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Education for cosmopolitan citizenship

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Introduction

The strong interest in education for citizenship in the early years of the 21st century derives from a number of political developments. First, there is the emergence of recently democratised nation-states, such as South Africa and those of Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. In these contexts forms of citizenship education have been introduced to enable populations to understand democracy and its basis in human rights and to equip young people with skills for participation. Secondly, governments in established democracies, concerned at an apparent crisis of confidence in formal, established political processes, including elections, see citizenship education as a means of restoring confidence in democracy. They also see it as a means of addressing a number of societal problems, such as violence, apathy and disengagement with political processes. Thirdly, globalisation has led to increased migration and consequent demographic changes. In urban areas in particular, school populations are characterised by increased cultural diversity and by the presence of new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Citizenship education is intended to enable young people from different backgrounds to live together. New migrants and minority groups in general are sometimes perceived by education

policy-makers to be in particular need of such education even when there is little evidence to support such an assertion (Osler 2000, Osler and Starkey 2001).

It is the issue of civic disengagement, analysed by writers such as Putnam (2000) that most concerns governments in the longer established democracies. As a consequence, the programmes of citizenship education in England, for example, are based on a view of young people that assumes that they are apathetic because they fail to understand the political basis of the state and they are ignorant of their responsibilities and their rights (Crick, 2000). This deficit model defines young people as less good citizens, and often implies that ethnic minorities require even greater compensatory programmes. It is, almost by definition, pedagogically unsound since it fails to build on young people's existing knowledge, skills and experiences (Osler, 2000; Starkey, 2000; Osler and Starkey, 2000).

We therefore propose that education for citizenship needs to be re-conceptualised and to be built on the life experiences and the citizenship learning that young people acquire in their communities. These may include experiences of international travel, of migration, of living in multicultural and multi-faith communities, of taking responsibility, of discrimination and of challenging discrimination on the basis of age, sex, ethnicity, colour, religion or disability. Rather than a narrow education for national citizenship, we propose citizenship education that includes a global perspective, promotes human solidarity and a commitment to human rights. It implies learning to (re-)imagine the

nation as a diverse and inclusive community. We define this as education for cosmopolitan citizenship.

Defining citizenship

Citizenship, in a legal sense, is anchored in the rights and responsibilities deriving from sovereign-nation states. National citizenship of democratic countries with strong economies and the rule of law is a prized status. Access to national citizenship for those not entitled to it from birth is typically restricted by governments. Acquiring citizenship involves bureaucratic processes and, increasingly, tests of language and civic knowledge.

However, the narrow association of citizenship with nationality poses difficulties when we seek to conceptualise citizenship education in multicultural societies. Our societies are not only diverse but are also increasingly recognised as such. Global migration has caused many communities and schools which were previously seen as homogenous to acknowledge long-standing differences related to such factors as social class, gender and sexual orientation. We now recognise that all individuals are likely to have multiple loyalties and identities. When citizenship and citizenship education is conceived of as having a unique focus of loyalty to a particular nation-state, this leads to pressure to assimilate to imagined national norms and values. This pressure is felt particularly acutely by those individuals and communities in historically marginalised and less powerful positions.

In designing programmes of citizenship education that are relevant to young people, we need to define citizenship in a way that both preserves and extends its historical meanings and corresponds to the realities of a globalized world. Citizenship can be understood as a *status*, a *feeling* and a *practice* (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Citizenship is a legal status based

on nationality, certainly, but also on entitlement to universal human rights. Citizenship is also a feeling of belonging to a community or communities. Practice is the third dimension of citizenship, since citizens are expected to engage with their fellow citizens to promote the common good. Individuals typically experience and practice their citizenship in local communities. As holders of human rights our citizenship status extends beyond the nation to the global community. Feelings of belonging can extend from the local to the national and to transnational communities.

There is a considerable literature promoting the concept of global citizenship. This concept tends to imply an overriding loyalty to the planet. Education for global citizenship is sometimes understood to imply a tension between national and global citizenship. We follow John Dewey and others (Held, 1995; Habermas, 1996; Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999; Beck, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Isin & Turner, 2007) in preferring the term *cosmopolitan* citizenship, a concept that links the local, the national and the global. It allows us to conceive of citizenship as a status, a feeling and a practice at all levels, from the local to the global.

