EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: THEORY AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Session 1: The political and social dimensions of formal education. Ideology, hidden curricula and the education of the citizen

Dr Nicola Horsley

Guiding Questions:

- How do concepts like *democracy, freedom, citizenship, rights* and *responsibilities* inform understandings of citizenship?
- How have different theories characterised the role of education?
- What is education's role in (re)presenting certain histories and (re)*producing* citizenship?
- What are the hidden processes of formal education?

Citizenship Theory

Theorists of citizenship are concerned with concepts including liberty or freedom, rights, responsibilities and civic virtue. Theories differ in their interpretations of these concepts and which elements they privilege.

The most obvious example of this is the disagreement between thinkers in the liberal and republican traditions over the proper balance of the rights and responsibilities of the citizen. Approaches vary in their support for more active or passive models, often referred to as 'thin' or 'thick' citizenship. 'Thin' liberal accounts of citizenship position the citizen fundamentally as a legal member of a defined political community who should be enabled to enjoy certain rights, particularly the right to liberty (Thompson 1994). Over the centuries, liberal theorists have argued about the nature of these rights – especially the nature and extent of liberty and the degree of support from the state and other public institutions that may be required to give liberty real meaning. Republican thinkers, on the other hand, offer a 'thicker' definition of citizenship that locates the citizen not only as the legal recipient of certain rights, but also as an active, 'engaged' member of a defined polity who has an obligation to contribute to the common good. Here the state, and the formal public sphere more generally, has a more significant role than it tends to be granted by liberal thinkers. In consequence, notions of social justice, duty and 'civic virtue' become especially important in republican thinking.

Liberal Citizenship

Classical liberal theorists like John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) laid the foundations of the vernacular we continue to use to articulate understandings of citizenship. Mill was most famous for his treatise on liberty but he actually believed in the pre-eminence of developing people's capacity to co-operate in society; because liberty should be reserved for those judged to have the required faculties. He believed in democracy for the sake of developing people's faculties, and that only a government built on participation could stimulate public concern that is in itself enlightenment.

Mill believed that parents had a moral obligation to cultivate their children's knowledge, and that this should be enforced by the state, though left to the parents to decide how to

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educate them. He was an advocate of diversity in education as better for building character than a narrow national curriculum.

A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government … it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. (Mill1910a:199)

The work of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant outlined the founding tenets of liberal citizenship that are recognised as the basis for subsequent thought. Mill's contribution to the liberal canon built on those macro concepts of freedom, rights and responsibilities and turned attention to how micro processes of active citizenship reinforce these. The role of the citizen envisaged by classical liberalism influenced politics in the UK into the twentieth century and beyond.

Despite his optimism for active participation, Mill is one of the liberal thinkers Berlin (1958) names in his insightful essay, Two Concepts of Liberty, as characterising the 'negative' conception of freedom that is not instructive. Berlin argues that Mill's thought conflates two liberal views: that all coercion is inherently bad and 'non-interference' is inherently good; and that 'men' should be educated to develop 'a certain type of character of which Mill approved – fearless, original, imaginative, independent, non-conforming to the point of eccentricity, and so on', which was possible 'only in conditions of freedom' (Berlin 1958:159). Berlin sees this second view as fundamentally flawed and neglecting of the proliferation of historical examples of human spirit thriving in struggles with oppression. Berlin contrasted Mill's claim that 'the only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way' (Berlin 1958:158) with 'positive' constructions of liberty, which Berlin defines as the realisation of the individual's desire to be the 'instrument' of her own acts of will, of thoughtfully 'conceiving goals and policies of my own' and actively realising them. He explains the distinction between this understanding of the purposeful citizen and Rousseau's natural man: that 'lower' nature governed by irrational impulse, which is the target of 'rigidly disciplined' moral training (Berlin 1958:161).

