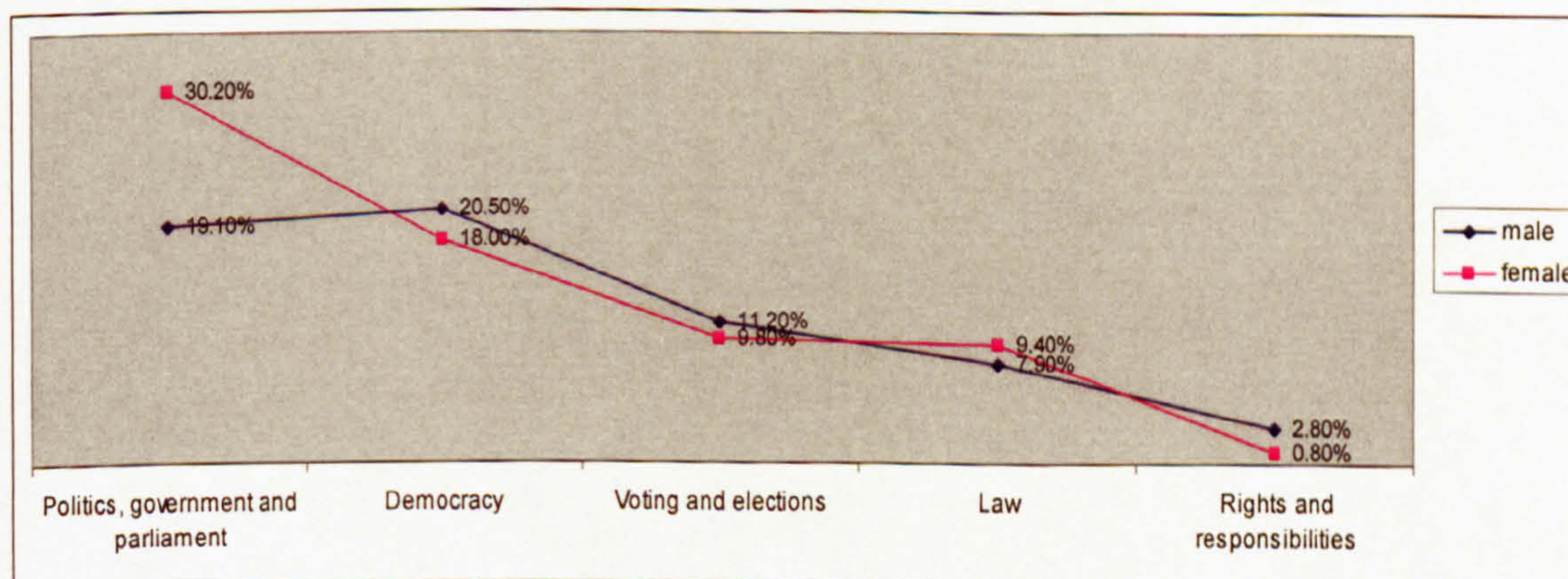


#### 4.4.7.2 Politics, Government and Parliament

A large number of young people (42%), the majority of whom were female, indicated that they had ‘very little’ knowledge about politics and government with a statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.001$ ;  $U=22057.5$ ), compared to males who rated their knowledge from ‘average’ to ‘extensive’.

With regard to young people’s knowledge about ‘law’, ‘voting’ and ‘democracy’, analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant gender or residence difference. The topics that young people had no knowledge about are presented in Figure 4.5 below:

**Figure 4.5: Topics young people had ‘No knowledge’ about**



About one-quarter of the sample, mostly females, mentioned that they had ‘no’ knowledge about politics and government and law; while most males mentioned that they had ‘no knowledge’ about democracy, voting and elections and rights and responsibilities.



#### 4.4.8 Young People’s Sources of Information

When the young people were asked to rank ‘their primary sources of information about citizenship and democracy’ (Appendix II, Q34), they ranked their ‘frequent sources’ as shown in Table 4.27 below.

**Table 4.27. Frequent sources of information about citizenship and democracy**

The sources of information	Male		Female		Sig. (Gen.)	Sig. (Res.)
	rural	urban	rural	urban		
Parents/ Family	25.1	25.6	38.4	29.0	***	-
The Internet	27.4	24.7	35.9	19.2	-	-
Newspaper	25.1	23.3	31.0	24.5	-	-
Television	19.1	21.4	28.6	23.7	**	-
Mosques / Religious scholars	23.3	24.7	22.0	12.2	**	-
Radio	14.0	17.2	20.4	17.1	*	*
Friends	13.0	14.4	15.1	10.6	-	-
Associations/organizations	14.9	13.0	12.7	7.3	-	-
School/Teachers	7.9	9.3	10.2	8.2	-	-
Youth Clubs	2.8	7.0	3.3	1.6	-	-

\*\*\*P<0.001  
 \*\*P<0.01  
 \*P<0.05

A considerably greater proportion of females thought that the ‘family’ and the ‘mass media’ (the Internet, television, newspapers and radio) were ‘frequent sources’ of information for young people and saw ‘friends’ and ‘school/teachers’ as ‘occasional sources’. More males thought that ‘youth clubs’ were ‘not a source’ of information to them.

Data analysis revealed some statistically significant differences between young people and sources of information. The sources of information, which were found to be statistically significant, are found shaded in Table 4.27. A statistically significant gender difference was found at (p=0.000; U=21918.5) with more females indicating that ‘parents/family’ were their most frequent source of information.

With regard to 'television' as a source of information, a statistically significant gender difference was found at ( $p=0.005$ ;  $U=22661.5$ ). Females were more likely to consider 'television' as a frequent source of information, compared to males. A statistically significant gender difference ( $p=0.017$ ;  $U=23168$ ) and a statistically significant residence difference ( $p=0.012$ ;  $U=22902$ ) existed between young people and their endorsement of 'radio' as a frequent source of information. Data analysis revealed that rural males were the least likely to consider the 'radio' as a frequent source of information.

A statistically significant gender difference existed at ( $p=0.002$ ;  $U=22148$ ) for the statement on 'mosques and religious scholars' as a source of information. A greater proportion of males considered the 'mosques and religious scholars' as a frequent source of information about citizenship and democracy compared with females.

The young people mentioned other sources of information, such as: lectures, bulletins/brochures and books. It was mostly young people from rural areas who mentioned the above sources while, for both young people from rural areas and young people from urban areas, 'lectures' were one of the main sources of information. They believed that their information was gained, 'from different media such as, television, the Internet and other people (Sadiq, rural male), 'from my family, books, cultural programs and events' (Fatma, rural female) and, finally, 'my father is my source of information about democracy and life' (Mooza, urban female).

Other young people pointed out that besides getting information from their family and the mass media, their local community and religious leaders were other sources of information. For example, one student said:



I have some knowledge about what is going on in my community and politics, which I get from the local community, my family and from lectures by religious leaders (Ali, rural male).

In the interview, the majority of young people indicated the role their parents had in influencing their knowledge and in forming their attitudes. Here are some examples:

My father is kind, understandable, and democratic. He is a good listener too. He always advises me and guides me. I like him and am happy to have him as a father. My mother is also kind, passionate, and understanding. Like my father, she is a good listener too. I like my mother. My personality is like hers. She always gives me advice for the future. I like my parents, they care about me and guide me, but at the same time they do not interfere in my life or in my decisions (Safa, urban female).

Some young people mentioned that their parents had a role in involving them in community activities. Mustafa, a rural male, said:

My father is a farmer, but he plays a big role in the community through participating in its activities. My mother is a housewife. She is wise, patient and social. She communicates with her family, neighbours and our village community. She attends almost all the activities in our community. She has the same role as my father in influencing my choices in life.

#### **4.4.9 Leisure Activities**

The young people were also asked how they spent their leisure time. The majority of them indicated that they spent their leisure time either watching television or surfing the Internet. They mentioned specific programmes that they liked to watch on the television. For instance one respondent said:

I watch television daily. I like to watch everything, comedy shows, intellectual, political, religious and social programmes, episodes and Investors programmes. 'The Investor programme' taught me the basics of dealing with others,



directions, different things of life, building up a leadership personality. It does have an influence on building up my personality through gaining different kinds of information (Mazin, urban male).

On the other hand, Razan, an urban female, only selectively watched television:

I don't watch television much, but I watch my favourite shows, like those directed towards youth and entertainment and educational programs. Those programs are educational, advisory and directive. However there are some programs which I find useless.

Raqia, a rural female used the Internet for specific purposes. She said 'I surf the net sometimes to do my school research and to log on to political websites'. Another respondent said 'I use the Internet for about four hours a day at the most; going through various websites about Bahrain and participating in Bahraini forums'. Hameed, a rural male, said 'I surf the net for a maximum for one hour daily, logging on to sport websites, going through local newspapers'.

With regard to reading, a few young people had read more than seven books during the past three months before the interview. Here is one of them:

I read more than seven books during the last three month. I enjoyed reading religious books, such as: 'The Family in Islam' and 'Contemporary History of Bahrain'. The first book was an educational one and I learnt a lot from reading it. In addition, I like reading about Bahrain's history to get to know Bahrain's culture. I think my reading helps me to form my personality and lets me know more about my religion. Some books make me confident; by giving me the knowledge I need and help me to understand life (Reem, urban female).

#### **4.4.10 Preparing Good and Democratic Citizens**

##### ***4.4.10.1 Role of the Family***

In the interview (Appendix III, Q20), young people indicated that the family had a major role in preparing the children to be democratic and to participate in a democracy. Salman said:

A good citizen is a part of a good family. If we have a good family, we can gain a good citizen and the whole society will be good for its members (Salman, urban male).

Furthermore, young people believed that by living in a democratic environment at home, children would know the meaning of democracy, and how to be democratic and they would accept others' opinions and respect others' rights, as well. By doing that, they said, children could participate in developing their country to compete with other developed countries. In addition, young people believed that the family should train its children to love their country, to respect their traditions, and to express their opinions freely:

The family should be trained to behave properly: to respect people's feelings and efforts, to try not to hurt others, to be understanding, to be good listeners, to avoid damaging property, and to discuss different matters in a logical way (Raquia, rural female).

One student mentioned the importance of the family's role in calling for rights. Jaffer, a rural male, said:

Parents should teach their children to struggle for human rights and to participate in different community activities and programmes by encouraging them to participate in the relevant public events.

Other young people mentioned that the family had a role in preparing its children to practise democracy by helping them to learn about democracy through different media, such as television, the Internet, books and magazines. One student argued that ‘these democratic characteristics would definitely benefit our homeland in general and the community in particular’ (Nadeen, urban female).

#### ***4.4.10.2 Role of the School***

Almost all young people believed that schools also had a role in preparing young people to participate in a democratic society (Appendix III, Q22). They thought that schools should guide and teach young people democratic knowledge, values and skills by providing suitable textbooks, which focus on developing the qualities for good citizens, and by practising democracy through different school activities. This might include debating different topics like their right of education and discussing their educational problems.

Democracy can be practised by letting young people express their opinions freely and by letting them participate in school activities and educational programs: school lectures, clubs and groups, for example, and by voting and making the young people’s council more active (Mustafa, urban male).

Also:

Schools, like home, should guide young people right from the beginning; I mean in primary school, and teach them about real democracy, and good citizenship (Mariam, rural female).

They argued that schooling ‘should not be limited to conducting examinations for young people’ (Reem, urban female); ‘schools should be ‘educational and advisory’ (Khalid, urban male); furthermore, ‘it is the school’s role to provide knowledge about democracy and citizens’ rights and responsibilities’ (Fatma, rural female). Hameed, a



rural male, said ‘democracy should not be learnt theoretically, but it should be practised on a daily basis’. Overall, young people believed that schools should help their students to play a role in the democratic life by enforcing mutual respect between all school members, e.g. teachers, young people and so forth.

A small minority of young people argued that the ‘school plays no role in preparing young people to participate in democratic life’ (Qassim, rural male), and Ahmed, an urban male, said that the ‘school had a minor role in preparing a good citizen’.

#### ***4.4.10.3 Role of the Community***

A large number agreed that the community should play a big role in preparing citizens for democratic life to generate feelings of belonging among citizens (Appendix III, Q21). One student thought that:

In a democratic society, mass media such as, television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet should play an important role in guiding its citizens and helping in the activities and programmes of the society (Zain, urban female).

In addition, young people thought that the community could help its citizens ‘by encouraging them to participate in the elections when they can vote’ (Ali, rural male); ‘to hold workshops, seminars, conferences and forums to educate people’ (Ayat, rural female); ‘by providing training programs that are related to the principles and values of democracy’ (Nadeen, urban female); and ‘by educating the citizens about the conception of democracy through television and newspapers’ (Khatoon, rural female).

A few young people indicated that they had no idea about the role of the community or they did not believe it had a role. Mazin, an urban male, said ‘I have no idea of the community’s role in preparing citizens for a democratic life, but a calm, peaceful,

place can make good citizens'; and for Rehab, a rural female, 'preparation for democracy comes only through the role of individuals. If individuals are democratic, the whole community will be democratic'.

A considerable number of young people believed that political parties, the 'National Council', the parliament and its representatives should participate in preparing citizens to be democratic and knowledgeable about democracy, voting and elections, freedom of expression, their political role in a democracy and their political rights. This could be done through social and political associations and organizations' workshops and lectures, by discussing youth's problems and life in Bahrain, and by developing good relations between Bahraini citizens, which can prepare young people for a better future.

To sum up, the findings revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship at the  $p < 0.05$  level, between young citizens' background characteristics (i.e. gender and place of residence) and their conceptions of democracy and government, their awareness of their political role and their perceptions of the role of schools in a democracy.

For the majority of young people, democracy meant 'freedom'. More urban young people thought democracy meant the rule of people, while more rural young people thought democracy meant rights and responsibilities and equality. Regarding young people's awareness of issues related to politics, rural young people show a greater awareness of politics and, therefore, more understanding of their role as citizens in a democracy. A large number of young people had never had the opportunity to participate in political activities in their schools. Some never had the opportunity to express their opinions freely or to criticize their schools, teachers, or textbooks.



