

Education for Citizenship: mainstreaming the fight against racism?

AUDREY OSLER & HUGH STARKEY

Introduction

Citizenship education is increasingly seen as a priority in Europe. We argue that it needs to take into account the fact that citizenship itself is a highly charged political issue. In the established democracies of Western and Northern Europe there is anxiety that democracy itself is threatened by decreasing voter participation rates on the one hand and the activities of vociferous xenophobic populist parties on the other. In Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, the concern is to build democracy in order to secure economic development, peace and stability. One response to these concerns is the promotion of education for citizenship.

In 1997, the Council of Europe launched the Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) programme which aims to promote best practice and develop new models for citizenship education, including the drafting of a common European framework. It is also designed to be ‘... instrumental in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance’ (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 5).

The Committee of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe considers that the programme has demonstrated:

how education for democratic citizenship can contribute to social cohesion through learning to participate in the life of society, to assume responsibility and to live together (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 3).

The EDC programme thus emphasises the key role of education in combating racism and xenophobia, acknowledging that these are barriers to democracy and social cohesion. However, this apparent consensus conceals debates about the nature of citizenship, about multiculturalism in society and about the place of antiracism in education. There are structural features that are likely to impede the effective implementation of citizenship education programmes. First, citizenship is a contested concept. Secondly, it is a site of struggle. Thirdly, the reality for many living in Europe is that their status as non-citizens severely limits their capacity to participate.

In this article, we explore some of the tensions implicit in education for citizenship and consider whether such programmes can effectively contribute to combating racism. We argue that, whilst education for democratic citizenship is

certainly a site for mainstreaming antiracism, programmes need to take into account the wide range of experiences that students bring to their studies. Within the context of Europe, many students experience racism, which serves to limit their citizenship rights and restrict their participation. Any programme of education for citizenship will therefore need to address these experiences and equip all students with the skills to effectively challenge racism. Secondly, programmes will need to consider structural and institutional inequalities and the ways in which these are reproduced in schools. For example, recent reports from England suggest that schools, by their admissions policies and their ethos, may unwittingly be racist in their practices, serving to undermine social cohesion and contributing to social inequality (Macpherson, 1999; Cante, 2001). Schools, as well as being a means to combat racism and xenophobia, may also contribute to the problem. This raises questions of what they offer by way of citizenship education and, equally importantly, how they offer it.

Citizenship, Conflict and Struggle

Citizenship is a status, conferred by Nation States, which carries rights and responsibilities. In principle, democratic States in the liberal tradition guarantee human rights to their citizens. However, entitlement to human rights extends to all human beings, irrespective of their citizenship status. Thus, education for citizenship needs to be more than just civic education, which informs pupils of their status and their responsibilities. This is acknowledged by the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, who, in their Resolution, refer to citizenship education as 'process-focussed' (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 5). In other words, it is about creating a stronger, fairer, more cohesive and more democratic society. Given the gross injustices and social fractures present in even the most democratic States, this process is inevitably critical. In inviting young people to make judgements about the world around them, citizenship education is political and therefore controversial.

Citizenship has always been a site of struggle. It is a process and an on-going project. Women, people with disabilities and minorities continue to campaign for justice and equality. Citizenship is also an ideal and its realisation is a process. This process involves politics and power as well as education (Lister, 1997). Teaching and research in citizenship education need to address these debates about the nature of democracy and democratic education (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000; Osler, 2000a).

One of the most significant sites of political controversy, and therefore struggle, in Europe is the development of multicultural or cosmopolitan democracies. Whereas Nation States were constructed on the basis of patriotism and nationalism, they have evolved in many cases and citizens now may have multiple loyalties within and beyond the State. Citizenship within Nation States confers the right to vote. In other words, it is linked to a measure of democratic control and to territory (Kaldor, 1995, p. 71). However, globalisation and the development of transnational entities such as the European Union (EU) have given rise to the development of citizens' movements that now constitute a civil society transcending national boundaries. Such movements may campaign for third-wave rights such as sustainable development, peace, and greater democracy and transparency. This movement of 'cosmopolitan democracy' builds on the

existing principles of the liberal international order, namely democracy and human rights, to extend democratic principles to all public institutions within and across States (Held, 1995; Lister, 1997; Delanty, 2000).