With the rise of capitalism from the nineteenth century onwards, the liberal view of the relationship between citizenship and liberty, and particularly freedoms connected to property, took on a new dimension. As it was acknowledged that property ownership was a privilege not enjoyed by all members of society, the assumption that a citizen's commitment to the state was a return on the state's investment in protecting private property was no longer operational (Heater 2004). As capitalism expanded into the twentieth century, the idea that the state's role should include some level of redistribution of the assets of the wealthy to enable the poor to achieve a standard of welfare conducive to attaining equal citizenship gained purchase, and the relevance of the classic liberal account was challenged. The traditional debate diversified as more contemporary thinkers sought to address the inequalities created by laissez-faire markets and the classic liberal position was re-evaluated for the new age by a number of theorists (Heater 2004).

In his highly influential work, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Marshall and Bottomore 1992), T. H. Marshall (1893–1981) pioneered the notion of social rights, which shaped debates about citizenship in post-Second World War Britain, when the welfare state was in its infancy (Dwyer 2003). In his considerations of increasing citizens' share of power in capitalist society, Marshall claimed that his main concern was the impact of citizenship on social equality. He saw social rights as Britain's area of need in the twentieth century, after the development of civil rights from the eighteenth century and political rights through the nineteenth century. His approach

was based on the universal enjoyment of classic freedoms but he did not believe that this necessitated the demolition of social stratification, rather, he was in favour of installing an 'educational meritocracy'. Through this system he believed an ideal of 'a structure of unequal status fairly apportioned to unequal abilities' (Marshall and Bottomore 1992:109) would be rightly achieved and those most suited to public life would naturally enter into it. However, it could be argued that Marshall's acceptable inequalities are just as damaging and reproductive as those he sought to redress. Marshall's model also assumes economic citizenship, which those who do not cultivate economic capital (such as the young unemployed) cannot hold. His vision of knocking the worst edges off capitalism also maintains the gendered separation of the public and private spheres and neglects complex identities (Turner 1993).

Republican Citizenship

The turn away from a conception of liberty dependent on property outlined above undermined the supremacy that liberalism had enjoyed as a basis for citizenship until the twentieth century. Although the legacy of thinkers such as Rousseau continued to be influential, it was the more republican strands of his theory that came to resonate more strongly, leading to a resurgence in support for the republican ideals of public duty, social justice and civic virtue as a foundation for citizenship (Faulks 2000). The republican model of citizenship is based on a 'thicker', more active role, with citizens encouraged to think and act on behalf of the common good and the state given more power to intervene in citizens' lives. The republican approach is more demanding in terms of what it expects of its citizens but still takes freedom as a central theme.

There is some doubt in the republican tradition, however, as to whether even a citizenry coaxed into 'fraternal' participation can be trusted to fulfil its civic obligation. Ancient Greeks drew a distinction between the state of idiocy, a natural state of ignorance into which all individuals are born, and the state of citizenship, into which one must be educated. They therefore excluded those who exhibited self-centredness by prioritising private rather than public life. Such a preference was evidence of idiocy and proof that some were not sufficiently enlightened to play a public role (Dagger 2002). Even Rousseau, who was in favour of republic-wide engagement, was circumspect:

How can a blind multitude, which often does not know what it wants, because it seldom knows what is good for it, undertake by itself an enterprise so vast and difficult as a system of legislation? … The general will is always rightful, but the judgement which guides it is not always enlightened. (Rousseau 1968:II.6)

With the high expectations heaped upon members of the republican citizenry, it is indeed difficult to envisage a society of such ideal citizens, united in their collective motivation and dedication to the common will. It is this problem that has led republican theorists to assert the need for education to engender the judgment, skills and practical knowledge essential for full citizenship (Faulks 2000).

Although republicanism's popularity waned towards the end of the eighteenth century, more recently, republicanism has enjoyed a resurgence of interest, as active citizenship has been posited as a remedy to the failings of the 'thin', passive citizenship that has taken root in much of the West. In particular, lamentations of the decline of electoral participation and social capital (Putnam 2000) have been construed as a desire for republican citizenship, and some republican notions have remained in the public conscious, as evident in the use of the term 'good citizen'. Attributes that have made republican citizenship an attractive theory include its basic proposition that human beings are inherently social beings that should not be expected to live in a disaffected state without the capacity to influence, or be influenced by, others.