## **4.5 Summary of the Findings**

The following are the findings found in relation to gender and residence (urban/rural) variables:

### ***4.5.1 Findings according to Gender***

Young Bahraini females think that good citizens should tolerate others' opinions, be proud to be Bahraini, obey the laws, and be loyal to country leaders. They often sing the national anthem in their school, and are more likely to believe that practising their rights and enjoying freedom of expression are important right for citizens in a democratic society. They are more likely to say that citizens perform their responsibilities and vote at the elections. They know more about the role of the 'government'. They think that their schools did not spend any time on teaching about citizenship and democracy. They indicate that their parents/family and television are their most frequent sources of information about citizenship and democracy.

Young Bahraini males are more likely to believe that in a democracy people should govern themselves. They think that participating in decision-making is an important role for citizens in a democracy. Males lack knowledge about the role of government. To them the government devises laws, forces people to follow the rules, and punishes those who break the law. They believe that 'terrorism' is never justified and think that Bahrainis lack the civic and political programmes, and that political parties can be good for the Bahraini people. In school, males never had the opportunity to participate in 'research and analyze information from different sources' and 'participate in debates or small group discussions in class'. They report that topics related to 'politics and government, democracy, laws and the role of media' were never presented in the



school curriculum. They indicate that mosques/ religious scholars are their most frequent sources of information about citizenship and democracy.

#### ***4.5.2 Findings according to Place of Residence***

Rural young people see citizenship as affiliation and belonging, rights and responsibilities, nationality, and freedom. They believe that good citizens should struggle for democratic rules and principles, be interested in public affairs, follow what is happening in government and politics, and avoid intolerance and fanaticism. They view unemployment, lack of proper housing, discrimination, and oppression as community problems. They indicate that ‘oppression’ is the main cause for crime in Bahrain. To them, ‘democracy’ means rights, responsibilities, and equality. They are more likely to see the importance of laws to practise democracy in society. They disagree with some of the Bahraini laws and think that ‘people should protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust’. They believe that ‘people should criticize the government’ and think that ‘government leaders should not be trusted without question’. The vast majority of them indicate that they never had the opportunity to form political or human rights groups/clubs. They think that these activities are important for young people of their age. On the other hand, urban young people see citizenship as living in the country ‘Bahrain’. They believe that good citizens should be loyal to country leaders

#### ***4.5.3 Findings according to Gender & Residence***

Rural males believe that discrimination and oppression are community problems. They think laws are important to practise democracy in society. Despite their disagreement with some of the laws in Bahrain, rural males believe that laws are important to practise democracy in society, and think that people should protest peacefully against

a law that is unjust. They report that topics related to ‘human rights’ are never taught at school.

Rural females never had the opportunity to ‘participate in the student council’ and ‘express opinion freely’. They indicate that the ‘radio’ is their most frequent source of information about citizenship and democracy. They believe that performing responsibilities is an important role of citizens in a democracy. In contrast urban females are more likely to identify themselves as Bahraini than any of the other groups. They are less likely to see performing responsibilities as their role as citizens in a democracy. They are also less likely to see participating in decision-making as an important role of citizens in a democracy. They believe that good citizens should ‘be loyal to the country leaders’. Urban males are less likely to see the importance of the political parties for people. To them political parties/associations do more harm than good.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicates that there is a noticeable awareness of citizenship. Young people appear to have a good knowledge and understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, they are aware of their community issues, but they are not greatly involved in community associations or activities.

Furthermore, young people seem to have some knowledge and understanding of democracy, they are aware of the need for democratic schooling. On the other hand, they show little understanding of politics and government and indicate their main sources of information on these topics are mainly the family and mass media. Young

people want changes in the school curriculum and the introduction of school subjects related to democracy, citizenship, and politics. It could be noted that if the goal of political socialization is ultimately to promote democracy and competent citizenship, then the structure of the educational system, the staffing of the school, and the underlying assumptions of the curriculum, tasks, and evaluation process need to reflect the spirit of democracy.

Interestingly, more females, mentioned that they had ‘no knowledge’ about politics and government and the law while more males mentioned that they had ‘no knowledge’ about the democracy, voting and elections, and rights and responsibilities. It can also be noted that the majority of young people lack knowledge of the Bahraini constitution; the role of the government and the national council.

Almost all of young people chose ‘Bahrain’ as the best country and wanted to remain its citizens. Rural young people showed more understanding of their role as a Bahraini citizen in a democracy compared to urban young people. Urban young people thought that Bahrain was a democratic country because of the freedom citizens had. In contrast, rural young people thought that Bahrain was not democratic due to the inequality that is practised by the government.

Finally, a considerable number of young people indicated that government and non-government institutions should participate in preparing Bahraini young citizens to be democratic for a better future.



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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions and the interpretations of the findings of the study. It reports my reflections on this research and summarizes the lessons learned about young Bahraini citizens. It then discusses the possible implications of such lessons for the development of citizenship education in Bahrain.

This study was undertaken in order to find out if young people graduating from secondary schools in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy, using the stated conceptual framework, the specific aims and objectives, and the research questions and hypotheses.

The research hypotheses were explored with reference to young people's background characteristics (i.e. gender and place of residence) and the levels of civic and political knowledge that they hold. It was hypothesised that there was a statistically significant relationship, at the level of  $p < 0.05$ , between young people's gender and place of residence and their conceptions of some elements related to the following three domains: firstly, citizenship, community and national identity; secondly, rights, responsibilities and law; and finally, democracy, politics and government.

In order to make sense of the findings, the discussion of the research hypotheses is compared and contrasted with the findings, the views, theories, issues and research

that are presented in the literature review in Chapter Two. To better understand the findings of this study, the following two research questions were addressed:

What do school students actually understand about citizenship and democracy?

What do students really need in order to improve their competency in a democracy?

The exploration of the young people's understanding of the constructs of citizenship in this study, as outlined above, was designed to illuminate the present state of citizenship education in the Secondary Schools of Bahrain, and then to make recommendations for developing citizenship education in Bahraini schools.

A strategy for citizenship education in Bahrain is suggested; it aims to enhance the local situation and potentially inform national guidelines on citizenship education. In addition, the ensuing discussion considers the limitations of this research and makes recommendations for future direction of research in this area.

## **5.2 Citizenship, Community and Identity**

To test the first hypothesis, I examined young people's conception of citizenship, their concerns about community issues, and explored their perceptions of their identity.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their conceptions of citizenship, community and their perceptions of their identity.

### **5.2.1 Conception of Citizenship**

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their conceptions of citizenship.

Citizenship is defined in the literature (See for example, Commission on Citizenship



1990; QCA 1998; Patrick 1999; Cogan and Derricott 2000; Parekh 2000; Banks 2004; and Huddleston and Kerr 2006) as membership of a political community, which carries with it rights and responsibilities. It is sometimes referred to as nationality and often implies involvement in public life and affairs to improve life for all citizens.

Although not all young people in the present study knew what citizenship meant, 'citizenship', as exemplified in their responses, was congruent with Crick's three constructs of community involvement; social and moral responsibility; and political literacy (QCA, 1998). As noted above, a statistically significant relationship is found between young people's conception of citizenship and their place of residence. Young people's conception of citizenship is characterised by a tendency to identify citizenship with love and loyalty to their nation state. One-third of the young people, the majority of whom were from rural areas, referred to citizenship as a sense of belonging to a nation state and commitment to a community. This association is noted by Osler and Starkey (2003) when they argue that citizenship involves a sense of belonging. In addition, one-quarter of young people, the majority of whom were from rural areas, referred to it as the rights of people and emphasised obligations to the country, as well.

Since 'a citizen is a member of a political community or state', and being a citizen 'depends upon different factors, for example place of birth, family ties or the duration of residence in a country' (Huddleston and Kerr, 2006: 2), the affective dimension of the young Bahraini citizens towards the political community is very important. It has taken-for granted value and contains special meaning for them. There was a tendency to mention the importance they placed on their status as Bahraini citizens. This emotional tie for such a status was common. Their feeling of belonging and affiliation with their motherland was generally evident in the survey and the interviews. This

group thinks that holding Bahraini nationality or simply living in Bahrain, which more urban young people reported as being important, is not enough to be considered a 'citizen'. They believe that it is the feeling of belonging, and love and affiliation to a country that are more important. A very small number of the young people in both groups mentioned the importance of caring about other people in the community.

Such responses can be attributed to lack of a clear idea of citizenship in both groups and reveals a sense of uncertainty about their citizenship status. 'Different types of political systems require a different type of citizen', i.e. the rights and responsibilities of individuals living in a democratic society differ significantly from those living under a totalitarian regime (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 144). To be a citizen of a democratic state requires active citizenship, where citizens are willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life (QCA, 1998). This lack of clarity of the meaning of citizenship seems to persist even after the political reforms in Bahrain, which indicate that there is a need to broaden young people's knowledge and understanding of the meaning of citizenship and the status of being a citizen.

### ***5.2.2 Young People's Identity***

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their perception of their identity. The literature suggests that citizenship is a civic identity (Habermas, 1998) in which people see themselves as citizens belonging to a particular group or nation-state (Isin and Wood 1999; Kymlicka 2001). Identities are labels, names and categories through which people shape their identities (Basit, 1997). With regard to perceptions of identity, this study shows that the vast majority of young people perceived themselves



as being Bahraini, an identity that included a sense of belonging and loyalty to their country, Bahrain.

Thus, there is a strong sense of a Bahraini identity among young Bahrainis. However, the urban females were significantly more likely to identify themselves as Bahraini than any of the other groups, were most likely to find 'demonstrations' as a problem in their community, and least likely to consider the teaching of politics as important. This revealed that this group is not interested in political issues and is not aware of what living in a democracy really means. They do not understand that there is a strong relationship between democracy and politics and that 'demonstrating' for example, is a legitimate practice in any democratic society. However, despite the indifference of a minority of young people, the majority's emotional reaction to national symbols reveals the existence of an emotional affiliation with the Bahraini nation and the state. The findings of this study suggest that, for more females, the Bahraini flag and the national anthem produce feelings of love, affiliation, respect, and appreciation for Bahrain. More females express a sense of pride at being Bahraini and such emotions can be attributed to their strong affiliation to Bahrain.

Although some young people are rather confused about their citizenship status and a few are indifferent to the national anthem, in general, their feelings about being Bahraini nationals are evident. In interviews, the vast majority of young people chose Bahrain as their favourite country in the world and stated that they were proud and happy to belong to it, wanted to remain its citizens, and to continue to live there. They chose Bahrain because of their birthplace or nationality, or because of its history, culture and religion. Such emotions of loyalty for the motherland and a willingness to sacrifice their lives for it, also, show young people's concern for the future of their motherland. Therefore, belonging seems to be a significant element in the social



psyche of young Bahraini citizens. This strong sense of belonging shapes their civic identity. In short, there is a strong identification with their status of citizenship as well as strong emotional ties with such a status.

As the majority of young people stress their strong affection for Bahrain, it can be argued that this is partially because of the special emphasis placed on the affective dimension in the school curriculum, which nurtures the feeling of love and loyalty to the country and the ruling family. These emotions are reflected in many topics in the curriculum, such as Bahrain's glorious history, traditions, language and culture. Those topics are distributed across a range of different subjects in the school curriculum and across the different stages of schooling (Ministry of Education, 2002). One of the main objectives of the Bahraini educational reform, as stated by the Ministry of Education (2001) is:

Affirmation of the integrated upbringing of the citizen, so as to deepen his/her faith in God, sense of belonging to the country, allegiance to the Amir, and respect for the cultural heritage, while developing the spirit of initiative to enable him/her to contribute to society's coherence, unity, solidity and development (p.37).

Another reason for this strong identification with their nation-state can be attributed to the rise of global competition among different nation-states. In a world influenced by globalisation, the Bahraini System of Education is also affected by these economic, political, and cultural influences. These influences create conflicts and dilemmas that lead the educational systems to enhance a national identity (Ministry of Education, 2004a). In light of this, it is interesting that some young people in this study mention that people should unite to counter external threats to their country. When people turn their attention towards external threats, such as a perceived Western threat to the

Middle East, it is understandable that they become more tolerant of authoritarian rule at home.

### **5.2.3 *Community Involvement***

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their concern about community issues. In this study, young people's involvement in the community was explored by investigating their concern about community issues and their attitudes to participation in social services. This is based on the idea that community involvement can be measured by citizens' active participation (Banks, 2004).

The literature suggests that young people who are involved in their communities tend to be more knowledgeable and better citizens (Koliba, 2000) and are more likely to stay involved throughout their lives (Hennes 2001; Torney-Purta and Vermeer 2006). The young people in this study, particularly those from rural areas, are involved in their community and have a wide knowledge of, and strong concern about, community issues. The problems in the community, as perceived by the young people, are economic, political, social, religious, educational, and environmental. The problems, which were found to be statistically significant, are unemployment, discrimination, oppression, lack of housing, and a dearth of educational programmes to improve people's civic and political awareness. Since these problems are more pertinent to young people living in rural areas, they are more cognisant of, and involved in, community issues.

In Bahrain, economic and political problems are becoming more widespread and serious. More rural young people consider unemployment, lack of proper housing, discrimination, and oppression to be the most serious problems that Bahraini society



faces today. Based on official studies (UNDP 1998; BCHR 2004), it is evident that the rate of poverty is increasing in Bahrain. The vast majority of the unemployed are Bahraini nationals, i.e. one unemployed Bahraini among every 10 employed foreigners (UNDP, 1998: 74). There are 20,000 unemployed Bahrainis now and it is worth mentioning that the unemployed and their dependents do not receive any financial support from the government, which is in contradiction to the provisions of the constitution. Around 44,000 low income families have been on the waiting list for government subsidised housing for up to 12 years or more and official statistics show that there are 6,000 ruined houses [in rural areas] (BCHR, 2004).

With regard to the problem of discrimination, it is evident, as stated earlier, that the young people believe that a love of Bahrain is the most important reason for considering themselves as Bahraini citizens. In contrast, those who do not consider themselves as Bahraini citizens, the majority of whom are rural young people, give one of the reasons as not getting their civic and political rights as citizens and their disappointment with discrimination in the country. This consequently generates negative feelings about national symbols in some young people.

More males' lack of interest in the national anthem may be attributed to the fact that they do not sing it in school on a daily basis, and because they disagree with the lyrics, which praise the ruler, whom they feel has a role in the oppression and the discrimination that they face. In addition, a few males from urban areas reported that their favourite country was not Bahrain. The reasons that they gave were varied such as, the countries that they favoured were better at giving their citizens their rights, at respecting their citizens and fulfilling their needs, were safer, and the standard of living there was higher. This finding reflects what Bahraini young people feel they need from their state, including, importantly, citizenship rights.



