Chapter 6

Conclusion: Citizenship, Values, and Belonging

Even as we challenge dominant discourses and the specific language which feeds and sustains them, we may find ourselves doing so within those discourses' own frames of reference, constrained by the very language with which they seek to determine our thoughts, words, deeds, (Moore 2018 p.145/6).

[Both welfare professionals and those who work actively for equality and diversity] are all situated ambivalently, implicated in inequality's reproduction as well as its challenge (Hunter 2015 p.144).

I finished the previous chapter by highlighting the ambivalent position - also illustrated by the quotations above - of those teachers who invested considerable amounts of time, energy and commitment in highlighting and explicitly promoting respect and tolerance to students, whilst the other FBV had a much lower profile. As the 'good' professional cannot be an 'unreasonable' one, teachers' promotion works through a discourse of liberal 'reasonableness' (Chetty 2018) that fails to recognise the entanglement of long-standing classed and raced inequalities in defining what 'we' know and should transmit through education. This absence of acknowledgement produces a curriculum and pedagogy that 'suggest[s] not moving too far from where we are and not looking too closely at how we got here' (Chetty 2018 p.9); a stance that also has to 'overlook' the determining role of current high-stakes testing in shaping what are understood to be 'effective' curricula and pedagogies. Given this situation, there are, 'no straightforwardly heroic, noble acts of resistance' (Hunter 2015 p.144). However, in this chapter, I go on to briefly consider whether particular approaches to citizenship education have potential to offer considerations of liberal democratic values that go beyond the simplistic, assumed consensus of FBV. But first, I shall summarise my arguments to this point.

The enactment of FBV

Ball, Maguire and Braun identify a major tension visible in recent education policy as being that between 'neo-conservative and neo-liberal versions of government, knowledge and social authority' (2012 p.140). The FBV policy however exemplifies both. The influence of neo-conservatism is visible in the idea of promoting a set of national values. This raises questions about equal belonging to the polity, and the likelihood of the effectiveness of a policy that seeks to enforce uniform commitments and loyalties on everyone, despite unequal starting points in terms of whether people perceive themselves, and others perceive them, as full citizens. The influence of neo-liberalism is visible in the way in which the prevailing focus of values education is not the political principles of the FBV, but rather looks 'inward' and not 'outward'; working on oneself, a neoliberal enterprise (Sant et al 2018 p.83) that operates within a system that emphasizes measurable performance targets, and allows limited opportunities for critical education about citizenship.

In this book, I have argued that understanding the context to the enactment of any policy is vital if the workings out of the policy on the ground are to be fully understood. I have suggested that there are two major sets of contextual influences to be considered with regard to the requirement to promote FBV. The first is the trend in the political and social climate towards populism and authoritarianism that coalesces in narrow interpretations of nationality and nationhood. This is shaped by the anxiety, and sometimes hostility, shown by governments across Europe about the integration of 'others', especially Muslim 'others', both newcomers and those born here; the current furore around Britain leaving the European Union, and the increasing polarisation of societal attitudes around nation, difference and cohesion (as seen in Britain, Germany, Brazil and the USA amongst others, with the rise of the far right)[i]. How teachers respond to the FBV, a policy apparently intended to strengthen national identity and belonging, is also influenced by the affective policy tone, the 'structure of feeling', of living in a particular political and social moment (chapter 3). Given this, I have detailed teacher-respondents' efforts to work against the prevailing climate of intolerance.

The second set of influences revolves around the role played by externally imposed forms of accountability in schools. These measures call into being particular behaviours from teachers if they are to be compliant (chapter 5). The demands of accountability also result in

the marginalisation of non-examined activity, such as discussion of contemporary political and social issues, thereby side-lining obvious 'homes' for these discussions: the non-EBacc subjects of PSHE, RE and citizenship education (chapters 1 and 3).

Following the literature on policy enactment, I have emphasised (chapter 3) that policies, especially ones as generally-worded as the FBV requirement, are not implemented in any straight-forward manner on the ground, and that teachers have considerable room for 'translating' policies to fit with what they perceive as the 'needs' of their pupils and the practicalities of having to respond to this and myriad other demands. Thus, minimalist responses, such as putting up posters listing the FBV, may be seen as a rational and efficient way of addressing the requirement to promote the values. In Chapter 4, I identified four main responses to FBV found in this study. Elements of these overlap in some sites, and particular individual responses are nuanced by teachers' individual beliefs and histories and the micro-contexts in which they find themselves. There is more to say than can be contained in a book of this length about these nuances, so here I have focused on the broader differences between teachers' responses. The four approaches are: *Representing Britain*, *Repackaging* and *Relocating* the FBVs, and *Engagement* with them.