In addition to the merits of republican thinking, in many western countries, including the UK and USA, perceived abuse of social welfare, together with despair at a burgeoning 'claim culture' that prizes rights without the counterbalance of responsibilities, has weakened support for liberal citizenship. Today's citizens are, according to Bauman, consumers who believe in an individualised 'right to enjoy, not a duty to suffer' (Bauman 1998:31), and the ensuing competition for luxuries has been identified by some concerned commentators as socially erosive (Jones 2011; Jensen 2013). Such a breakdown of responsibility to others threatens society's homonoia, which discourages anti-social behaviour and allows for less state intervention in social order. Republican theory's solutions to such problems have therefore found support in recent social climates, especially with reference to instilling in the young those values thought to be missing in twenty-first century life, through education.

Functionalist versus Neo-Marxist Explanations of Education

According to Dewey, education, understood in the broadest possible terms, is an instrument of social renewal; of the 'social continuity of life' (Dewey 1994:2). It is therefore a 'social need', a 'work of necessity' (Dewey 1994:3).

Beings who are born not only unaware of, but quite indifferent to, the aims and habits of the social group have to be rendered cognizant of them and actively interested. Education, and education alone, spans the gap. (Dewey 1994:3)

At the same time, it has been observed that the requirements of capitalism do not correspond to the best interests of democracy.

… the division of labor in education, as well as its structure of authority and reward, mirror those of the economy. Second, it holds that in any stable society in which a formal educational system has a major role in the personal development of working people, there will tend to emerge a correspondence between the social relations of education and those of the economic system. (Bowles & Gintis, 1988, p. 237)

Bowles & Gintis' correspondence thesis of the modern US educational system found that its structure and scope…

… cannot be explained without reference to both the demands of working people-for literacy, for the possibility of greater occupational mobility, for financial security, for personal growth, for social respect-and to the imperative of the capitalist class to construct an institution which would both enhance the labour power of working people and help to reproduce the conditions for its exploitation. (p. 240)

But Livingstone (1995: 61) points out this thesis fails to account fully for the political and social dimensions of formal education, not least because of its 'conceptual failure to identify the educational system as a social field in its own right, a site of social relations of the material production of knowledge'.

Further efforts at a more comprehensive explanation of the political and social dimensions of education have therefore sought to account for shifts in educational priorities through greater emphasis on social agency and sites of struggle.

Detailed analyses of structural factors underlying educational change, as well as more responsive accounts of policy processes, have then sought to provide greater clarity. Dale (1992: 207) describes 'socially committed' approaches to the sociology of education as '"theoretical" projects ... dominated on the one hand by ad hocery and on the other by a

restriction to concept development rather than theoretical development'. Resistance theorists have emphasised the role of intersecting class, gender and race positions (Giroux, 2011). Meyer (1986: 345) argues that functionalist accounts are only reinforced by a view of capitalist educational systems as progressive social projects:

The main sociological story stays squarely within the functionalist paradigm, unable to escape the overwhelming legitimacy in principle of the rational and purposive character of education as an ideal. This is not often seen, because many sociologists adopt a radical political posture in the matter. But this involves simply the notion that the educational system functions for the maintenance and enhancement of institutionalized distributions of power and status: in this respect, the neo-Marxist sociologists tend to be the most strictly functionalist, often unable to see any other aspect of education than its functioning, almost as if in a plan ... for the maintenance of the wider order.

Citizenship Education as a National Curriculum Subject

Ideas of civil renewal and active civic participation were ingrained in political discourse at the time the Advisory Group for Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, led by Sir Bernard Crick, started work on their objectives; and the three strands of citizenship education the group identified reflect this.

6.7 The strands

6.7.1 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 (this is an essential

pre-condition for citizenship).

6.7.2 Community involvement

Pupils learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and

concerns of their communities, including learning through community

involvement and service to the community.

6.7.3 Political literacy

Pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life

through knowledge, skills and values. (Crick 1998: 40-41)

The English Citizenship Order 1999 established the entitlement and declared that citizenship education should include ‘knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy; the duties, responsibilities, rights and development of pupils into citizens; and the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community’. Educators should be given a clear statement of what citizenship education involves and their role in it. The three strands should be used together in ‘habitual interaction’ to constitute ‘active citizenship’. The citizenship curriculum should therefore encompass not just political knowledge but skills, values, understanding, attitudes and dispositions. It should

also be cross-curricular and use resources from within and outside school. Due to the subject's political nature, it was stated that there should be guidelines for teaching controversial issues.