These responses are consistent with a report about Bahrain, published by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour (BDHRL, 2006), which states that ‘the Bahraini government places limitations on the exercise of rights’ (Sec.2a). Even though Bahraini people live in a democratic state, as laid down by the constitution, the existence of perceived problems such as discrimination and oppression make them ‘feel like foreigners’ in their own country despite holding Bahraini nationality and consequently prevents them from having a sense of belonging and feeling like true citizens of their country.

Despite the political reforms, the old problems of Bahrain have not been eliminated. In addition to sectarian discrimination, there is protracted conflict between the government and the opposition, mounting unemployment, high rates of poverty, and a rising cost of living (Middle East Report, 2005). In the Bahraini context, educational, social, and municipal services, particularly in the villages, are inferior to those found in urban communities (BDHRL, 2006: Section 2c). Urban young people are less likely to be aware of their community problems as these problems are less evident in big cities. Urban females consider ‘demonstrations’ as a problem in the Bahraini community, and urban males are against ‘protesting even if it is peaceful and against any laws that people perceive as being unjust’. However, in a democracy people often carry out peaceful demonstrations to ask for their rights. A report by BDHRL (2006) states that in Bahrain ‘there were public demonstrations over foreign policy, unemployment, personal status laws, housing shortages, human rights abuses, and other issues’ (Section 2a).

By emphasizing the problems that Bahrain faces and young people’s dissatisfaction with their life situation, most young people show a desire to solve the problems of their community. They want to participate in making changes in their country by

getting involved in voluntary social services and feel an obligation to serve their community. A few young people participate as volunteers in community centres serving people in need, doing charity work or joining youth associations. By doing so, they admit that they also want to develop their skills and gain useful experience. Despite wishing to do so, many young people do not take part in such activities because of various constraints, such as time and resources. Many young people have a heavy homework load and some have to do part time jobs in order to help their family, something they regard as a high priority.

There is general feeling that individual efforts can bring about changes within the community. However, more than one-third of the young people perceive individual young citizen as powerless to change the state-wide political reality. They are of the opinion that actions by individuals are useless and negative experiences in real life situations discourage them from active participation in citizenship. They have a negative view about the usefulness of political action and are wary of the power exercised by those in control. The disbelief that young people can exert an influence to bring about change partially explains why they rank items related to participation in politics, such as struggle for democratic rule, being an active member of a community organization and working or volunteering in a political campaign, relatively low. This feeling of detachment in some young people, as mentioned in the interviews, may be a defensive tactic to protect themselves from being viewed as troublemakers.

A general tone of powerlessness can also be discerned. The young people feel they have to tolerate the fact that the rights of people are not being fully protected, despite the stipulation in the constitution, and they dare not take action to redress this injustice. Therefore, their negative views and attitudes towards the policies of their government, their lack of confidence and their apprehension and worries about the



whole political reform movement is related to the political, social and economic problems that Bahraini society is encountering.

### **5.3 Rights, Responsibilities and the Law**

To test the second hypothesis, I investigated the extent of young people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, specifically, their rights and responsibilities as children at home, as students at school, and as citizens in society at large. The findings reveal that there is a statistically significant relationship between young people's gender and place of residence and their understanding of their rights and the need for laws at the  $p < 0.05$  level. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between young people's gender and place of residence and their understanding of their responsibilities as citizens at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Patrick (1991) and Osler (2000b) describe rights and responsibilities as two sides of the same coin. The enjoyment of rights obligates the holder of the rights to fulfil corresponding responsibilities. In congruence with this, the vast majority of young people recognise that rights are often matched by responsibilities. They indicate that the term citizenship implies having citizenship rights and carrying out duties for self, families, local communities, and the state at large. Most of them highlight the importance of caring for and respecting others and stress the part that citizens should play in maintaining the welfare of their country and working for developing it.

#### **5.3.1 Rights of Citizens**

The basic premise of human rights is that they are entitlements that protect human dignity (Osler and Starkey, 1996), which encompass the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural domains of people's lives (UDHR, 1948). Since all the young



people in this research are Muslims, it is important to mention that the human rights of privacy, freedom, dignity, and equality are guaranteed in Islam and ‘there is no compulsion in religion’ (The Holy Quran, 2: 256).

With respect to the rights of a citizen, the young people are ‘learning about being a citizen and about what rights they have on a daily basis’ (Davis, 2000: 12). At home, most of them had the right to freedom of expression, being loved and respected, being treated equally with other members of the family, getting their basic needs and having a suitable milieu for living. At school, they all agree that they have the right to good education and a healthy school environment. In society, the young people believe that citizens have civic and political rights and relate them to good citizenship. For them, citizens need to satisfy their basic needs such as having a good job, good health, and good education along with being safe in their country. As citizens in a democracy, they call for their political rights, for example, the right to freedom in general and freedom of expression, in particular. They believe that in a democracy they should have the right to criticize, and to be given the opportunity to lead a life where there is equality with and respect for others, thus showing a clear understanding of their rights as citizens.

The young people stress the rights of the citizen, and rank the qualities of a good citizen to be related to these rights. For example, from twenty-four qualities listed in the questionnaire, they rank defending their own rights as the most significant for a good Bahraini citizen, and the struggle for human rights as the seventh most important quality. Moreover, a statistically significant difference was found between young people’s gender and place of residence and their understanding of human rights at the  $p < 0.05$  level. Young people believe that even criminals should have the right to be treated as humans, be given access to a lawyer, a just jury and to be allowed to

communicate with the outside world if imprisoned. This implies that this understanding of human rights will develop their desire to work to secure and defend these rights for themselves and others. Nevertheless, a considerable number of young people in this study do not know who is responsible for protecting their rights as citizens. More than one-third of rural males blame their school for 'never' encouraging them to find out about and discuss topics related to human rights.

Despite the continued reality of the massive violation of human rights around the world, it has been argued that today people are living in the age of rights and going through a rights revolution (Bobbio 1996; Ignatieff 2000). All over the world, people are talking about human rights, linking them to democracy, economic development, and to various political and social processes, including social and cultural institutions such as schooling. In Bahrain, the constitution provides for equality, equal opportunity and the right to medical care, welfare, education, property, and work for all citizens. However, these rights are unevenly provided, depending on the individual's social status, sect, or gender (BDHRL, 2006: Sec.5).

The young people in my research believe that there are restrictions placed on them by the state and are dissatisfied with this situation. For instance, they believe that they should have the right to vote in elections at the age of 18, as opposed to the current voting age of 21. Young people of 18 who are members of 'Alshabeeba Youth Society' protested on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006 asking for the right to vote in elections (Abdulla, 2006). Bahrain has recently made an effort to create a youth parliament, but the government had placed a restriction on activating it, which has made young people feel that the government was not serious regarding this matter (Almarzooq, 2007). In an article a young person who is a member of a citizenship project funded by the British Council in Bahrain states:



Our government have signed a commitment to the UN convention on the rights of the child. They should abide by article 42, which states that children should be informed about their rights. As part of the commitment young people should have local, national and international youth representatives and a discussion board such as a youth parliament ... to bring the views of young people to the lawmakers and [to enable them to] make positive contributions [to society] (Abdulla, 2006: p.8).

In my study, more rural young people complain of the practices of discrimination. In the interviews, females were more likely to complain of practices that involve gender discrimination. For example, regardless of the high grades female students achieve (91.9% female students as compared with 78.7% male students got higher grades in 2005/2006, according to the Ministry of Education, 2006), more government scholarships are given to male students. The Directorate of scholarships in the Ministry of Education announced that more scholarships were allocated for male students (Ministry of Education, 2006). Moreover, the BDHRL (2006) reports that domestic violence against women and discrimination based on gender, religion, and ethnicity remains a problem in Bahrain. The UDHR (1948) states that rights should be equally applicable to all people, at all times, with no right being more important than another, and that rights are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

According to the BDHRL report on human rights practices (2005), 'the Bahraini government continues to infringe citizens' privacy rights, and it restricts the freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of associations, and imposes limits on the freedom of religion and freedom of movement' (Sec.3). For example, on February 2007, the head of the Bahrain Youth Society was prevented from attending a seminar for youth about developing democracy and human rights in Cairo (Alayam, 2007). Moreover, one young female recently stated in an article 'Give us our rights' that



‘young people have many rights and one of the most important right is respect... This lack of respect is due to the difference of beliefs between those in power, i.e. the government and the people’ (Alorayedh, 2006: 8). Widespread mistrust of the government might have reinforced young people’s tendency to stress the rights of the citizens; i.e. freedom in particular.

In addition, Bahraini young people have witnessed the Bahraini government’s continuous infringements of human rights until very recently. ‘Torture appears to have been most prevalent between 1994 and 1999 when civilians sought the return of a liberal Constitution and their Parliament’ (REDRESS, 2001: 4). This may be one of the reasons, which led rural males to participate in demonstrations calling for their rights. Therefore, there is concern among males in particular about the lack of some of citizens’ civic and political rights and the need to make improvements in this area. These views are the result of their experiences of unsatisfactory citizenship conditions in their country. These concerns lead to a desire to see reforms by the government in which the rights of the citizens are better realised.

### ***5.3.2. Responsibilities of Citizens***

Patrick (1999) argues that, ‘the status of citizenship entails very important responsibilities and duties that must be fulfilled because if they are not, democracy is disabled’ (p.2). Also, if citizens of a democracy are to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities, they must first understand their rights and take responsibility for them. No statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people’s gender or place of residence and their awareness of their responsibilities as citizens. The young people in this study recognise that rights are often matched by responsibilities with the majority of them indicating that the term

citizenship implies not only getting rights but also performing responsibilities. Young people think that it is not only the responsibility of the government to create a better society, but also the responsibility of individual citizens.

Article 29 of UDHR (1948) categorically declares that free and full development of the human personality entails fulfilment of duties to the community. Young Bahrainis believe that membership of their community carries an obligation to contribute to the development of their country. They view a good citizen as someone who is an active member of the community and they consider community participation to be a right and a responsibility at the same time.

A considerable number of the young people rank being responsible towards the family and the community as the second most important quality for a good citizen. Other qualities that the young people perceive as important attributes in developing their country include protecting public property, developing democratic awareness, and preventing discrimination. Young people seem to believe that protection of the interests of the group is equivalent to the protection of individual interests. They think that different community or ethnic groups can unite to fulfil the goals of the whole nation. In their opinion, Bahraini people can unite by loving their country, generating equality and sharing and accepting differences. Most young people highlight the importance of caring for and respecting others and focus on the role that citizens can play in maintaining the welfare of their country.

Bahraini young people, who appear to be optimistic about their own future, appear to be committed to the future responsibilities of adult life. They are concerned about environmental destruction, growing crime and violence, and social inequality. They feel responsible as citizens for the wellbeing of future generations. This understanding



is an important prerequisite for participation in democratic life. Nevertheless, the future of Bahraini democracy depends largely on young Bahrainis gaining competence in participating as citizens to carry out their civic responsibilities, both in Bahrain and in the wider world.

### ***5.3.3 Understanding of the Law***

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their understanding of the need for laws. The findings show that young people, females in particular, do not want to break the law. In general, all young people accept that it is necessary to 'obey the laws' in consideration of the interests of the group. Moreover, this quality is viewed as one of the most important qualities of a good citizen and was ranked fourth in the survey by more than three-quarters of them, the majority of whom were females. In the survey questionnaire, the young people gave reasons for the need for laws in society. Most of them believe that laws are needed to safeguard people's rights, to formalise the relationship between people and society, determine people's responsibilities, and to safeguard the practice of democracy.

About three-quarters of young people, the majority of whom are rural males, endorsed the idea that society needs laws to safeguard the practice of democracy. In addition, they supported the idea of peaceful (lawful) demonstrations by arguing that 'people should protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust'. It seems that rural young people are more aware of the laws in their country. While these young people understand the need for laws, they are also aware of the need for 'just' laws. For example, they disagree with some of the laws that cause problems in their community, and a large proportion of them believe that 'people should not obey a law



if it violates human rights'. This illustrates rural young people's understanding of the infringements of citizens' rights. This is supported by the report of the BCHR (2006), which notes that most Bahraini people are against the laws that affect their lives in a negative way and make the lives of decent law-abiding citizens difficult. They, therefore, want these laws to be changed. The young people in my study thought that it was their responsibility as citizens 'to recognize and overcome contradictions of ideals concerning equality of rights for all citizens, such as unjust denial to certain persons or groups of their rights to participate in government or to fair treatment in the courts of law' (Galston, 1995: p.48).

The literature stresses that understanding the law enables people to make sense of and deal with everyday law-related problems, and helps them to understand their legal rights and obligations (Breslin and Dufour, 2006). Almost all young people who participated in this study believed they had very little knowledge of the Bahraini civil and criminal laws, which they should understand in order to participate as citizens in a democracy. They noted that the school curriculum did not encourage them to understand and discuss topics related to law. This implies that law-related issues have not been covered in the curriculum and young people need to know more about their country's laws and thus have a voice in evaluating government policies that affect their lives.

#### **5.4 Democracy, Politics and Government**

The third hypothesis was tested to explore young people's understanding of the term 'democracy', their awareness of their political role in a democracy, and to investigate if young people view their school as a democratic institution. The findings of the study show that there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of  $p < 0.05$

between young people's gender and place of residence and their conceptions of democracy and government, their awareness of their political role and their perceptions of their schools as a democracy.

#### **5.4.1 *Conception of Democracy***

In a democracy, the people govern themselves and are considered the foundation of political life (Breslin and Dufour, 2006). A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's residence, gender and their conception of democracy. Fourteen per cent of the young people in the study did not answer this question and perhaps did not know what democracy meant. The vast majority of respondents defined democracy as freedom. Rural young people were more likely to define democracy as rights and responsibilities and equality. In contrast, to most urban young people, democracy meant the rule of people.

Since democracies are built on the belief that people should be free (Keeter *et al.*, 2002), most of the responses that emerged from the survey equate democracy with freedom; an understanding that was repeated in the interviews. For about half of the young interviewees, democracy meant freedom of thought, expression, and choice of religion. This was supported by the findings on the role of Bahraini citizens in a democracy, when a similar number of interviewees, the majority of whom were from rural areas, noted that citizens should enjoy freedom of expression, should practise their rights and should perform their responsibilities. For most urban young people, citizens should accept others' opinions and govern themselves.