Drawing on the nationalism literature, I argued in Chapter 2, that the traditional positioning of civic and ethnic nationalism as dichotomous, overlooks the way in which, in practice, civic nationalism (belonging based on commitment to political principles, such as the FBV) may be permeated by ethnic nationalism (belonging based on shared ethnicity or heritage). This permeation was illustrated in Chapter 4 in the approach I have called *Representing Britain;* an approach that proceeds from and promotes 'British-ness' as closed and unchanging. Here are instances of 'everyday nationalism', that is, taken-for-granted representations of nationhood. It seems that those teachers who responded to the FBV requirement by planning visual representations of 'Britishness', reached for images representing a united, and mostly White Britain, emphasising tradition and heritage, through cosy images of an imaginary past, present and future. Since the 2016 EU referendum, such imagery of Britain, harking back to an imagined past have been part of the debate over the nation's future outside the EU: a 'last gasp of the old empire' as Dorling and Tomlinson (2019) put it.

Representing Britain was not the majority response of teachers in my study, however. This was *Repackaging*, which describes schools absorbing the promotion of FBV into their current practices. This minimises the policy's demands upon staff and students, and avoids exclusionary imagery, but does not develop any of the opportunities that the policy requirement appears to open up, to introduce or give more time to issues of belonging, citizenship and nationhood. I also discussed the limitations of school council meetings as a lived example of democracy, despite their common repackaging as fulfilling the requirement to promote that FBV.

Relocating the values is a related response to *Repackaging.* It describes the promotion of FBV as subsumed within other work on values. When values are the focus for explicit teaching, I argue that this is likely to be in the form of 'inward-directed' character education, rather than 'outward-directed' citizenship education, the former focusing on individual emotional and moral development, with 'performance virtues' (e.g. perseverance, excellence, resilience) seeming to dominate in many sites.

However, I also note the conviction of the teacher-respondents that their role included modelling, and in particular, explicitly teaching virtuous behaviour in relation to others. Indeed, the FBV that teachers discussed most was the promotion of mutual respect and tolerance, noting 'we were doing this anyway'. Although what this promotion meant in practice was often rather generally expressed, there was nevertheless a clear commitment to disseminating a message of equal respect, that should inform how students treat each other within the school community, but also as an attitude to take forward into adult life. I have tried to explore the affective elements of citizenship - how students are taught to feel about themselves and others - and in this respect, the case study schools presented a consistent view of 'good' citizenship for their students. As present-day citizens of the school, 'good' citizenship is about respecting all within the institution, and developing the performance virtues needed to succeed and conform in adult life. Additionally, there were also occasional initiatives around active citizenship (fundraising, letter-writing, engagements with the surrounding community, for example, Kenton's regular teas with senior citizens). In a few cases, particular individuals explicitly spoke of wishing to develop the students' sense

of themselves as having an autonomous and assertive voice (for example, Valley High and Downs' headteachers, see chapter 5).

Fully understanding teachers' shared focus on equal respect and tolerance presents several issues. Given the particular context of growing concerns of intolerance, rising levels of hate crime and the frequent assumption by politicians that difference is a threat (chapter 1), then arguably such work by teachers is hugely valuable. I started this book citing Honig's (2001) notion of 'our' ambivalence towards 'the foreigner' (including those born in the nation but still positioned as 'foreign'); xenophobia and xenophilia uneasily co-existing, although surely with a tilt towards xenophobia in the political climate since Honig was writing. Yet a response tilting more towards xenophilia comes from the teacher-respondents, especially those in the multi-ethnic case study schools, who sought to celebrate diversity, to promote the idea of difference as enriching, and not a threat or source of anxiety; Britain as a multiracial society comfortable with itself. However, I have also sought to emphasise this is far from an unproblematic positioning, and is limited and constrained in various ways.

I have argued that the generality of the teachers' responses, their role as institutional actors in dividing and classifying pupils, and the apparent limitations on what can be said and taught in schools if the teacher is still to remain 'professional' and in control, all these act to question the impact on pupils of teachers' attempts to teach 'not [only] what it means for an individual to live well, but what she owes to others' (Clayton et al 2018 p.30). Furthermore, Zembylas (2014) argues that commonly-cited teaching goals encouraging openness to and tolerance of difference – what he refers to as 'coping with difference' and 'embracing the other' - have to be critically interrogated for the underlying emotional tensions and ambivalences they create. As an example, he offers the commonly-expressed notion (cited in Chapter 5) that 'we are all different, we are all the same'. The other is embraced as different but, as Zemblylas drawing on Fortier's work, asks what and whose differences disappear to make us all the same? Differentiation persists between the normal and unmarked, and the non-normal – who should still be tolerated (Bowie 2018 p.208, Sant & Valencia 2018). Despite their genuine commitment, most of the teacher-respondents did not have the scope, the vocabulary, the space, to look beneath and around their

exhortations of respect and tolerance. Thus, the existing power relations in and outside schools remain largely unquestioned.