Cosmopolitan citizenship

Cosmopolitanism is a philosophy developed during the period of the Enlightenment, notably by Immanuel Kant. It upholds the dignity and inherent rights of individuals, seen as members of a single human family (Beiner, 1995). However, by the end of the nineteenth century, nationalism, mediated through state education, largely obliterated cosmopolitanism:

Under the influence of German thought in particular, education became a civic function and the civic function was identified with the realization of the ideal of the national state. The "state" was substituted for humanity; cosmopolitanism gave way to nationalism (Dewey [1916], 2002:108).

Dewey argues that by the early nineteenth century cosmopolitanism had developed a consciousness of the interconnectedness of humanity. This worldview was prevalent until ideologies of nationalism refocused the loyalties of the people towards the nation rather than the world. Crucially, Dewey notes at the end of the nineteenth century states took control of education from religious and charitable foundations and teachers became agents of a national state. They were expected to show loyalty to the state and promote patriotism. Indeed, citizenship itself was nationalised (Isin & Turner, 2007). Thus the educational goal of introducing young people to a humanistic curriculum became subservient to a more instrumental, national curriculum. In Dewey's words: 'the "state" was substituted for humanity; cosmopolitanism gave way to nationalism'.

Nonetheless, cosmopolitanism survived strongly enough to provide an alternative grand narrative to that of nationalism, notably following the discrediting of ultra nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century as responsible for two world wars. A cosmopolitan vision underpins the Charter of the United Nations (UN) signed in 1945. The UN is an organisation of independent nation-states but its vision is undoubtedly humanistic. The preamble to the UN Charter proclaims:

faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small
(United Nations Organisation, 1945).

This essentially cosmopolitan vision of a peaceful world based on justice and equality challenges worldviews based on domination or on antagonism between peoples.

Cosmopolitan citizenship does not deny the validity and indeed the importance of a national perspective, rather it recognises universal values as its standard for all contexts, including national contexts. It stresses those things that unite human beings rather than those which divide them. It is epitomised by a global outlook.

The cosmopolitan ideal combines a commitment to humanist principles and norms, an assumption of human equality, with a recognition of difference, and indeed a celebration of diversity.

(Kaldor, 2003:19)

Cosmopolitan citizenship in a liberal democracy is not an alternative to national citizenship, nor is it even in tension with national citizenship. It is a way of being a citizen at any level, local, national, regional or global. It is based on feelings of solidarity with fellow human beings wherever they are situated. It expands horizons and stands opposed to narrow and exclusive definitions of nationality and of citizenship:

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship ...implies a broader understanding of national identity; it requires recognition that British identity, for example, may be experienced differently by different people.

(Osler and Vincent, 2002: 124)

The research project

We set out to explore with young people living in Leicester, a multicultural city in England, their sites of learning for citizenship, their feelings about community and how they negotiate their multiple identities and sense of belonging within a range of localities (Osler and Starkey, 2001a, 2003, 2005).

We collected data from volunteers who took part in two workshops we ran in each of four schools. Here we draw on data from students in Year 9 (aged 13-14 years) attending school in two contrasting inner city areas. The demographic composition of each school reflects the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity which is typical of inner-city schools in Europe.

Young people's identities and community

When writing about where they came from all but two of the total sample identify with other places as well as Leicester, even when it is the only place they have lived. For example, Ranjit, said he was: 'born and bred in Leicester. Parents from India and Africa'.

Abdul had recently returned to Leicester after his family fled from Malawi. He had lived in the city for less than a year, after growing up in East Africa:

I am from Malawi and I was born in Leicester in the General Hospital. My father and mother are from Malawi and my grandmother is from India. We left Malawi because almost every day people were getting shot in their houses and one of them was my neighbour.

Changes in family circumstances, particularly parental separations, often meant a change of home:

I was born in Manchester and [lived there] until I was six months old. I moved from Manchester because my mum and dad had a divorce. My mum, dad and granddad are from Africa and my grandma is from India (Asha).

Many of the young people had strong affective ties with other countries and places. This was true whether they had lived most of their lives in Britain or were relatively new

arrivals. International travel and visits to family overseas were often mentioned as particularly significant events in their lives.

I was born in Keighley in West Yorkshire. I lived there for nine years and moved to Leicester when I was in Year 5. My parents are both from Bangladesh and I visited Bangladesh in 1995 and moved to Leicester in 1996 (Najma).