Breslin and Dufour (2006) argue that freedom is an extremely important concept in the context of citizenship. In this sense, young people believe that someone who respects people's freedom is a democratic person. They put forward various models of



democracy. Some view their parents as democratic, either the mother or father or both; while a few see people such as the school principal, some teachers, the King, the religious leaders, and some popular political activists in Bahrain as democratic. They view these people to be democratic because they respect an individual's freedom or call for it.

Moreover, a few identify certain institutions as democratic, such as Alwifaq Political Society, The Islamic Awareness Society, and The Islamic Council. This may be a reflection of the fact that these organisations embody democratic principles, as 'political societies operate much like political parties and hold internal elections, campaign for public support, and host political gatherings (BDHRL, 2006: Section 2b).

Interestingly, most young people also perceived themselves as democratic for reasons similar to those mentioned earlier, such as endorsing principles of respecting others' opinions, thoughts and ideas, participating in school and community activities, and protecting their own rights and those of others. Here the young people are clearly relating democracy to human rights, which suggests that there is an understanding and conscious commitment to the fundamental values of human rights and democracy, such as freedom, equality and fairness.

Parker (2003) and Banks (2004) argue that democracy needs to be experienced by young people in order for them to internalise democratic values and beliefs. The majority of young people in the study have embraced the concept of democracy, and some of the associated values, but very few of them understand the wider implications of the concept. Values related to the preservation of the way of life in a democracy are regarded as more important. However, democracy is perceived as an ideal rather than a



real life objective about which one has to acquire relevant knowledge and to shape it through participation.

Flowers (2000) notes that participation in the democratic process involves a conscious commitment to the fundamental values of human rights and democracy such as equality and fairness, and the ability to recognize problems such as racism, sexism, and other injustices as violations of these values. This participation is engendered by a sense of personal responsibility for promoting and protecting the rights of all. The young people in the study show a developing understanding of democratic values and regard knowledge about the actual functions of democracy such as struggle for rights and participation in democracy as important. Three-quarters of young people in the study consider struggling for democratic rules and principles as one of the most important qualities of a good Bahraini citizen.

The literature shows that in a democracy, citizens are the ultimate source of authority, their interests and welfare are the principal goals of the government, and their rights are the foundation of justice, the ultimate standard of good society (Parker 2003; Patrick 2003). Bahrainis have lacked trust in their government since the introduction of the new constitution in 2002, which many Bahrainis do not accept (Alsayed *et al.*, 2002). Because it effectively suspended some of the previous constitutional rights relating to an individual's rights to security and liberty. In addition, a few of the interviewees stated that there was no role for citizens in decision-making because the absolute authority was in the hands of the ruling family. The BDHRL (2006:1) notes that 'The constitution states that the King is head of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government'. In interviews, young people, the majority of whom were from rural areas, stated that they found Bahrain to be undemocratic due to the continuous infringement of citizens' rights, inequality and discrimination. These

factors have led to loss of trust in the government as Havel (1985) suggests that 'neo-totalitarian regimes no longer strive to control fully the bodies and souls of their subjects' (p.8). In this context, the young people's stress on the need to introduce and preserve a democratic way of life and the rights of the citizens in Bahrain is understandable.

More than one-third of the young people thought that they had very little knowledge of voting and the electoral system. This finding is supported by the fact that three-quarters of them stated that the school curriculum did not encourage them to find out about and discuss topics related to voting and elections. However, the findings reveal that two-thirds of the young people knew that they did not have the right to vote at their age and could vote at the age of 21, according to Bahraini constitution.

A large proportion of young people, females in particular (Table 4.21), believed that voting at elections was important for a number of reasons, for example, to enable citizens to choose their community representatives, and to exercise their political rights. A few of the young interviewees considered themselves to be undemocratic for not having participated in any elections or in a process of consultation in decision-making yet. There was an awareness not just of the importance of voting at elections but also of choosing the appropriate representatives. Young people thought that elected officials should care about what people think and consider people's opinions in policymaking. Some of the young people believed that the Bahraini parliament was ineffective as the elected members did nothing to solve the problems of the Bahraini people.

In short, democratic citizenship requires more than voting to elect their representatives; it requires using one's voice, and being able to act. 'It involves



dialogue and debate not simply between parliamentary representatives, but also between ordinary citizens (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 114). This study suggests that the meaning of democracy is unclear to young people and they only have a partial view of what it entails. As a result, it seems desirable and perhaps necessary for young Bahraini citizens to develop their knowledge about the meaning of democracy and their role in a democratic society.

#### **5.4.2 *Political Awareness***

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their awareness of their political role in a democracy. The findings of the study reveal that young people exhibit little political knowledge. Despite their endorsement of the importance of democratic values, the majority of young people do not take part in political activities for various reasons. One major reason for non-participation is the impression that it is too complicated. Urban young people had political views, which were different from those of rural young people. For instance, a considerable number of urban males, in particular, showed a lack of knowledge about the aims of political parties or associations as they disagreed with the statement that political parties/societies are an important way for people with similar views to make their opinions known.

It has been argued that a certain degree of political knowledge is necessary for young people to be able to play an active role in a democratic society. In particular, political knowledge is an important prerequisite for motivating political participation (Dalton, 2002), a point I will return to later. The findings of this study reveal that the majority of young people lack knowledge about the role of the government. More than one-quarter of them did not respond to the question about the government's role and more



than one-third showed their lack of awareness about the role of the government in Bahrain, as they stated that the government had powers to devise laws; protect citizens' rights etc, which is not the case. Only one-third of the young people stated that the role of government was to fulfil citizens' needs, to organize the country's affairs and to implement the laws, which reflect the role of the Bahraini government. The findings also suggest that a small proportion of females have slightly more understanding of the government's role as compared to males.

As noted above, the literature shows that in order to prepare young people to participate fully in the political life of a democratic society, they need to have some 'factual knowledge about the institutions and processes of government and how they work locally, nationally and internationally' (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 145). However, there is evidence that young people in Bahrain do not have sufficient knowledge about the government and the constitution as the majority of them indicate that the government devises laws according to Bahraini constitution. Only one-third of the young people know that the 'national council' and 'the King' devise laws according to Bahraini constitution. This indicates that young people's lack knowledge of Bahraini political institutions and their role in the governance of Bahrain. Unfortunately, young people leave school without having the chance to learn about the Bahraini Constitution, which makes it difficult for them to become active, aware and responsible citizens.

Young people, who do not have an interest in politics, relate the political problems in society to some political parties and leaders. The majority of urban males seem to think that political associations do more harm than good to people and believe that political associations do not exist for the welfare of the people or society. Rural young people appear to be more politically radical and astute. They are more likely to

disagree with statements such as 'people should not criticize the government', and that 'government leaders should be trusted without question'. They show more understanding of the role of political parties and associations and have more political awareness. They were more likely to take part in activities related to political issues, such as attending political events and taking part in demonstrations. Most of them feel it is their responsibility to take an active part in the demonstrations. This greater political awareness seems to engender a belief that political activity can lead to changes in their country and in the world, and that an active involvement in politics can help citizens lead a better life and solve their different political problems.

In contrast, urban young people's, particularly females', relative satisfaction with the current reality of citizenship seems to be the consequence of their acceptance of a passive citizenship. Since they believe that they enjoy satisfactory rights as citizens in Bahraini society, they are not eager to take part in political matters. It could be argued that a lack of relevant knowledge about politics is one of the reasons for this passivity. This is worrying in light of Crick's (1999: 338) contention that 'where a state does not have a tradition of active citizenship deep in its culture, or cannot create in its educational system a proclivity to active citizenship, that state is running great risks'.

Although this study has found that there is a deep sense of affiliation with the nation-state of Bahrain, it has also found that young people have a negative perception of politics, a sense of uncertainty about politics, and a general belief that politics are too complicated, and this has induced passive attitudes of non-involvement. Despite being ambivalent about political involvement, the young people show a great deal of concern for the civil and political rights of Bahraini people and view it as vital for the preservation of the Bahraini democratic mode of life. Young people live at a time where politics appear to be far removed from their lives, and what we are seeing,



instead, is the emergence of a kind of 'anti-politics', a retreat from civic involvement (Boggs, 2000).

A large proportion of young people who participated in the survey admitted that they 'never' had the opportunity to practise activities, such as forming political groups; forming human rights groups; debating political and social issues, editing the school newspaper or magazine, or participating in the student council in their schools. In response to another question, about three-quarters of young people, mostly males, mentioned that the school curriculum 'never' encouraged them to find out about and discuss topics related to politics and government. In addition, a large number of young people, the majority of whom were rural females, indicated that they had 'very little' knowledge about politics and government.

It appears that Bahraini schools are not providing opportunities for young people to find out about politics or participate in political activities despite the fact that young people know that they lack political knowledge and are aware of its importance. They also realise that their schools should play a role in improving their political knowledge. This kind of awareness-raising of politics and opportunities to practise democratic skills are important, because, as Patrick (1999) argues, the right to vote, to speak freely on public issues, and to participate in voluntary organizations, for example, have little or no significance in political and civic life unless citizens regularly and effectively use them. This implies that the right of political participation means little if most citizens fail to exercise it. For example, the right to free expression that allows citizens to comment on political laws or ideas is diminished when individuals do not have knowledge about the government and/or its operation. This view of citizenship emphasizes the idea of political, civil, and social participation by citizens, which is an important aspect of democratic and institutional life.



#### **5.4.3 School as a Democratic Institution**

A statistically significant relationship was found at the level of  $p < 0.05$  between young people's gender and place of residence and their view of their schools as a democratic institution. The literature indicates that in democratic schools everyone should be able to contribute as citizen-member of a worthwhile community (Lawton *et al.*, 2000) where relationships are based on shared values rather than bureaucratic roles (Sergiovanni, 1994).

However, the majority of young people in the study viewed their schools as undemocratic institutions. They did not feel that they got the opportunity to discuss the topics of citizenship and democracy. Although, in the survey, young people did note that 'schools and teachers' were occasional sources of information about citizenship and democracy, more than two-thirds of young people stated that 'no time' was spent in their schools on teaching topics related to citizenship or democracy. Males were less likely to indicate that adequate time was spent on teaching about citizenship and democracy.

There is evidence that while some Bahraini secondary schools are bureaucratic, other schools have a students' council. However, young people criticized their schools for selecting students for the students' council rather than holding an election. The survey shows that about half of the young people 'never' had the opportunity to participate in the student council, or to evaluate textbooks, or teachers, or the curriculum. Additionally, they seemed to have little chance to participate in debates or small group discussions in classes.

This is worrying in light of the fact that the literature stresses the importance of creating and maintaining a classroom climate that is conducive to free and open

exchange of opinions about public issues and other controversial topics where different perspectives need to be appreciated (Breslin and Dufour, 2006). It is argued that this kind of classroom practice leads to the development of tolerance, civility, propensity to participate, and political interest (Baldi *et al.* 2001; Torney-Purta *et al.* 2001). In this study, rural females were more likely to indicate that they never had the chance to participate in the school students' council. In contrast, urban females stated that they had more opportunity to participate in the students' council and express their opinions freely. While the majority urban and rural males, also, reported that they never had the chance to participate in debates or small group discussions in classes or even express their opinions freely. This implies that there are differences in the school environment between rural and urban females schools, and between female and male schools. It seems that not all schools operate in the same way to ensure the participation of young people in student matters.

In the literature, a positive relationship is suggested between a democratic school climate, e.g. democratic participatory experiences, and the development of democratic civic knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour of democratic citizenship (Carnegie Corporation and CIRCLE, 2003). Therefore, in order to enable young people to develop social and moral responsibility and participate in civic life, the ethos of many schools would need to be changed (Lawton *et al.*, 2000). The findings of this study show that young people support this kind of change. They believed that their schools could become more democratic by improving the students' council and giving the students the chance to vote for their representatives. They also felt that a good relationship between school members and considering students' opinions in different school matters was important. They suggested, for example, that their school should ask their opinion regarding the exam timetable, and provide help in solving their



problems. The young people's suggestions are consistent with the argument of Kerr *et al.* (2002) below:

Schools that model democratic values and practices, encouraging students to discuss issues in the classroom and take an active role in the life of the school, are effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement (p.162).

The young people also suggested that schools should teach subjects relating to politics, democracy and citizenship. For example, the majority want to learn more about the Constitution, the National Charter, the Parliament and the development of their country's political system. They want their schools to provide classes that cover ethics and historical, cultural, and political issues relating to Bahrain. Furthermore, young people want schools to introduce new teaching strategies, whereby they are taught through more democratic approaches, such as workshops, lectures and seminars.

The Crick Report (QCA, 1998: 36) maintains that 'schools should make every effort to engage pupils in discussion and consultation about all aspects of school life'. The young people in this study emphasize the need to be critical of national and global issues, and suggest that democratic education would be helpful in promoting such critical attitudes and want an education that is both patriotic and democratic. They note the importance of teaching these issues to help them improve their knowledge about citizenship and democracy, to give them the chance to know their rights and responsibilities, possible political roles and their political system.

By expressing these needs, Bahraini young people reveal their awareness and understanding of the importance of issues related to democratic citizenship. They relate citizenship education to democratic education, regard it as important, and link it



to the nurturing of critical abilities among citizens. This is supported by Newton (2002) who argues that effective citizenship education cannot be delivered through the formal curriculum alone, as it requires a whole school approach including opportunities for students' to participate in school and the wider community. They emphasize that civic education is important as it can foster moral and responsible citizens for the community. Moreover, young people think that a structured civic education curriculum can help develop the ideal citizen who has a clear national identity, democratic values and the skills required to participate in a democracy.

The interview data supports the findings of the survey. It suggests that the integrated curriculum of citizenship education, which is illustrated in 'Citizenship in the School Curriculum' (Ministry of Education, 2002), in Bahraini schools, is ineffective. Young people report that discussion of topics is limited and unsystematically implemented in the school curriculum, which they find unhelpful. Part of the problem seems to be that young people do not find it relevant. Moreover, it is likely that this unsystematic implementation of citizenship education in the school curriculum is a major reason for young people's limited knowledge of political institutions and their role in Bahraini society. The role of the curriculum in shaping young people's conceptions of citizenship and democracy seem to be less effective than other socializing agents, such as the family or the mass media.