Within a cosmopolitan democracy, citizens may build on and develop their social, political, cultural, religious and commercial links for the benefit both of the territory in which they live and of the global community. This is perhaps of particular significance to diasporic communities, separated by migration and national boundaries, but retaining a sense of cultural unity. Their number is growing, and within schools across Europe students are increasingly likely to hold multiple identities and loyalties. However, those responsible for formulating education policy in Europe and in its Member States have given minimal consideration to these positive developments. We have noted that in the discourse on education for citizenship there is a tendency to categorise an increasingly diverse school population, and minority students in particular, as problematic (Osler, 2000b; Osler & Starkey, 2000; Osler & Starkey, 2001; Starkey, 2000).

The characterisation of multicultural societies as problematic is precisely the terrain on which xenophobic political parties have chosen to operate. Far right and populist politicians spuriously link multiculturalism to crime, insecurity and loss of national identity. Such discourses are profoundly anti-democratic as they deny the basic tenets of liberal democracy, namely equality of rights and respect for human dignity.

European Citizenship as a Problematic Concept

Citizenship as a status conferred by Nation States is both inclusive and exclusive. Citizenship defines who is included in the reciprocal relationship of democratically governing (the voters) and being governed (Lister, 1997). It therefore defines those who are included in democratic processes and also those who are excluded, that is, as non-citizens, they are not eligible to participate fully. In the case of the European Union, the status of European citizenship is exclusive to citizens of the Member States, but even they do not have the power to elect a European government.

The definition of European citizenship excludes two sets of people who could legitimately consider themselves to be citizens in Europe. The first excluded group is made up of those residents of any Member State of the EU who are not citizens. Their number has increased since the 1990s as a result of migration from zones of conflict within and beyond Europe and from poorer areas of the world. Many of these migrants are refugees. Their children are present in the schools of all EU Member States.

The second excluded group consists of citizens of those European States that are not Members of the EU. In 2001, 43 States were members of the Council of Europe. They are signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights and are therefore committed to democracy and human rights. In other words, citizens of 28 democratic European States, such as Norway, Hungary or Russia, whilst being citizens of Europe, are not entitled to the status of European Citizen.

Education for European citizenship is likely to face challenges both from those excluded from it and from those radically opposed to it. In all European States there are radical national parties that characterise the creation of European institutions as a threat to a previous national autonomy and integrity. Such

discourse is often suffused with xenophobia and racism. Education for citizenship in Europe is therefore particularly controversial and it is inevitably confronted with the need to address racism.

European Liberalism and Antiracism

The Council of Europe (founded in 1949), the European Community (founded in 1957), the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament are all explicitly committed to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These institutions underpin a European culture based on an ambition to achieve peace and stability in a continent that suffered two horrendous wars in the first half of the 20th century.

Whilst many European States were founder signatories of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), there was simultaneously a strong movement to promote European unity and create European institutions based on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 1948. The earliest of these institutions was the Council of Europe whose Member States are required to sign the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) which gives legal force to a number of the rights from the Universal Declaration. All Member States of the European Community or Union are also signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU has developed its own Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The European movement that gave impetus to the creation of these institutions can be traced back to resistance to fascist and Nazi attempts to achieve dominance over Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Given that the Nazi ideology was founded on racism and a denial of the essential equality of human beings, its opponents are, by definition, committed to the promotion of antiracism and race equality. In this, the United Nations and the Council of Europe share the same ideals. The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was intended to strengthen, at European level, the work of the United Nations. The preamble to the Convention is quite explicit about this:

Being resolved, as the governments of European countries which are like-minded and have a common heritage of political traditions, ideals, freedom and the rule of law, to take the first steps for the collective enforcement of certain of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration

The founding principles of the Council of Europe are both regional and universal, as are those of the European Community and European Union. Both the Council of Europe and the European Community are profoundly committed to antiracism. Racism is seen as being based on principles that are entirely antithetical to European (and international) values of human rights, dignity and equality. It is therefore not only undemocratic, but is, in its essence, the enemy of democracy and threatens the stability of individual States and of the continent as a whole.