As cited in chapter 5, Moore and Clarke describe teaching is a 'fantasy of equality of opportunity' (Moore & Clarke 2016 p.670). Teachers seek to fulfil their professional aims for the *all-round* development of *all* young people, despite their unequal starting points, the institutionalised processes which place barriers in the way of the desired development for some young people (resulting, for example, in the low level of educational qualifications gained by children excluded from mainstream schools), and also the wider social, economic and political context which see 'fantasies … fraying, include[ing], particularly, upward mobility, job security, political and social equality' (Berlant 2011 p.3).

Arguably, another fantasy is the discourse of 'reasonableness' in relation to teaching respect and tolerance and other values. Throughout the book, I have been commenting on the way in which citizenship education in many English schools has been reduced in status in recent years, but as I started to outline in chapter 5, there are more fundamental difficulties with a strategy of *Engagement* (my fourth response), concerning the conceptualisation of the aims of citizenship education, its appropriate content and how it should be taught in schools. The implicit framing of the subject suggests that 'more' and 'better' citizenship education requires identifying the correct and appropriate body of knowledge and arguments, to be conveyed through the correct pedagogy and this *will* result in tolerant and respectful attitudes in the students. Similarly, Strandbrink (2017) argues that the implicit promise of saturating young people with particular liberal democratic values of tolerance, cosmopolitanism and universalism is unlikely to be realised, partly because civic/citizenship education commonly depends on a 'soft', cosmopolitan (Goren & Yemini 2017), and also an instrumentalist, technicist approach (Strandbrink 2017, also Biesta and Lawey 2006). Moreover, Strandbrink claims that liberal democratic values are often presented as having a coherence and agreed definition that they lack; and that they are implicitly presented as European values to civilise non-Europeans, overlooking Europe's 'shadowy legacy of bad values' (e.g. imperialism, anti-Semitism, racism, fascism, Strandbrink 2017 p.74, also Diwan 2018). From this basis Strandbrink argues that pupils will have to 'struggle in order to assemble meaningful comprehensive worldview packages' (ibid p.172) from rather vague

and often non-committal subject matter that may not address students' immediate concerns, as I argued at the end of Chapter 5.

However, from the point of view of practising teachers, such arguments must appear to suggest that their efforts lack any meaning or validity. Strandbrink ends his discussion of civics/citizenship education by highlighting its fallibility, but observing that comprehensive programmes to educate young people in liberal democratic values are 'really the worst form of civic enculturation imaginable – except that is for all other forms' (2017 p.206). So, with this in mind, I am going to briefly going to review an approach to citizenship education that does begin to address at least some of the complexities around citizenship, belonging and nationhood.

Global Citizenship Education and Human rights

Commentators have argued that in the light of technological developments, the global movement of capital and increased migration flows, there has been an increasing understanding of the need for educators to move beyond traditional ideas of citizenship education as aiming to build a common national identity. This has led to the development of broader conceptualisations of citizenship inherent in Global Citizenship Education (GCE), that centre human rights 'since all students, regardless of their nationality and migration status, are holders of human rights' (Osler & Starkey 2018 p.34/5, Yemini et al 2018, Farrell 2019).

However, GCE is not easily defined (Oxley & Morris 2013) It is a 'moving montage' (Gaudelli 2009 p.82, cited in Goren & Yemini 2017 p.171). In a recent text book, Sant and colleagues (2018) include discussions on varied topics placed under the heading of GCE - citizenship, social justice, education for diversity, development education, character education, peace education and sustainable development education. They note the similarities and differences across these dimensions, and ask whether this complexity is evidence of intellectual dynamism or simply incoherence (2018 p.8). As indicated in Chapter 2, discussions around GCE also suggest that the label has and is applied to different forms with different outcomes: from an investment in the neoliberal self, developing the attitudes and knowledge young people need to compete effectively in the global market place, what Dill

calls ‘global competencies’ (Dill 2013, cited in Goren & Yemini 2017 p.171; also Pais and Costa 2017), to engaging with the roots of inequalities, whether local or global – Dill’s ‘global consciousness’ which aims to develop a ‘global orientation’ (ibid). The latter requires centring ‘the complex relations of power at the heart of what it means to relate to other citizens’ (Sant et al 2017, unnumbered), and may be referred to as ‘critical’ (Andreotti 2006) or ‘transformative’ (Bamber et al 2017) citizenship education, although there are other variations (for a review see Sant et al 2018).