#### ***5.4.4 Other Sources of Information***

In the survey, the family and parents were considered by young people as the most 'frequent source' of information about citizenship and democracy. It is clear that parents have a role in influencing their children's understanding and in forming their attitudes. Some even encourage their children to participate in activities related to

their community. This may be due to the parents' educational level, as the parents of majority of young people were educated, and this may have influenced their children's conceptions and perceptions about citizenship and democracy. The literature suggests that children's early awareness of their parents' political views leads to a tendency for children to inherit their parents' political affiliations (Alqatam *et al.*, 2002). Thus, socialization within the family is important, since an individual's parents play an important role in the construction of his or her political identity (Abujado, 1998).

Young people rank the mass media (television, internet, newspaper and radio) as the second most frequent source of information about citizenship and democracy. On television, they like to watch intellectual, political, religious and social, entertainment and youth programmes, comedy shows, and series. On the Internet, they log onto websites related to sports, politics, local newspapers, schools research, surf Bahraini websites, and participate in internet forums, which they suggest is a good way to express their opinions. Reading is also a source of information to young people. More than two-thirds of them read one to two books within a three months' period. Most of them enjoyed reading religious, historical, and political books.

The degree of influence of different sources varies according to the background, culture, and education of the family, the school that the young people attend, the social activities they are involved in, and the life experiences that he or she has encountered. The literature suggests that an independent press and the rich information provided by television, radio, journals, and books, is essential to the maintenance of a politically literate society (Keum, 2004). However, since the Bahraini government controls the Bahraini press and the Bahraini mass media (BDHRL, 2005), it is important that all teenagers learn to read newspapers critically for their political content (Crick, 2000).



While the above affirms that the family, community, and the media are important influences in shaping young people's conceptions of citizenship, the school curriculum, in comparison, seems to be playing a relatively less important role in promoting their understanding of citizenship. Young people are not taught to think critically about citizenship. This raises important questions for teachers, curriculum planners, schools and other educators about what the education systems needs to do to implement effective citizenship education.

Young people believe that a major role can be played by the family, the school and the community to prepare them to participate as democratic citizens in the shaping of Bahraini society. They believe that the family can encourage children to express their opinions freely, respect each other's rights, and accept each other's views by providing a democratic environment at home. Parents can encourage their children to fight for human rights and to participate in different community activities and related public events. In addition, the family can develop in children a sense of belonging to the homeland, an affiliation to their country, and respect for their traditions. With regard to the community, young people suggest cultural and societal activities that can generate feelings of affiliation to Bahrain among its citizens, such as training programs, workshops, seminars, conferences and forums to educate people about democracy and their political rights and role in a democracy. Furthermore, young people think that political associations, democratic organisations, civic institutions, and the mass media can also help in this regard.



## **5.5 Reflections on the Research**

This section reflects on the insights that I have gained about Bahraini young citizens' conceptions of citizenship and democracy and the role of citizenship education in shaping these conceptions in the Bahraini context.

Conception of citizenship is contextually bound. Young people's understanding of their citizenship and their affective relationship with this status, are constrained and shaped by the conditions of citizenship within a specific historical, legal, political, socio-economic and cultural setting. Young people's attitude to their real life experience of citizenship is the product of the interaction between these various elements. Furthermore, it is evident that young people's conception of citizenship and their cognition of their status as citizens changes as the contexts change. The study reveals that in Bahrain, young people's experiences of citizenship resulting from the strategies and educational policies of the ruling elite are important factors in shaping their conceptions of their citizenship.

In Bahrain, the socialization of young citizens and the efforts to promote a national consciousness are having an impact. Citizenship values and norms, that the political elite have endorsed, are integrated into the school curriculum and seem to involve the subordination of individual interests to those of the nation-state, and patriotism has become an important value and norm for young citizens.

This kind of citizenship education that includes building a certain type of national identity, accompanied by the appropriate emotional responses, which emphasizes the history and tradition of the state is accepted by young citizens who consider it to be relevant since it informs their identity. However, such dominant discourses on

patriotism, and the related obligations, have been implemented at the cost of more desirable objectives that relate to a real understanding of citizenship, and have led to resentment amongst young people for allowing little room for their own thoughts and views.

In the light of the findings of this study, I argue that the core features of the conception of citizenship should be understood not only as the product of the ruling strategy and educational policy but also the way people interpret 'citizenship'. People do not just accept what they are taught; they accept what seems to match the reality of their lives (Abujado, 1998). However, the findings of my research suggest the official curriculum in contemporary Bahrain does not seem to match the reality of young people's lives, as they express a desire to be taught about human rights and political education, which they believe to be missing from the curriculum.

Young Bahraini people seem to be demotivated and disappointed by the contradiction between what they are taught in school and what they experience in life as a Bahraini citizen. They show a growing desire for improvement in their conditions as citizens in a democratic society. They are disinterested in citizenship education in its current form, and will probably continue to feel this way unless they can see its relevance to their lives. Clearly, young people need more than information if they are to engage with their communities in thoughtful, realistic and beneficial ways. They need to be given the freedom and trust to take responsibility (Breslin and Dufour, 2006), and be allowed to operate in a democratic setting where participation is encouraged, views are discussed and expressed openly, and where there is fairness and justice (Osler and Vincent, 2002).



With regard to citizens' rights, the present form of citizenship education does not help the young people to learn about their rights. Instead, as observed in many school textbooks and programmes, citizenship education emphasizes their responsibilities as citizens, i.e. to defend their country, to love it, to respect the law, to help to develop it and to be loyal to its ruler. In this sense, the stress on responsibilities of citizens in the school is shaping a conception of citizenship but not necessarily in a desirable way, which produces informed, interested and active young citizens.

Moreover, there seems to be a genuine desire on the part of young people to be able to enjoy the full set of citizenship rights as stated in the Bahraini constitution. The recent reforms and the related exposure to democratic thoughts and practices, as well as the lack of citizenship rights in their lived experiences, enhance their desire for change. They realise the importance of rights-based citizenship education, and wish that it is improved to provide more support to attain their citizenship ideal.

Citizenship education is political by nature. National educational systems all over the world seek to teach young people basic values and adopt specific educational policies to promote the type of citizenship desired (Breslin and Dufour, 2006). This study reveals that young Bahrainis have only a partial understanding of the status of citizenship, and lack essential political knowledge and democratic understanding. Yet, young people's ideal of citizenship is one in which citizens have a clear Bahraini citizenship status with guaranteed citizenship rights and are able to participate in decision-making. In this respect, it is likely that the citizenship ideal of those being ruled, i.e. the citizens, is different from that of the ruling elite and this antagonism potentially provides a basis for conflict.



This study has provided evidence that the socialization process via citizenship education in its present form, whether it is civic or political, is contributing only partially to Bahraini young people's notions of citizenship. As citizenship education is currently relatively ineffective, it is understandable that young people's conception of citizenship is influenced, developed and shaped by other equally important socializing agents such as the family, and the mass media.

Thus, young people's perceptions, attitudes, opinions and ideals are in the main a product of how they are socialised. Cogan and Derricot (1998: 166) note that 'the school is no longer the sole source of citizenship education'. Furthermore, my research has revealed the limitations of teaching selected aspects of citizenship that are contrary to real life experiences and which lead to doubt and mistrust in government and political institutions. As a result, my study calls into question the effectiveness of depending solely on institutionalised socializing processes in shaping the desirable citizenship status.

In Bahrain, there is a growing acceptance today that topics related to citizenship, democracy, human rights and politics should be 'on the agenda', especially via citizenship education. As we have seen, young people's conception of citizenship is influenced by their life context, including the specific type of citizenship education they have been exposed to and their experiences of real life. It is evident that citizenship education that does not match young people's life experiences will be largely ineffectual. There is therefore a pressing need to make citizenship education relevant and meaningful to the real life experiences of young people.

## **5.6 Recommendations to Enhance Education for Citizenship**

This section presents a number of recommendations aimed at improving the young people's understanding of the concepts of 'citizenship' and 'democracy' in state schools in Bahrain. With a new emphasis on citizenship in Bahrain, educational policy, the curriculum, and the teaching of citizenship education must be changed to align with young people's changing perceptions of citizenship. Conceptions of citizenship do not develop in a vacuum but are contextualised. According to Torney-Purta *et al.* (1999:30), 'civic education is deeply embedded in the political and historical context particular to each country'.

Nevertheless, the civic concepts established in the 2004 citizenship education syllabus do, in a sense, exist in a historical and political vacuum with regard to the active contributions of the Bahraini people. The important events of Bahraini history are attributed only to kings and presidents, and the role of the people in the development of the Bahraini nation-state is disregarded. However, ordinary people helped to shape the Bahraini history and their participation should be highlighted. The historical context should be drawn upon in developing an understanding of the origins behind the notions of Bahraini citizenship, or in learning about those who fought for human rights (Davis, 2000).

A content analysis of the initial draft edition of the secondary school citizenship education textbook 2005-2006 shows that it is written in a theoretical and distanced way. The book only includes definitions of, for example, a nation, a citizen, a state, human rights, government, roles and achievements of the ministries. These definitions are quoted from different sources. Breslin and Dufour (2006: 147) argue that 'it is just not practicable to produce an exhaustive list. There is no end to the number of



concepts available, nor is there a correct list just waiting for identification'. The book lacks coverage of important civic competencies, skills and values and inadequately deals with areas of civic and political knowledge and human rights issues.

This book therefore has a limited role for teaching young people about citizenship. In relation to this, Shiman (1993) argues that 'human rights' is not a subject that can be studied at a distance. Young people should not just learn about the Universal Declaration or about racial injustice but should be challenged to think about what human rights mean for them personally, and human rights educators must relate all these issues to the way young people live their lives as citizens in Bahrain. This suggests that the new citizenship education curriculum in Bahrain needs to be re-evaluated if it is to be effective in developing knowledgeable, interested and active young citizens.

Conceptions of citizenship need to be grounded in the context of the political entity they are concerned with as non-contextualized teaching about citizenship lacks relevance and therefore effectiveness. For instance, teaching about the role of the citizens without teaching them the skills of participation, through which they can fulfil these roles in real life situations, will be ineffective. Although the government provides policy direction, it should not be too prescriptive in its implementation, and it is important to provide young people with a voice to put forward their views.

The findings of this study demonstrate the need for policy makers and curriculum developers to include the opinions of young people when formulating policies that affect them. Education policies should always be adaptable since they are meant to improve societies and the people of those societies are not passive but involved in processes of change. There should be a rethinking of the objectives, content,



approaches, and methods of school citizenship education to ensure they match the changing context and the changing needs of the young citizens in Bahrain. In addition, the approaches and methods used should provide space for discussion and debate on the curriculum in light of the argument put forward by the QCA (1998) that discussion and debate are the bases for developing social responsibility. In this way, young people can be enabled to take an active part in, and express their personal opinions, ideals and attitudes towards, citizenship. A more flexible and comprehensive approach is supported by Sears (2004) who argues that:

Citizenship in a modern pluralist society is complex and shifting and that educating for citizenship will require much more nuanced and sophisticated approaches than have dominated in the past (p.367).

Young people need to see the connections between their knowledge of different aspects of citizenship and to move beyond conceptual understanding to have learning experiences that develop active participation. In addition, they need to make use of what they learn in school and their experiences in the wider world, which can be useful in developing young people's sense of belonging, and lay a firm foundation for their growing understanding of rights and responsibilities and their ability to participate effectively in society. According to Weller (2003:153), it is important to 'relate the citizenship curriculum to teenagers' needs and aspirations, as well as drawing valuable lessons from teenagers' own expertise and constructions of citizenship'. Such an approach could make teaching and learning more meaningful and relevant to young people, and could help citizens become more aware, knowledgeable, and active in their communities and nation.

The lack of a balance in emphasis over the citizens' rights versus their responsibilities, discussed above, is a concern for young people. This concern needs

to be considered because, as Chauhan (2001) argues, teaching about citizens' responsibilities should ultimately lead to a climate in which infringements of fundamental rights are minimised and in which such rights are vigorously defended and protected when infringements occur. Crick (2000) maintains that children learn responsibility best by discussing and debating real and controversial issues, which form the bases and the practices of active citizenship. In this sense, the development of democratic civic knowledge, skills and dispositions among young people can be seen to be positively related (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001).

According to Isin and Wood (1999), a focus on equitable outcomes requires a differentiated approach to rights that actively addresses the realities of power and inequalities institutionalised in societies, rather than considering citizenship as a bundle of particular rights and obligations. The growing awareness of rights amongst young Bahrainis and their dissatisfaction with the ruling polity makes it desirable to improve the conditions of citizenship through reform and a more comprehensive citizenship education, rather than just seeing citizenship education as a means to achieve social control and social stability.

Policy makers and curriculum developers should take the changing attitudes of the citizens into consideration. Issues relating to the reality of citizenship in Bahrain, as outlined by the Bahraini constitution and the basic law of citizenship, including oppositional opinions and ideals of citizenship should not be avoided but included in discussion and debate in the school's citizenship education curriculum. According to Crick (2000:14), 'any worthwhile education must include some explanation and, if necessary, justification of the naturalness of politics'. Crick further elaborates this issue by arguing that education for citizenship or education of the citizens about politics cannot be avoided, so 'care and time should be given to it' (p.149). It is



therefore important that any rethinking of citizenship education in Bahrain should be informed by this advice.

Article 12 of the CRC (1989), states that children have the right to ‘say what they think and they should be listened to by adults when decisions are made that affect them’. In this study, young people suggest that a citizenship education curriculum should contain not only topics related to showing the country in a positive light, but also the importance of human rights education, political education and a curriculum that develops understanding of the laws and encourages community participation. This is supported by Breslin and Dufour (2006: 115) who argue that ‘understanding the law is an important aspect of community involvement’. Young people want a curriculum that will give them a chance to reflect on what it means to be a citizen and which provides them with the tools to deal with the changing context. Lawton *et al.* (2000) suggest that:

In order to engage young people who are disaffected by the political process it is appropriate to use the constitutional and human rights principles, and other progressive and democratic struggles, as part of the curriculum (p.19).

Young people need to be provided with learning experiences that help them to analyze public issues and which develop the skills to participate democratically in influencing public policy decisions in relation to those issues. These kinds of learning experiences are likely to develop young people’s cognitive and participatory skills and dispositions (Vontz *et al.*, 2000).