Europe and Antiracism

The Council of Europe, working with the European Commission, convened a number of preparatory meetings before the 2001 UN World Conference Against

Racism. The governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe made a formal declaration at the European conference *All Different All Equal: from Principle to Practice* held in Strasbourg in October 2000 which made a strong case for antiracism as an essential element of democracy.

Europe is a community of shared values, multicultural in its past, present and future;

... Full and effective implementation of all human rights without any discrimination or distinction, as enshrined in European and other international human rights instruments, must be secured;

Racism and racial discrimination are serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world and must be combated by all lawful means;

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance threaten democratic societies and their fundamental values;

Stability and peace in Europe and throughout the world can only be built on tolerance and respect for diversity;

... All initiatives aiming at greater political, social and cultural participation, especially of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, should be encouraged.

Amongst specific measures recommended, education is seen as having a leading role. Governments committed themselves:

to give particular attention to education and awareness-raising in all sectors of society to promote a climate of tolerance, respect for human rights and cultural diversity, including introducing and strengthening such measures among young people (Council of Europe, 2000).

At the World Conference Against Racism, the European Commission highlighted the need for both legislation and education:

The fight against racism is now firmly rooted in European law. Specific reference to the fight against racism is contained in the Treaty establishing the European Community ...

We know though, that there are many areas of discrimination that cannot be tackled by law. Practical action is needed to reach out to people and to help change the underlying prejudices that fuel racist attitudes and behaviour. Education is called to play a fundamental role in this endeavour. (Anna Diamantopoulou, European Commissioner).

This is an important analysis, confirming that legislation, whilst important, needs to be accompanied by an educational programme designed to create a climate of human rights. By promoting equality, strengthening democracy and encouraging respect for human dignity, education can play a key role in overcoming the conditions in which racism flourishes. Ensuring that these values and dispositions are at the forefront of the public conscience requires that they permeate the whole education process. In other words, it is vital that antiracism be mainstreamed.

Mainstreaming Antiracism

The European Commission defines the concept of 'mainstreaming' antiracism as having two main strands, namely specific actions and incorporation across the whole field of policy.

(It) aims to integrate the fight against racism as an objective into all Community actions and policies, and at all levels. This means not only implementing specific measures, but deliberately using all general actions and policies to combat racism by actively and visibly considering their impact on the fight against racism when drawing them up (Commission of the European Communities, 1999, p. 3).

The European Commission report *Mainstreaming the Fight Against Racism* draws together various previous initiatives and highlights how Community policies and programmes can contribute to the fight against racism. It outlines two main means by which racism can be challenged: first, by presenting diversity in a positive light; and secondly, by creating favourable conditions for a multicultural society. The report proposes issuing directives designed to implement Article 13 of the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam. The first aims to combat various forms of discrimination in the labour market. The second aims to combat discrimination on the ground of racial and ethnic origin in other areas within the limits of the powers of the Community, including education, provision of goods and services, social protection and social advantages.

Following the European Year Against Racism (1997) a working group was set up within the Commission to evaluate the extent to which policies and programmes contribute to antiracism. It produced an *Action Plan Against Racism* (European Commission, 1998) that was intended to complement specific anti-racist measures. It had four strands:

- paving the way for legislative initiatives;
- mainstreaming the fight against racism;
- developing and exchanging new models;
- strengthening information and communication work.