Commentators on critical citizenship education suggest a number of principles – issues of pedagogy, curricula, and school organisation of the school - which could offer opportunities for critically engaging with the liberal democratic values of the FBV. The word ‘critical’ is often vaguely defined, and as a result, heavily overused (Johnson & Morris 2010). Johnson & Morris nevertheless defend ‘critical pedagogy’, an approach that draws on Friere’s work, focusing on affect, in order to reveal inequalities and encouraging students to consider what action would improve the status quo. They use this approach to develop a framework of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for critical citizenship education. Similar ground is covered by Osler & Starkey in their three-fold understanding of rights:

> As well as knowledge (learning about rights), there is an emphasis on learning through rights (democratic upbringing and school practices, such as student councils and a climate that promotes recognition and respect of difference). Finally, there is learning for rights. This involves empowering young people to be able to make a difference, and equipping them with skills for change. It involves seeing human rights education as a means of transformation (2018 p.37)

In critical framings of GCE, empathy for others is (mostly) held as crucial, but insufficient (Andreotti et al 2015), if it remains what Zembylas calls a ‘sentimental discourse of suffering’ (2013b p.505). To avoid this, he writes of encouraging students to engage in small-scale compassionate action (e.g. letter writing, volunteering for NGOs). Writers also suggest an emphasis on open-ended pedagogic processes which involve students in what is to be taught, and which are not framed around a search for the ‘right’ answer (Bamber et al 2018b). Relatedly, Sant et al (2017, also Sant & Valencia 2018) discuss the generation of

agonistic spaces in their research (drawing on the writing of Chantal Mouffe), foregrounding a recognition that conflicting views on controversial issues are inevitable, and that consensus may not be possible, or only on fragile temporary grounds.

Alternative curricula and pedagogic approaches cannot be easily inserted into an existing education system, and even if this partially occurs, such approaches are unequal to challenging existing discursive formations of the purposes of schooling, and the current constructions of the 'good' teacher and the 'good' education. However, a planned and progressive programme of citizenship education could, at least, move beyond the blunt generalisations of the FBV policy; to offer and debate with students the worth of an identity as 'citizens of a pluralistic society' (QCA 2004, cited in Quartermaine 2016 p.23), and recognise and encourage their identifications with the multiple communities to which they belong (Starkey 2018). I suggest that this starts with those contemporary political and social issues that relate to living with diversity and 'the actual conditions of young people's citizenship' (Biesta & Lawey 2006 p.74). Chapter 5 includes some topics identified by teacher-respondents, but different issues may be identified by students as relevant to them at different times and in different localities.

Last word

Debates about diversity and cohesion will doubtless persist as global population mobilities continue. I have focused here on one policy reaction to diversity. The FBV policy derived from a state-led concern over a minority, extremist threat to the majority, and engaged with and built on White British ethnic nationalist inclinations to identify as a policy imperative, the further integration of ethnic minorities, especially Muslims, into the liberal polity.

The promotion of fundamental British values as currently enacted is distant from the more progressive developments of GCE. It posits the development of commonly-held values that can help young people, regardless of ethnicity, class, religion and so on, to live together based on shared attachment to these political and social principles, values that are asserted as universally applicable. What I have tried to show through this study is that despite the apparent promise of national belonging for all who commit to these values, narrow, exclusive definitions persist of who truly belongs, is able to fit in; who confidently inhabits

and is understood as inhabiting these values. The particular format and enactments of the FBV requirement do not encourage the degree of critical deliberation that might ensure that ideas of nationality and nationhood are not fixed and closed, but fluid, open to redetermination as the population profile develops (Bamber et al 2018b p.435). Neither does FBV currently provide the basis for an in-depth examination of how as a society we understand diversity and cohesion and the possibilities and limitations of current understandings. The requirement to promote FBV was seemingly planned to challenge extremist thought, but is unlikely to be effective in this, given the lack of detailed definitions of either 'extremism', 'radicalisation' or students' 'resilience' to these phenomena (Crawford et al 2018). As discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Garden, the FBV requirement may be used to promote liberal values, at times in an illiberal manner, shutting down the possibility of dialogue with families, and making assumptions influenced by families' faith and/or class-based identities of their opposition to liberal democratic values. Nor is the FBV requirement an effective way to establish areas of consensus and commonality in a diverse society, because, in this research, it did not lead to the sorts of discussions and debates which could allow children and young people to voice their perceptions of relationships in their local areas, what the fault lines and divisions, and commonalities and points of solidarity are and could be.

Finally, the requirement to promote FBV was not in this research an inspiring approach to educating young people about citizenship, as its explicit promotion largely consisted of posters, arrays of union jacks, and re-runs of discussions about toilets, food and mobile phones in school council meetings badged as promoting democracy. Developing pupils' understanding of and commitment to any set of political and social values must surely require exploration and debate around their meaning and their practice in our society. This could be enabled by a programme of critical citizenship education, notwithstanding its limitations. As it is, the FBV are likely to remain at best merely words and pictures on a school display board, and at worst, words and pictures that actively work to exclude.

Endnote

[i] The rise of the far right in Britain was reported on by the Lead Commissioner for Counter Extremism, Sara Khan, to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee in October 2018.