Formal Education: 'institutionalisation', 'schooling', 'training' and 'banking'

The principal component of educational training has been identified by many liberal theorists as the inculcation of certain practices in order to represent the continuity of the culture into which pupils are to be integrated. Dewey proposed that trainee teachers are trained in the art of culture-as-management to fundamentally control the learning environment of the classroom (Dewey 1916), what have been called 'factory' aspects of schooling (Latour and Woolgar 1986). Teachers are therefore trained to transmit the messages of, for example, the National Curriculum, which encapsulates elements of the national culture deemed most crucial to this tradition of integration, and to adopt generalist teaching methods appropriate to their role as reproducers of values.

However, even in countries like the UK, where formal education is regulated by a government department and a national curriculum structures the norms of teaching and learning, it falls to school senior leadership teams, heads of subject and classroom teachers to interpret and deliver subjects and standards set out by that curriculum. Teaching issues of citizenship, as Westheimer and Kahne (2004:238) point out, involves political choices with political consequences, as 'decisions educators make when designing and researching these programs often influence politically important outcomes regarding the ways that students understand the strengths and weaknesses of our society and the ways that they should act as citizens in a democracy'. It is, therefore, a great burden of responsibility that rests with teachers.

While not a typical Marxist, Crick, drew on Orwell's (1941) account in Wells, Hitler and the World State, which 'was deadly serious in arguing that capitalism, faced with a largely literate and free electorate, could only by means of cultural debasement maintain a class system so grossly unequal and inequitable' (Crick 2000). Crick would therefore have endorsed Habermas' description of a public 'mediatised' by manipulated publicity (Habermas 1987), though not necessarily share his view that this would ultimately lead to a united revolt. We might ask, therefore, why does capitalism need citizenship? The answer lies in the assumptions that underlie capitalist values. Post-industrial society has been seen to expand the definition of the citizen from the particular to the universal, in acknowledgement of the economic contribution of previously excluded groups. Women, for example, were not included in the citizenry as they were regarded as agents of the natural, rather than social, world, 'concerned with the reproduction of men rather than with the reproduction of culture' (Turner 1986:134). With the erosion of hierarchies necessary for open market competition came increased individual freedoms. This led to two paradoxes in contemporary social citizenship.

Firstly, the very rights that have been afforded the citizen as a result of free market culture have been used as the context for critique of capitalism through the welfare state. The rise of citizenship has, therefore, compromised the supremacy of profit and the grip of hierarchical authoritarian control (Turner 1986). The second paradox comes in the form of Arendt's critique of the development of human rights. The tension inherent in safeguarding any kind of rights, Arendt asserts, is that states were not to be trusted to restrain their own power or to act in their citizens' best interests without privileging some groups over others – that is, after all, why we enshrine rights in legislation. Yet the enforcement of these rights is left in the hands of these unreliable, if not wholly corrupt, states (Arendt 1951). Taken together, these two ironies provide an account of capitalism's effect on citizenship. The question is then raised as to how

a capitalist government, which is not concerned with achieving a solution to all society's problems or taking action which may upset the social order, might instead use citizenship as a basis for addressing particular concerns it regards as fundamental to the functioning of democracy. As Habermas suggests, however, a precarious balance must be struck to ensure against the uprising of a mediatised public, were it to become aware of its manipulation (Habermas 1987).

Micro Level Educational Practice

Curriculum writers cannot expect to relate to the teacher's classroom experience or the 'inward journey' that students experience as a result of their exposure to the ideas and activities of any curriculum. What happens in the learning experience is an outcome of the original, creative, thinking-on-your-feet efforts of the teacher – which often lead the class in directions far, far away from the anticipated goals of the curriculum writers (Schwartz, 2006, p. 250)

Youdell's (2011) analysis of the power struggles behind educational models highlighted key features of the English context, which she identified as:

... the mandated National Curriculum; organizational approaches including 'ability' groupings; accountability mechanisms, targets and performance indicators; an audit culture and its inspection regimes; particular teaching and learning approaches, some mandated and some heavily promoted; the requirement for all lessons to be heavily documented; a demand for approaches to school activities, from school leadership to 'behaviour management' and promoting health and 'wellbeing', to be based on approved forms of 'evidence'; and required ways of working with other agencies from across sectors (Youdell 2011: 13)

Perhaps the least controversial, most accepted area of stringency in education (in England and a majority of other countries) is the notion of bounded knowledge within subjects, which fundamentally structures students' movement through their school day according to whether it is time to assemble in the science lab or the humanities block, and to direct their thoughts to the norms and routine practices of the appropriate discipline (Bernstein 1973). McLaren (1995:31) saw this categorisation in the same light as Youdell's other examples, as characteristic of a model based on 'ideologically coded' forms of knowledge, which are translated into commodities of a particular value. Giroux's work takes issue with any use of common-sense or taken-for-granted reasoning for not engaging in dialogue about any aspect of schooling and argues that the skills children require to become active citizens go hand-in-hand with the ability to call into question 'any pedagogy that refuses to name the political interests that shape its own project' (Giroux 2011: 63). Such refusal is elemental to what Freire (1970) called the 'culture of silence' that upholds the existing order.

Using the concept of education as a private right allows for the analysis of the instrumental nature of schooling in terms of a Freirean understanding of 'banking' (Freire 1970) or the professionalisation of education in terms of coded forms of knowledge (Bernstein 1973). As Giroux uses Gramsci to illustrate, such an understanding of education constructs those most able to succeed as 'a mere container in which to pour and conserve empirical data or brute disconnected facts which he will have to subsequently pigeonhole in his brain' (Gramsci 1916, cited in Giroux 2011:55). Bernstein's (1973) term 'educational knowledge code' describes the set of principles that shape a curriculum, the appropriate forms of pedagogy and the means of evaluating teaching and learning. Bernstein describes the English National Curriculum as a collection type curriculum, made up of subjects with strongly classified content and a strongly framed pedagogical relationship. Teaching and learning in citizenship lessons could therefore

be expected to be influenced by what Critical Race Theorists call the 'business as usual' (Delgado and Stefancic 2000) of schooling.

Critical Pedagogy

A revolutionary's conviction in the need for a tipping point, which allows the public to glimpse beyond its mediatisation and inspires it to put its capitalist freedoms to use for the sake of discursive democracy, is one that we can recognise in the work of Habermas (1987), Freire (1970) and Crick (2001). Unlike Crick, however, Freire's meditations on education revolve around the relationship between teacher and learner. Freire believed a truly participatory model for education must be co-intentional.

Teachers and students … co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. (Freire 1970:44)

Importantly, as the spirit of revolution suggests, Freire called for a fundamental shift in the established dynamics of formalised teaching and learning and he warned that this new dialogue could only be achieved through upsetting traditional power relationships: these could not be disassembled piece by piece, nor could a truly revolutionary teacher adopt the methods of what he called the 'banking' approach to education with the intention of introducing a new order as a later part in the process. Freire was a key influence on hooks' (2003) rejection of economic models of learning. It was his belief that, if participation in a school environment were to be a model of participation in society, a structure based on teachers 'depositing' knowledge in pupils rendered passive receptacles, would be an undesirable model. When a teacher adopts the role of 'narrator', Freire argued, her ownership of the narrative dooms her pupils to receiving and storing their learning, ready for its later conversion to the currency of examination grades: this is a one-way transaction between the teacher and the taught, which does not require communication or co-production (Freire 1970).

The Hidden Curriculum

In addition to the educational knowledge code of a specified curriculum, the existence of a 'hidden curriculum' has been observed by many scholars referring to 'those non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education' (Vallance, 1983: 11), which operate through processes of 'values acquisition, socialisation, maintenance of class structure' (ibid, p. 10). Such processes may be unintended by-products of curricula and may not be responsive to changes in context but rather 'outcomes more deeply embedded in the historical function of education' (Vallance, 1983: 10). Jackson (1968) described the hidden curriculum as 'the rules, routines and regulations that must be learnt by pupils in order to adjust themselves in the life of the school'. Schooling in this sense is performed.

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