In the learning process there is a need to raise political awareness not only for students but also for their teachers to enable them to provide their students with relevant information and to help them develop their ideas about the politics of their country. In this way, the teachers can also help their students to foster skills of critical



thinking and to allow them to evaluate the information they see and hear. In addition, teachers need the freedom to develop a flexible and comprehensive approach to citizenship education. They should be trained and encouraged to stimulate discussion about important issues and develop these discussions into meaningful educational experiences. According to Davies *et al.* (2005)

Unless teachers and pupils are given, compatible with the nature of democratic politics, the freedom to pursue issues wherever they may go, citizenship education will be undermined from the very start (p.131).

Teaching about politics should include coverage of the political system of Bahrain, its different institutions and a glossary of political terms to enable young people to learn about politics. Citizenship education should be a nation-wide project aimed at providing Bahraini youth with an understanding of the recent socio-economic and political realities of Bahraini society. This is because it is necessary to have ‘an informed and politically active population to address the innumerable challenges that face us in the present and the future’ (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 93). In light of what has been said above, this study suggests that in the new citizenship education curriculum there should be more emphasis on content that satisfies the present needs of young Bahrainis, for instance, the school curriculum should focus on finding possible solutions to the problems faced by the youth, such as unemployment and discrimination.

The teaching and learning of citizenship education involves issues that are important to learners and which they experience in their daily lives and personal experiences. Davis (2000) notes that citizenship education should have an emphasis on national and local views of current events and debates and should therefore be one of the most

flexible and responsive areas of the curriculum. This means that there should be a focus on school and local community issues, as well as on national issues.

### **5.7 A Suggested National Strategy to Improve Education for Democratic Citizenship in Bahrain**

Having discussed citizenship at some length, and taking into account the recent political changes in Bahrain, I want to argue that it is important for Bahraini young people to learn the concepts, skills, trends and values related to citizenship to enable them to understand themselves and to be able to express independent views. They have to learn how to cope positively with their environment and with the requirements of daily life and its challenges. They also need to learn how to participate in their community and in the economic, social, and political life of Bahrain in a positive way. Callahan and Ronald (1990:338) point out that ‘the intellectual and interpersonal skills needed for effective civic participation must be learned, and to be learned well they must be practised’. The skills, which include the ability to help shape public policy, can be created, as Patrick (1991) argues, by meeting, talking, and thinking with other members of the young people's community inside and outside the school.

To achieve this level of civic knowledge and skills, the whole civil community has to be involved, beginning with the family, which has a major influence on children. Schools are also important, as has been established above. In addition to giving information and training people how to think and how to use the different skills in the school curriculum, schools can contribute by providing information on national trends and values and developing life skills. The other institutions in the kingdom can play a significant role in achieving the aims of citizenship education, especially the media, which has a powerful influence on people throughout their lives. It is therefore



important to devise a strategic plan for citizenship that involves all the institutions of the civil community to prepare young people to play an active role in their society.

### ***5.7.1 What can be done at home?***

The family is the most powerful and influential social institution that affects individual behaviour and is primarily responsible for shaping children's behaviour. The family moulds the child's concepts, beliefs and national inclinations, in line with what the parents and elder siblings believe in (Abujado, 1998). As a result, parents or guardians are the child's first and most influential teachers of civic values and attitudes. Lessons learned at home about political participation or community service, for example, are likely to set the tone for later learning about the responsibilities of citizenship (Patrick, 1991). In other words, values and attitudes are passed on directly to children through the discussions and comments that they hear.

The family's educational role stems from the close relationship between its members and so parents' views and cultural background are often reflected in a child's upbringing (Newton, 2007). A child who is brought up in a democratic family is more capable of adapting and showing a creative spirit. On the other hand, a child who is brought up in a tyrannical family is likely to be a more negative and dependent individual (Abujado, 1998). Thus, raising children requires a great deal of care and, amongst other considerations including the physical, social and moral wellbeing of the children, should be concerned with cultivating ambition and encouraging creative trends, patience, tolerance and perseverance.

Moreover, parents or guardians can enhance the child's understanding of citizenship responsibilities through guided play and practice (Patrick, 1991). The family can encourage children to perform their duties at home and in their schools and reinforce



their sense of responsibility towards their community as well. The family should provide children with learning resources such as books, magazines, newspapers etc, transmit the civic values and the democratic principles of a constitutional democracy to their children through free discussions, teach them how to behave in an exemplary manner and use fair rules in their family life, and encourage children's contribution to the common good of their family and their community. Parents and guardians can set an example by taking part as volunteers in community service projects and by participating in the political system and by encouraging children to be critical in response to any social or political events reported in the media, such as television programs about current events.

#### **5.7.2 *What can be done at school?***

After the family, the school is the most important medium for implementing citizenship education and can have a major effect on the civic attitudes of young people. The school years are the most crucial period for development of attitudes and convictions about the nation (Alqatam *et al.* 2002). It is during this period that young people become acquainted with civic and political concepts and organizations and 'their cognitive ability begins to develop' (Newton, 2007: 5). A school conveys to the learner the values and ideals prevailing in the community and are 'the main provider of education for democratic citizenship in that it allows a systematic learning of citizenship-related knowledge' (Birzea *et al.*, 2004: 16). In this way, the school plays a vital role in fostering national unity and cohesion amongst the citizens. It can play a vital role in eliminating divisions, which arise from ethnic, class, gender, linguistic and religious differences and so forth and can foster an understanding of the benefits of diversity (Birzea *et al.*, 2004).

The state usually depends upon the school to inform citizens about the principles on which the system of government is based and the aims that it seeks to realize. This is because acceptance of such principles and aims is a source of strength, support, and stability for the government. Nevertheless, schools also need to implement students' agendas, which 'encourage personal ambition and determination' and 'enable them to consider contemporary social and global issues' (Deuchar, 2007:6). The ethos of the school is critical to the successful implementation of citizenship. The ethos that supports citizenship is likely to be one that has clear whole-school values and develops good relationships within the school, and between the school and the wider community (Rowe, 2001). This ethos can provide a positive environment for young people to discuss sensitive and controversial aspects of citizenship and can promote understanding about, and respect for the common and the diverse features of society (QCA, 2001).

The experiences and activities offered by the curriculum can enable young Bahraini people to become aware of their rights and duties as citizens. Properly designed activities can develop their abilities to be effective citizens in a democratic society, by helping them acquire the ability to think critically about social, political, and economic issues. If young people are 'never introduced to politics or communal involvement', it is difficult to see how we can 'expect dangers of voter apathy or disenfranchisement to disappear' (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 93). Young Bahraini people should also be trained to be more analytical in their thinking and examination of facts.

Moreover, developing a curriculum that requires young people to participate in, and contribute to, their communities is necessary to give them real opportunities to make decisions and contribute to the running of the school and the management of their



own learning (QCA, 2001). This can be done through activities such as establishing school-based programs of community service as a regular part of the civics curriculum, and establishing cooperative learning experiences in which young people work in groups to take responsibility for their own achievement of educational objectives.

Increasing the amount of time spent on teaching about the rights of the citizens and about the civic values of Bahraini constitutional democracy in all subjects of the curriculum at all levels of schooling is also important. This is because the literature shows that young people with higher levels of civic and political knowledge are more likely to participate in political and civic activities in the future (Torney-Purta *et al.* 2001; Kerr *et al.* 2002). Furthermore, it is important to involve students in simulations and role play activities and reading and writing assignments about various aspects of civic responsibility and in open discussions of public issues and current events. In addition, to enhance education about citizenship responsibilities and to develop the necessary participatory skills, it is important to encourage students to do assignments that require them to write letters to government officials or newspapers to express opinions about public issues and policies and to participate in political activities outside the classroom (Patrick 1991).

Through such practical activities, the school provides students with the ability to read, analyze, and discuss cases and stories about people involved in the civic life of their communities in the past and present, to engage them in social and voluntary activities and co-operative work and helps cultivate desired values, such as respecting the laws, and other people's property. These may also help develop personal qualities, such as honesty, self-restraint, taking personal responsibility and upholding social ethics (Patrick 1991; Breslin and Dufour 2006; Huddleston and Kerr 2006).



In short, the above discussion makes it clear that the school has a special role to play in shaping the lives of young Bahraini citizens. They have a major influence on the civic attitudes of young people, and a significant role in fostering knowledge about citizenship responsibilities. Thus, education for citizenship should be a long-standing goal of schools in Bahrain. To achieve this goal, school leaders need to share ideas and work more effectively to promote responsible citizenship.

#### ***5.7.3 What can be done at mosques by religious scholars?***

Religious scholars can play an important role in citizenship education in an Islamic society. The findings of this study reveal that many young people develop their knowledge, concepts, convictions and political trends through following up topics discussed in mosques, whether they are in the form of lessons, sermons, speeches or ceremonial events. As a result, the activities carried out in mosques can be used to enhance education for citizenship in a democratic society.

#### ***5.7.4 What can be done at youth clubs and through NGOs?***

Bahraini youth has no clubs, entertainment places, programmes or activities that attract them (Ebrahim, 2007: 21). Therefore, youth clubs, where ideas and information can be exchanged, can contribute to the civic and political development of young Bahraini people. They can also provide experiences that enhance the values of democracy, deepen feelings of national unity, respect for others' views and acceptance of majority decisions. Clubs can contribute to raising awareness of citizenship through seminars and by giving the opportunity for participation in discussions on issues concerning the nation.

Moreover, this study has shown that there are also non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in public affairs. These were set up to foster participation in issues that concern Bahrain, deal with democracy, and encourage citizens to take an active role in civic life. These organisations can motivate young people to engage in the election process as voters or perhaps even candidates and thus be more 'active citizens'.

#### ***5.7.5 What can be done through the mass media?***

This study shows that the media has a great deal of impact on influencing young people and enabling them to acquire information. The mass media publishes or broadcasts news, provides analysis and holds debates and seminars concerning national and political issues, both locally, nationally and internationally. The media also has a wider influence because it affects trends among children and youngsters as a whole (Abujado, 1998). Nafea (2006) notes that the media is a cause of crime from young peoples' point of view though it has a big role in, and influences, the shaping of young people's thoughts. However, young people are not trained to read what is being introduced by the media. The school should therefore protect young people from the negative influences of the media by developing their critical thinking skills, which can help them differentiate between good and bad, and helpful and harmful influences. 'Media involvement is vital for increasing awareness of youth issues in the community (Abdulla, 2006: 8).

To sum up, schools and other socializing agents should seek to promote a concept of citizenship that is thoughtful, responsible, and active, in the sense of enabling young people to act and participate in various communities, wherever it is possible or appropriate to do so. This is because 'democracy needs protection through active,

informed and widespread participation' (Breslin and Dufour, 2006: 93). In this way, educators and policy makers can give young people a sense of hope, an experience of community, and a belief in their own personal effectiveness. Thus, a major challenge for educators is to devise and implement policies to improve citizenship education in schools.

## **5.8 Limitations of This Research**

### ***5.8.1 The Application of Different Languages***

In this study, I am aware of the additional issue of validity caused by the use of two languages, i.e. English and Arabic. Using two languages in my research raises some problems, which need to be explained. Most of the literature on citizenship that I have referred to is in English. Therefore, all the terms that I used relating to citizenship had to be translated in the research instruments from English to Arabic, which was the language used in the field. The interviews were transcribed in Arabic and subsequently translated into English. Efforts were made to avoid distortion by using back translation.

Throughout this work, I have been dealing with two very different cultures. Certain terms and ideas in both languages cannot be directly translated into the other, for instance, the concepts underlying the English term 'citizenship' are not part of the tradition of Bahraini culture. This term is relatively new to Bahrainis and has been introduced relatively recently, along with other Western concepts and ideas. This may have given rise to uncertainty as to the exact meanings of some concepts that are culturally different and may have resulted in loss of meaning in the process of translation.



### ***5.8.2 The Lack of Literature about Citizenship in Bahrain***

Despite the feeling that there is a need to start a debate about citizenship education in the Eastern world in general, and in Bahrain in particular, there is very little literature about citizenship and democracy in education in this part of world and in the Bahraini context specifically. For this reason, I have also drawn on articles in newspapers and journals.

Faced with this dearth of literature, and because citizenship theories originated and developed in the West, I decided to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework by reading about citizenship in the extensive literature found elsewhere. While documenting and critically evaluating the literature, I noted that the development of the UK educational system has influenced and been reflected in the development of other educational systems not only in the Western World but also in other parts of the world, including Bahrain. Since Bahrain was a British colony, and its system of education has been, and still is, influenced to a certain extent, by the British educational system, mainly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I felt that it would be beneficial to base my research on a conceptual and theoretical framework that evolved in the UK and in the wider Western world. For instance, in the area of citizenship education, the UK publications on citizenship, e.g. the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), have similarities to the publication of Bahraini Citizenship Education Syllabus Scheme (Ministry of Education, 2004b) and include similar aims, objectives and proposals.

It is evident that the concept of citizenship is contextual and country specific. Thus, the reliance on the Western literature on citizenship education in this thesis can be viewed as a limitation. In addition, as a non-Westerner, I felt it was a major challenge to get acquainted with the different issues related to citizenship and citizenship

education, which were mainly developed in the West, such as human rights, law, democracy, politics and government. This may have given rise to certain inaccuracies in my attempt to understand concepts and ideas that are culturally dependent.

## **5.9 Suggestions for Future Research**

Despite the limitations noted above, I argue that this research has strengths, as is evident in the thesis, which would at least serve to initiate a debate about citizenship education and contribute to the decisions that need to be made regarding the future of citizenship education in Bahrain.

The present study is a starting point for further research, which should be aimed at investigating how civic and political knowledge can be imparted to young Bahraini citizens at a time of political change and reform. It should also focus on understanding the factors shaping young people's conceptions of and attitudes towards the concepts of democracy and citizenship, and to serve as a basis for more research and discussion. This research should not be seen as an end, but as a means, or a contribution, to an ongoing international debate about these two very important concepts that influence not only education, but also society as a whole.