These young people already identify with a range of places, beyond Leicester and the UK, giving them the potential to see themselves as cosmopolitan citizens.

Self definitions

The students were invited to write about how they defined themselves in terms of ethnicity, race and culture. A number stressed their bilingualism. Many chose to explain their values, sometimes drawing on religious beliefs. Some chose to explain that theirs was an inter-faith family. For example, after her parents' divorce, Asha continued to live with her mother, a Sikh, but she herself was brought up a Hindu. Asha identified with her religious tradition, but was not uncritical, emphasising her opposition to the caste system. For many, religion was an identifier:

I am Hindu, born in Leicester and proud of being a Hindu (Wayne).

I'm Asian and my religion is Islam. I live in a multicultural area with Christians, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus (Najma).

I am Methodist. Don't really believe in God. (Ayleen).

Concepts of community

At the end of the first workshop, students were provided with disposable cameras. At the second workshop they were invited to create an exhibition of photographs illustrating themselves in their communities and to write descriptive captions. The captions reveal much about their sense of community and belonging.

Rehana, for instance, sees community in terms of what she sees from her house and in her street. This includes the public facility of a park and two places of worship. This is a community in which she feels at ease, where she recognises people to be friendly. She gets a sense of occasion from crowds attending religious services:

This is St Peter's Church. I see lots of people go. I see weddings, funerals.

This is the big mosque in St Peter's. Lots of people go there every Friday to pray. The mosque is just behind my house. When it's a big day, I always go up in the attic to see people and I get a very good view.

Morgan, too, feels at ease in the cosmopolitan neighbourhood where he lives. He is proud of the cultural diversity he experiences, and he identifies with his place of worship as providing a focus to his week and a sense of historical continuity. The other key institution in his neighbourhood is the community centre which he associates with leisure and relaxation:

My church is a very important place for me. I am not very religious but I love going to pray every Sunday. It's a really old building and on its other side there is our community centre. At my community centre is where people go and relax and chill. ...I do karate at this centre and it is good fun.

My street is ...in Highfields, there are many people living there, people of many cultures, religion and race. I like my street people and these many cultures which are fascinating and you can learn more in life with many cultures surrounding you.

Many of the young people had been involved in campaigns to save a local school and had been engaged in fundraising efforts for earthquake victims in Gujerat. In general they had considerable sensitivity to injustice. The major response was to give charitably, and schools tended to support this approach.

Defining education for cosmopolitan citizenship

Drawing on UNESCO's (1995) framework, we have identified some characteristics of the educated cosmopolitan citizen (Osler and Vincent, 2002). We suggest that educated cosmopolitan citizens will be confident in their own identities and will work to achieve peace, human rights and democracy within the local community and at a global level, by:

- accepting personal responsibility and recognising the importance of civic commitment
- working collaboratively to solve problems and achieve a just, peaceful and democratic community
- respecting diversity between people, according to gender, ethnicity and culture
- recognising that their own worldview is shaped by personal and societal history and by cultural tradition
- respecting the cultural heritage and protecting the environment
- promoting solidarity and equity at national and international levels
(adapted from UNESCO, 1995).

Discussion

Citizenship requires a sense of belonging. To neglect the personal and cultural aspects of citizenship is to ignore the issue of belonging. Cosmopolitan citizens have learnt to be confident in their own identities and schools can usefully provide learning opportunities to explore and develop these. Evidence from these young people suggests that they are

engaging as citizens and learning the skills for cosmopolitan citizenship within their homes and communities.

The majority of young people we worked with identified strongly with their city and/or their local neighbourhood. Cosmopolitan citizenship does not mean asking individuals to reject their national citizenship or to accord it a lower status. Education for cosmopolitan citizenship is about enabling learners to make connections between their immediate contexts and the national and global contexts. It is not an add-on but rather it encompasses citizenship learning as a whole. It implies a re-conceptualisation and a broader understanding of national identity. It requires recognition that British identity, for example, may be experienced differently by different people.

The young people in our research demonstrated multiple and dynamic identities, embracing local, national and international perspectives. An education for national citizenship is unlikely to provide a sufficiently comprehensive context for them to integrate their own experiences and identities.

We have argued that education for cosmopolitan citizenship addresses peace, human rights, democracy and development. It is about equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to make a difference. It is orientated towards the future, preparing young citizens to play an active role in shaping the world, at all levels, from the local to the global. The processes of globalisation make this a critical task.

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