Mainstreaming Antiracism in European Education Programmes

An example of mainstreaming antiracism is the inclusion of specific criteria for awarding European funds. For instance, schools and universities apply to the European Commission's SOCRATES programme which annually funds hundreds of transnational cooperation projects. The criteria for selection include the following priority:

Emphasis placed by the project on the promotion of equality between women and men, equal opportunities for disabled persons and *contributing to the fight against racism and xenophobia* (European Commission, 2000, our emphasis).

The Commission notes that almost half the projects in some sections of this complex programme address these issues specifically (Commission for the

European Community, 1999). The section of the SOCRATES programme involving projects between schools, known as Comenius, is even more explicit in its intentions:

Comenius contributes to promoting intercultural awareness in school education in Europe by transnational activities designed to:

- promote enhanced awareness of different cultures;
- develop intercultural education initiatives for the school education sector;
- improve the skills of teachers in the area of intercultural education;
- *support the fight against racism and xenophobia*;
- improve the education of children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, gypsies and travellers.

Amongst suggested themes for projects, the Commission proposes:

Broad thematic areas for the development of a Comenius School Project could, for example, include arts, sciences, environmental education, cultural heritage, European citizenship, use of information and communication technology, *fight against racism* (European Commission, 2000, p. 29, our emphasis).

The Commission is thus able to demonstrate that the priorities set for its educational programmes support antiracism. This trend is also observable in policies of individual Member States. We shall examine two examples.

British Government Policy, Race Equality and Educational Inclusion

In Britain, antiracist initiatives followed the 1998 Human Rights Act and in particular the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson, 1999) which identified institutional racism as a major cause of social exclusion. In setting up the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and accepting its finding of institutional racism, the British government acknowledged the importance of political leadership in challenging racism and in creating a climate in which race equality is seen as the responsibility of all. At the time of its publication in February 1999, senior figures from a range of political parties went on record to acknowledge institutional racism in British society and the Government pledged itself to a programme to eradicate racism. For instance, when presenting the report to the House of Commons the then Home Secretary Jack Straw stated:

The report does not place a responsibility on someone else; it places a responsibility on each of us. We must make racial equality a reality. The vision is clear: we must create a society in which every individual, regardless of colour, creed or race, has the same opportunities and respect as his or her neighbour (Hansard, 24 February 1999).

The report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry defined institutional racism as:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic

origin. It can be detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism, it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation. It is a corrosive disease (Macpherson, 1999, para. 6.34).

The report drew attention to institutional racism in the police force, but it did much more than that. It effectively made clear that institutional racism is endemic in British society. The Home Secretary explained:

Any long-established, white dominated organisation is liable to have procedures, practices and a culture which tend to exclude or disadvantage non-white people. The police service in this respect is little different from other parts of the criminal justice system, or from government departments ... and many other institutions (Jack Straw, Hansard, 24 February 1999).

In making this statement, the Home Secretary stressed that institutional racism is not confined to the police force and criminal justice system but has a profound impact across society, affecting everyone. Educational institutions are not exempt from the pernicious effects of racism.

As well as being part of the problem, education is seen as part of the solution and the report recommended that schools have an important role in enabling the development of greater racial justice. Of the report's 70 recommendations, three address education. As well as proposing amendments to the National Curriculum so that schools might more effectively value cultural diversity and prevent racism, the Inquiry recommended that local education authorities (LEAs) and school governors take a lead in ensuring that racist incidents be recorded and reported. Schools should monitor exclusions by ethnicity and the school inspection agency, OFSTED, should be given a lead role in monitoring how schools are addressing and preventing racism.

The Government's response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry's recommendations (Home Office, 1999) accepted these in principle and also identified citizenship education as a key means by which schools would address and prevent racism and encourage young people to value cultural diversity.