Comparative case studies could be conducted in different locations with different Bahraini ethnic groups and at different educational levels in order to construct a more complete picture. In addition, longitudinal studies would be useful in shedding light on changes in the young people's understanding of some aspects of citizenship and democracy, using the same research instruments. This study is limited to an investigation of young people in government schools of Bahrain. However, in order to obtain a wider image of Bahraini young people's understanding of the concepts of



citizenship, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in private secondary schools in Bahrain. In addition, a similar study could be carried out to evaluate school programmes, activities and facilities to assess their success in implementing citizenship education in the way it has been conceptualised in this thesis. It would also help to evaluate the effectiveness of the new citizenship education curriculum taught at secondary level in Bahrain, and to ascertain if the teaching methods being used are advancing young people's understanding of citizenship. Furthermore, as Rowe (2001) points out, careful evaluation needs to be made of the messages sent to young people in textbooks, classroom instructional materials, and teacher attitudes, especially those communications - overt or covert, verbal or nonverbal - that reinforce stereotypes, discrimination and destructive practices.

## **APPENDICES**



## **APPENDIX-I**

### **Letter to Schools**

To:

The Principal

Isa Town Boys Secondary School

Date: 2 May 2006

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am conducting a research study for a PhD in Education at the University of Leicester, UK. My PhD project will examine whether young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy. For this purpose, I will administer questionnaires to secondary school students in Bahrain. I would like to ask a group of your Grade 12 students to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be followed by a one hour interview with a smaller number of students.

Your support is crucial for my research. Your students' answers will be completely CONFIDENTIAL and the name of your school and that of your students will not be mentioned in the research.

I would appreciate your help and assistance in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

**Fatima Eid**  
PhD student  
School of Education  
University of Leicester  
UK

## APPENDIX-II

### Questionnaire

#### Questionnaire for Young Citizens of Bahrain

Dear Student,

As a student graduating from secondary school, you have been selected to complete this questionnaire, which is designed to collect data for a PhD project entitled, *‘Educational Reform in Bahrain and Preparing Youth for Citizenship and Democracy: Young Citizens’ Civic and Political Knowledge and Understanding’*. This study aims to examine whether young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy.

The questionnaire encompasses three domains: (1) citizenship, community and identity (2) rights, responsibilities and law (3) democracy, politics and government. You will be asked about your concepts of citizenship and democracy, your knowledge of democratic processes and institutions, your rights and responsibilities, and your understanding of the issues that concern your community including your role in a democratic society.

Your answer will be very helpful for the research. Please respond to all the questions. Your answers will be completely CONFIDENTIAL and your name will not be mentioned in the research.

I very much appreciate your time and assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

**Fatima Eid**  
PhD student  
School of Education  
University of Leicester  
UK



**SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Please tick or fill in your answers**

<b>1</b>	<b>Gender</b>			Male <input type="radio"/>	Female <input type="radio"/>
<b>2</b>	<b>Place of Residence</b>			Rural <input type="radio"/>	Urban <input type="radio"/>
<b>3</b>	<b>Age</b>	16 <input type="radio"/>	17 <input type="radio"/>	18 <input type="radio"/>	19 <input type="radio"/>
<b>4</b>	<b>Nationality</b>			Bahraini <input type="radio"/>	Not Bahraini <input type="radio"/>
<b>5</b>	<b>Parents' / Guardians' Educational Background:</b>				
<b>5a</b>	<b>Mother / Female adult carer</b>				
5a1	No formal qualifications				<input type="radio"/>
5a2	Has formal qualification: (Choose the HIGHEST, please)	Elementary <input type="radio"/>		Secondary <input type="radio"/>	
		Undergraduate <input type="radio"/>		Postgraduate <input type="radio"/>	
<b>5b</b>	<b>Father: / Male adult carer</b>				
5b1	No formal qualifications				<input type="radio"/>
5b2	Has formal qualification: (Choose the HIGHEST, please)	Elementary <input type="radio"/>		Secondary <input type="radio"/>	
		Undergraduate <input type="radio"/>		Postgraduate <input type="radio"/>	
<b>6</b>	<b>On an average school day, how many hours a day do you watch TV and/or use the Internet before or after school?</b>				
6a	Less than 1 hour				<input type="radio"/>
6b	1-2 hours				<input type="radio"/>
6c	3-5 hours				<input type="radio"/>
6d	more than 5 hours				<input type="radio"/>
6e	Not at all				<input type="radio"/>
<b>7</b>	<b>Not including books related to your schoolwork, how many books have you read in the past three months?</b>				
	(a) None <input type="radio"/>	(a) 1-2 <input type="radio"/>	(b) 3-4 <input type="radio"/>	(c) 5-6 <input type="radio"/>	(d) 7 or more <input type="radio"/>
<b>8</b>	<b>What kind of books have you enjoyed reading the most in the past three months? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)</b>				
	(a) Religion <input type="radio"/>	(b) Science <input type="radio"/>	(c) Philosophy <input type="radio"/>	(d) Politics <input type="radio"/>	(e) Detective <input type="radio"/>
	(f) fiction <input type="radio"/>	(g) Human rights <input type="radio"/>	(h) Sociology <input type="radio"/>	(i) Romance <input type="radio"/>	(j) Adventure <input type="radio"/>
k) Other (please state) -----					

## SECTION 2: KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

<b>9. Do you consider yourself to be a citizen of Bahrain?</b>		(1) Yes <input type="radio"/>	(2) No <input type="radio"/>	(3) Not sure <input type="radio"/>
9a.	If yes, what makes you feel like a Bahraini citizen? ----- -----			
9b.	If no, what prevents you from feeling like a Bahraini citizen? ----- -----			
<b>10</b>	<b>What do the following terms mean to you? Please Write in below:</b>			
10a.	To be a 'Citizen' means ----- -----			
10b.	'Citizenship' means: ----- -----			
<b>11. How important do you think the following qualities are in being considered a competent and responsible Bahraini citizen? (To answer, please use the following scale to tick a box beside each statement according to the degree of importance).</b>				
<b>To be considered a good Bahraini citizen, you must:</b>		(1) Not important	(2) Somewhat important	(3) Very important
a.	Obey the laws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Vote at elections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Follow what is happening in government and politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Join a political party.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Be interested in Public affairs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Volunteer for a service in the local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g.	Donate money to charity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h.	Love your country (Bahrain).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i.	Be loyal to the country's leaders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j.	Protect the environment (e.g. collect litter in your neighbourhood)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k.	Work or volunteer in a political campaign	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l.	Support a football club.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m.	Be Responsible towards the family and the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n.	Struggle for democratic rules and principles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o.	Struggle for human rights.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p.	Defend own rights.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q.	Be an active member of a community organization or not-for-profit association.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



r.	Understand the system of government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s.	Tolerate others' opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t.	Believe in equality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u.	Attend public meetings on political events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
v.	Be proud to be Bahraini.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
w.	Write articles or 'letters to the editor' for a newspaper or any other publication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
x.	Contact a public official to express your views (e.g. a Member of Parliament (MP))	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
y.	Please add any other qualities that you feel are needed to be a good citizen which you consider important but are not mentioned above: ----- -----			
12	<b>How often do you sing the national anthem in your school?</b>	(1) never <input type="radio"/>	(2) sometimes <input type="radio"/>	(3) Daily <input type="radio"/>
12a	If you sing the national anthem, why do you sing it? ----- -----			
12b	If not, for what reasons? ----- -----			
13	<b>What does the Bahraini flag mean to you?</b> ----- -----			
14	<b>Do you think Bahraini citizens belonging to different ethnic groups can unite to fulfil the national goals and purposes?</b>	(1) Yes <input type="radio"/>	(2) No <input type="radio"/>	(3) Not sure <input type="radio"/>
14a	<b>If yes, how can it be possible?</b> ----- -----			
14b	<b>If no, why don't you think so?</b> ----- -----			
15	<b>What do you personally perceive to be the main problems in your community?</b> ----- -----			
16	<b>To what extent do you think that you as a person YOU can make a difference in solving the problems of your community?</b>	(1) Not at all <input type="radio"/>	(2) To some extent <input type="radio"/>	(3) To a great extent <input type="radio"/>
16a	Please give reasons for your answer ----- -----			
17	<b>Society needs laws to: (choose the most important three, in order of priority (writing 1, 2, or 3))</b>			
17a	Safeguard people's rights			<input type="radio"/>
17b	Determine people's responsibilities			<input type="radio"/>
17c	Practise democracy			<input type="radio"/>
17d	Organize the relationship between individuals and Society			<input type="radio"/>
17e	Others (please state)----- -----			

18	<b>In Bahrain, are there any laws that you disagree with?</b>	(1) Yes ⌋	(2) No ⌋	(3) Not sure ⌋
18a	If yes, which ones?----- -----			
18b	Why?----- -----			
19	<b>People commit crimes for different reasons. What do you <i>perceive</i> to be the main causes?</b>  Please choose the most important three reasons, in order of importance, (writing 1, 2, or 3):	(a) Poverty ⌋	(b) Oppression ⌋	
		(c) Family ⌋	(d) Mass media ⌋	
		(e) Friends ⌋	(f) Society ⌋	
	g. Others: (please state) -----			
20	<b>Do criminals have rights?</b>	(1) Yes ⌋	(2) No ⌋	(3) Not sure ⌋
20a	If 'yes' what rights do they have? ----- -----			
20b	If 'no', then why don't you think they don't have rights?----- -----			
21	<b>Who constitutes laws in your country according to the Bahraini constitution? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)</b>			
	(a) Government ⌋	(b) Judiciary ⌋	(c) National C ⌋	(d) The King ⌋
22	<b>What does the term 'Democracy' mean to you?</b>  <b>'Democracy'</b> means: ----- -----			
23	<b>In a democratic system of government, as Bahraini citizen you can: (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)</b>			
23a	Participate in decision-making			⌋
23b	Have freedom of expression			⌋
23c	Practise your rights			⌋
23d	Perform responsibilities			⌋
23e	Accept others' opinions			⌋
23f	Govern yourself			⌋
23g	All the above.			⌋
23h	None of the above			⌋
24	<b>How would you describe the main roles of the following?</b>			
24a	<b>The National Council:</b> -----			



24b	<b>The Government:</b> ----- -----			
25	<b>Do you have the right to vote?</b>	(1) Yes ☐	(2) No ☐	(3) Not sure ☐
26	<b>At what age do you think people are eligible to vote in Bahrain?</b>	18 ☐	21 ☐	23 ☐
27	<b>Why should people vote?</b> Choose the MOST important three, in order of priority (writing 1, 2, or 3)			
27a	To show that they live in a democratic society			☐
27b	To choose community representatives			☐
27c	To exercise their political right			☐
27d	Because it's an obligation			☐
28	<b>Do you think that in Bahrain, women can vote at the elections?</b>	(1) Yes ☐	(2) No ☐	(3) Not sure ☐
29	<b>Do you agree or disagree with the statements below?</b> Please tick the box beside each statement that most accurately reflects your opinion.	(1) <b>Agree</b>	(2) <b>Disagree</b>	(3) <b>Not sure</b>
29a	People should not criticize the government.	☐	☐	☐
29b	Politicians, not ordinary citizens, know what is good for the country.	☐	☐	☐
29c	Political parties/associations do more harm than good.	☐	☐	☐
29d	Political parties are an important way for people with similar views to make their opinions known.	☐	☐	☐
29e	Elected officials care about what people think and take those opinions into account in their policy decisions.	☐	☐	☐
29f	Schools should stay out of politics.	☐	☐	☐
29g	It is every adult's duty to vote at election.	☐	☐	☐
29h	Newspapers should be able to print whatever they like.	☐	☐	☐
29i	People should obey a law even if it violates human rights.	☐	☐	☐
29j	Government leaders should be trusted without question.	☐	☐	☐
29k	People should protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust.	☐	☐	☐
29l	Terrorism is never justified.	☐	☐	☐
29m	Children and teenagers are unable to	☐	☐	☐



	do anything to help their community.			
29n	It is every adult's duty to vote at elections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29o	Newspapers should be able to print whatever they like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29p	It the responsibility of the government, not individual citizens, to create a better society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30	<b>How often you come across these topics in the school curriculum:</b>	<b>(1) Never</b>	<b>(2) Sometimes</b>	<b>(3) Often</b>
30a	Human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30b	Laws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30c	Politics, government and Parliament	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30d	Voting and elections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30e	Role of media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30f	Democracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31	<b>At school, do you have the opportunity to:</b>			
31a	Participate in debates or small group discussions in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31b	Research and analyze information from different sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31c	Participate in the student council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31d	Express your opinion freely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31e	Criticize your textbooks, teachers or the curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31f	Raise money for a good cause or charity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31g	Debate political and social issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31h	Edit the school newspaper or magazine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31i	Form human rights groups/clubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31k	Form political groups/clubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32	<b>At your school, how much time do you think is spent in teaching about citizenship, democracy and human rights:</b>	No time <input type="radio"/>	Too little time <input type="radio"/>	Adequate time <input type="radio"/>
33	<b>How important it is for secondary schools to teach about citizenship, democracy?</b>	Not at all important <input type="radio"/>	Somewhat important <input type="radio"/>	Very important <input type="radio"/>
34	<b>What are your primary sources of information about your rights and responsibilities, government and politics?</b>	<b>(1) Not a source</b>	<b>(2) Occasional source</b>	<b>(3) Frequent source</b>
34a	Parents/ Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34b	Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34c	School/Teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34d	Clubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34e	Associations/organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34f	Mosques/Religious scholars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34g	Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34h	Newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34i	Television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34j	Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
34k	Others, please state: ----- -----				
<b>35</b>	<b>How would you rate your knowledge about the following:</b>	<b>(1) None</b>	<b>(2) Very little</b>	<b>(3) Average</b>	<b>(4) Extensive</b>
35a	Your rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35b	Your responsibilities				
35c	Laws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35d	Politics, government Parliament	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35e	Voting at the elections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35f	Democracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANSWERS TO THIS SURVEY!**  
**HAVE A GOOD SCHOOL YEAR!**

## **APPENDIX – III**

### **Interview Schedule**

1. Could you introduce yourself, please? How do you see yourself; who are you?
2. What do you usually do in your leisure time?
3. Do you consider yourself a citizen of Bahrain? Do you feel you belong to Bahrain? Why? Why not?
4. What does the term ‘citizen’ mean to you?
5. What does being a ‘Bahraini’ citizen mean to you?
6. What does ‘Citizenship’ mean?
7. What qualities needed to be a good citizen?
8. Do you think you are a good Bahraini citizen? If yes, how? If not, why not?
9. Do you think citizens have rights? Why?
10. As a citizen of Bahrain, what rights do you have as a young person?
11. Do you think you have rights at home? If yes, what are they?
12. Do you think you have rights at school? If yes, what are they?
13. Who protects your rights as a citizen in Bahrain?
14. Do you think citizens have responsibilities? If so, why?
15. What are your responsibilities at home?
16. What are your responsibilities at school?
17. What are your responsibilities to Bahraini society?
- 18a. Do you think Bahrain is a democratic country? What makes you think so?
- 18b. If you had a choice to be a citizen of any country in the world, which country would you choose? Why?
- 18c. What model of democratic (people/institutions) have you seen/experienced in your life? What do they do?
19. Who do you think is responsible for preparing young people to be active and responsible citizens?



20. What is the role of the family in preparing its children to participate in a democratic society?
21. What is the role of the community in preparing young citizens to participate in a democratic society?
22. What is the role of the school in preparing young citizens to participate in a democratic society?
23. What is the role of political parties in a democracy?
24. Do you think it is important for people to vote in elections? Why?
25. Why does a country need laws?
26. Do you think enforcing laws makes a country a better place for its citizens?
27. Do you personally have interest in politics? Why/ why not?
28. Do you think schools should teach politics? Why/ why not?
29. What can your school do to be 'democratic' / more 'democratic'? What subjects should your school teach to be 'democratic' / more 'democratic'?
30. As a young citizen, what can you do to make your country a better place for your generation and for future generations?

Closure: Is there anything you wish to add that has not been addressed by any of my questions or your responses?

## **APPENDIX – IV**

### **Transcript of an Interview**

Name (fake): Raqia (Rural female). Time: 10.00 am to 10.55 pm (55 minutes)

Researcher: First of all I would like to thank you for accepting to participate in this interview as part of my research. As I have already pointed out, I would like to emphasize the anonymity and confidentiality of all the responses that will be recorded during this interview.

#### **Focus of Discussion**

The purpose of this study is to examine whether young people graduating from secondary school in Bahrain are equipped with the civic and political knowledge and understandings necessary to participate effectively as democratic citizens. The focus of discussion will be the administration of some interviews with students for more understanding of their conceptions, their perceptions, and their experiences of being a citizen in a democratic society. How they see this democracy, what role they have as citizens, what their rights and responsibilities are, what they understand by citizenship, and democracy, and how they can make their community a better place.

Researcher: It will help us in further analysis if you would tell us a little about yourself.

#### **1. Could you introduce yourself, please? How do you see yourself; who are you?**

Raqia: I am Bahraini girl; a student in ... Secondary School; I am 18 years old; I live in Budayea, a village in Bahrain and I have seven siblings My family is poor because My father is a teacher but his salary is quite low and my mother is a housewife.

#### **2. What do you usually do in your leisure time?**

Raqia: Umm ... in my free time I like reading novels and religious books. I read all kinds of magazines too. I also like swimming, and writing poems. I like watching television too; I like watching films, and some social programmes like: 'This evening' in Bahrain TV, Channel, 'Oprah' and 'Dr. Phil' on the MBC channel and 'Zavan' on the Future T.V. channel.

#### **3. Do you consider yourself a citizen of Bahrain? Do you feel you belong to Bahrain? Why? Why not?**

Raqia: Yes, I am Bahraini and I am proud of it. I was born on this land and I live in it. I have a feeling of love and affiliation towards my country. When I travel, I feel that I miss Bahrain and its people. I miss my family, my school and my friends. I do not feel that I belong to any other place with a different culture, language and religion".



#### **4. What does the term ‘citizen’ mean to you?**

Raqia: Being a citizen means to me is having that feeling of love and affiliation towards the country a person belongs to. Being a citizen also means having rights and being responsible for my family, my country, and myself, and respecting the laws of the country. It also means participating in developing a country by serving in any field in this country.

#### **5. What does being a ‘Bahraini’ citizen mean to you?**

Raqia: To me, being a Bahraini citizen means all that I have already mentioned; I love my country. I have that feeling of affiliation towards it. I feel that I have some rights, like the rights of education, the right of getting access to a good health service, but I still do not have the right to vote or to participate in the political life of Bahrain. As a young citizen, I do not feel that I am represented. My voice is not heard and I feel I am unimportant.

#### **6. What does ‘Citizenship’ mean?**

Raqia: Citizenship means having rights and responsibilities towards Bahrain, and it means equality and justice. It makes people equal.

#### **7. What qualities needed to be a good citizen?**

Raqia: Umm, I think in order to be a good citizen, it is important to participate in developing Bahrain; to have a feeling of love, affiliation and loyalty towards Bahrain and the country’s leaders (e.g. the king), to have rights and responsibilities, and to try to make changes in society.

#### **8. Do you think you are a good Bahraini citizen? If yes, how? If not, why not?**

Raqia: In some way yes. I love Bahrain. I try to participate in developing my country through my studies. I work hard in school and I get good grades. I obey the laws of my country and my school as well, but I still need to do more for my country in the future by participating in elections and by joining some political or social associations.

#### **9. Do you think citizens have rights? Why?**

Raqia: Yes, I think citizens should have rights, because they belong to this land. Citizens should have rights, like: political rights, social rights and economic rights. They should have the right of freedom; the rights of education, and health-care. These rights are related to good citizenship. When they get their rights, they will perform their responsibilities.

#### **10. As a citizen of Bahrain, what rights do you have as a young person?**

Raqia: I don’t know. Umm perhaps as a citizen, I have the right to get my basic needs: I have the right to learn and to get a good education, the right to feel safe and be secure, and the right to have freedom of expression. As a young citizen of 18, I have the right to express my opinion, and my voice should be heard. I think it is important to get all the privileges of citizenship.



**11. Do you think you have rights at home? If yes, what are they?**

Raqia: I have the right of freedom, to have money for daily expenses, to be loved and respected, to feel equal with other members of my family, and to enjoy my life.

**12. Do you think you have rights at school? If yes, what are they?**

Raqia: I have the right to get a good education, to express my opinions freely, whether they are negative or positive, and to participate in decision-making and in school activities and programmes; I also have the right to vote in school elections, and to be treated equally with other students in my school. Teachers should be fair.

**13. Who protects your rights as a citizen in Bahrain?**

Raqia: I am not sure, however, I think there is a role for political and youth associations; the government; the national council; the judicial council; and the Centre for Human Rights in Bahrain.

**14. Do you think citizens have responsibilities? If so, why?**

Raqia: Yes, citizens must have responsibilities because they have rights. They are citizens in their homeland and should participate to make their country a better place. Without responsibilities, we can not develop our country so citizens are responsible for making changes in society.

**15. What are your responsibilities at home?**

Raqia: I am responsible for helping my mother and my family when needed, I am responsible for loving and respecting them; for studying hard and for helping my family in decision making in any matter related to my family. Rights and responsibilities are related to each other.

**16. What are your responsibilities at school?**

Raqia: In fact, my school is my second home. I am responsible for protecting it and keeping it clean and tidy. I should educate myself, work hard and be diligent in my studies, to participate in school activities, and to share in decision-making. I should respect my teachers, school administrators, and students and help them when needed. It is also necessary to obey the school rules, and make suggestions for improvement.

**17. What are your responsibilities to Bahraini society?**

Raqia: As a citizen of Bahrain, I have to participate in developing my country and I should defend my country and protect it from any danger. I should participate in community service and serve my country and try to raise its reputation. In general, I must be there when my country needs me.

**18a. Do you think Bahrain is a democratic country? What makes you think so?**

Raqia: Yes, Bahrain is a democracy; it has a parliament and 98% Bahraini citizens voted for the national charter in 2002. There is a big difference between Bahrain in the past and Bahrain now. There is freedom of expression. People can comment on anything and newspapers can present different topics, like politics and youth debates without hesitation.

**18b. If you had a choice to be a citizen of any country in the world, which country would you choose? Why?**

Raia: I am happy to be a citizen of Bahrain. Bahrain is my homeland; the place I was born, my family, friends, and all people that I know are living in Bahrain.

**18c. What model of democratic (people/institutions) have you seen/experienced in your life? What do they do?**

Raia: My family is democratic. We understand each other, discuss our problems and share each other in decision-making, we can express our opinions freely whether it is right or wrong.

**19. Who do you think is responsible for preparing young people to be active and responsible citizens?**

Raia: Umm ... the people are responsible, the state is responsible for preparing young citizens to participate in the community, to care about its people and develop educational and training programmes to equip them with the knowledge and the skills to participate in public life.

**20. What is the role of the family in preparing its children to participate in a democratic society?**

Raia: In fact, a good citizen is a part of a good family. If we have a good family, we can become good citizen and the whole society will improve. The family has a big role in preparing children to be democratic and to participate in a democracy. Families should train their children to love their country, to respect their traditions and encourage them to express their opinions freely. Also, by providing a democratic environment at home, children will understand the meaning of democracy, and how to be democratic and they will accept others opinions and respect others rights as well. By doing that, children can participate in developing their country to compete with other developed countries.

**21. What is the role of the community in preparing young citizens to participate in a democratic society?**

Raia: It is important that community institutions, youth clubs and associations, guide young citizens, and help them become aware of their rights and responsibilities, and their role in a society, all this can be done through community services and by encouraging democratic behaviour in people.

**22. What is the role of the school in preparing young citizens to participate in a democratic society?**

Raia: Actually, the school and the family complement each other. Schools, like families, should guide students' right from the beginning. I mean from primary school, and teach them about real democracy, and good citizenship.



This can be done through school activities and educational programmes: school lectures, clubs and groups, for example, and by encouraging voting and elections and making the students' council more active. In short, the school's role in preparing students for participation in democratic life is by immersing them in programmes that are related to democracy life and encouraging them to value such concepts.

**23. What is the role of political parties in a democracy?**

Raia: Political parties should help young citizens to understand about democracy, voting and elections, freedom of expression, their political role in a democracy and their political rights. All this can be done through social and political associations and workshops and lectures which can better prepare young people for the future.

**24. Do you think it is important for people to vote in elections? Why?**

Raia: Yes, since citizens are a part of this country, his or her voice can make a big difference. It is very important for people to vote in elections to choose their representatives, to practice their political right and to choose the best people for the national council.

**25. Why does a country need laws?**

Raia: Society needs laws to formalise the relationship between people and the country. Laws can guarantee our rights as citizens and of course this will determine our responsibilities as well.

**26. Do you think enforcing laws makes a country a better place for its citizens?**

Raia: Yes, but only if those laws take into account the citizens' rights and needs. In this case, laws make the country a better place to live for sure. In Bahrain we have some laws that people do not agree with and they are asking the government to change these, such as, the naturalization law and Law 56, which has allowed real criminals who have tortured Bahraini citizens to go free.

**27. Do you personally have interest in politics? Why/ why not?**

Raia: Yes, as a citizen, I should be interested in politics. Without politics we can not make changes in Bahrain, or even in the world. Politics helps us achieve our goals for a better life and solve different political problems.

**28. Do you think schools should teach politics? Why/ why not?**

Raia: Yes of course, it is really important to teach politics. I consider it one of the basics. It is necessary to teach children from early childhood about politics in a simple way to make them aware about their political role in the future. All this will help Bahrain to compete with other countries.



- **What can your school do to be 'democratic' / more 'democratic'? What subjects should your school teach to be 'democratic' / more 'democratic'?**

Raia: Schools can be democratic by forming a student council through real elections, rather than choosing them without any valid criteria. Let students vote for their representatives and choose the ones who are more qualified, have strong personalities, and who are able to make changes. Furthermore, schools should teach citizenship and politics in order to give us the chance to understand our rights and responsibilities, our political role and our political system. They should teach us the national charter and the constitution.

**30. As a young citizen, what can you do to make your country a better place for your generation and for future generations?**

Raia: I can make changes by being a member of political or youth associations which tries to educate young people about democracy and citizenship; they also try to find solutions for youth problems and allow the voice of youth to be heard. They can prepare young citizens for the future. For example, the 'Bahrain Youth Institution' has recently developed programmes like 'Achieving Youth' and the 'Youth parliament project', which prepares young people to become future leaders.

**Researcher: Is there anything you wish to add that has not been addressed by any of my questions or your responses?**

Raia: Yes, as I said earlier if we are given the chance to change the world, we have the ability to do that.

***Message of thanks***

Researcher: I would like to thank you for your cooperation and help during this interview, which will definitely prove fruitful for my research.

## APPENDIX V

### A Table:

### Qualities of a Good Bahraini Citizen

The following table shows all results of young citizens' perceptions about the 'qualities of a good Bahraini citizen' according to gender.

**Table 4.2: 'The most important' qualities of a good Bahraini citizen**

very important qualities for Bahraini citizens	Frequency	Percent	male		female	
			count	%	count	%
Defend own rights.	425	92.4	200	43.5	225	48.9
Be Responsible towards the family and the community.	410	89.1	190	41.3	220	47.8
Believe in equality.	399	86.7	184	40.0	215	46.7
Love your country (Bahrain).	392	85.2	174	37.8	218	47.4
Tolerate others' opinions.	378	82.2	159	34.6	219	47.6
Be proud to be Bahraini.	363	78.9	155	33.7	208	45.2
Struggle for human rights.	348	75.7	158	34.3	190	41.3
Obey the laws	347	75.4	148	32.2	199	43.3
Donate money to charity.	299	65.0	132	28.7	167	36.3
Understand the system of government	292	63.5	128	27.8	164	35.7
Volunteer for a service in the local community.	283	61.5	131	28.5	152	33.0
Be loyal to the country's leaders.	271	58.9	107	23.3	164	35.7
Support a football club.	236	51.3	111	24.1	125	27.2
Protect the environment (e.g. collect litter in your neighbourhood).	232	50.4	95	20.7	137	29.8
Struggle for democratic rules and principles.	223	48.5	104	22.6	119	25.9
Be interested in Public affairs.	188	40.9	89	19.3	99	21.5
Vote at elections.	176	38.3	83	18.0	93	20.2
Follow what is happening in government and politics	151	32.8	82	17.8	69	15.0
Be an active member of a community organization or not-for-profit association.	94	20.4	49	10.7	45	9.8
Contact a public official to express your views (e.g. a Member of Parliament (MP)	94	20.4	47	10.2	47	10.2
Attend a public meeting on local affairs or a political event	92	20.0	48	10.4	44	9.6
Work or volunteer in a political campaign	76	16.5	37	8.0	39	8.5
Write an article or "letter to the editor" for a newspaper or any publication	70	15.2	35	7.6	35	7.6
Join a political party.	50	10.9	30	6.5	20	4.3



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