Mixed Messages Concerning Racism and Antiracism

Many British political leaders appear uncomfortable when addressing or even acknowledging racism. Since 1997, there have been mixed messages from Labour ministers. On the one hand, certain government policies on refugees and asylum seekers, such as the distribution of vouchers for food and other essentials, and particularly some statements by government ministers, are considered by many to have undermined the status of these groups and fuelled racism. On the other, some ministers have made powerful statements, stressing the need to adopt antiracist policies and practices. The following example is from a Home Office minister:

Antiracism is not about helping black and Asian people; it is about our future — white and black. We all live in a multicultural society and we all have a choice: either we make a success of multicultural Britain or we do not. If we fail to address those issues, our children — white and black — will pay the price of that failure. That is why all of us, white and black, have a vested interest in the [Race Relations Amendment] Bill and in antiracism. We must make Britain a success as a multicultural society (Mike O'Brien, Hansard, 9 March 2000, column 1281).

However, despite the acceptance of the need for schools to prevent and address racism through their curriculum and ethos, no British education minister has yet made a positive statement arguing that schools have a key role to play in challenging racism in society. Nor has any education minister acknowledged the existence of institutional racism in the education service. Bernard Crick, the Chair of the Government's Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, suggests that those Home Office ministers who have endorsed antiracism in schools are 'perhaps not wholly conversant . . . with good practice in actual classroom teaching' (Crick, 2000, p. 134). He argues that Education ministers are wiser in not adopting an explicit antiracist position.

Antiracism in Other Policy Areas

One of the first actions of the Labour government in 1997 was to set up a special unit to find policy solutions to the growing divisions in society. The Social Exclusion Unit has produced a number of influential reports. One of these, *Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal*, makes explicit the links between racial discrimination and social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). The report highlights educational disadvantage: children from some minority communities are likely to do less well at school and to be excluded in disproportionate numbers. It concludes that members of minority ethnic communities are likely to suffer a double disadvantage since they are disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas and experience all the problems that affect others who live there but also suffer from the consequences of racial discrimination. They are likely to be the victims of racial harassment and racist crime, both of which are widespread; some services fail to reach them or meet their needs; and they may experience language and cultural barriers to accessing information and services. All these factors serve to limit individuals' citizenship rights. Among the actions proposed in the report are:

- monitoring by ethnicity the outcomes of mainstream services
- involving minority ethnic users in service design and delivery
- developing programmes specifically targeted to meet minority ethnic needs
- tackling racist crime and harassment
- improving information about these communities.

In 1999, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) introduced the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) as the main funding mechanism for addressing the specific educational needs of children from minority communities. The EMAG budget is over £150 million per annum. Previous funding arrangements had been seriously criticised by inspectors as providing

inadequate and short-term funding which led to difficulties in recruiting and retaining specialist teachers, with the quality of the teaching being 'variable' (OFSTED, 1999, p. 21). Evidence submitted to the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain suggests that, although much of the thinking behind the new arrangements is sound, many of the criticisms of the former funding arrangements still apply. The Commission concluded that: 'It appears unlikely that the grant will have substantial impact on the patterns of underachievement' identified by the Commission (Parekh, 2000, p. 150).

A preliminary analysis of LEA EMAG plans indicated that some authorities were, in fact, setting targets for the improvement of various ethnic groups which, if achieved, would widen the gap in performance and increase inequality. In these authorities the target percentage increase for those groups whose average performance was lowest was smaller than the target percentage increase for the highest achieving group (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000).

Policies, with some exceptions, tend to focus more broadly on reversing social exclusion, rather than directly addressing racial inequalities (Alibhai-Brown, 1999, p. 7). So, for example, targets were set to cut the overall number of permanent exclusions from school by one third by 2002. However, these failed to address the disproportionate number of exclusions of pupils from particular communities, notably African Caribbean boys and girls. There is clear research evidence that suggests that when schools and LEAs are successful in cutting exclusions from over-represented groups, they in fact do so across the board (Osler & Hill, 1999).

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The most significant specific element of the British government's policy on race equality is the passing of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which places a positive duty on public bodies, including schools, to promote race equality. It is no longer sufficient for public bodies simply to avoid discrimination; the Act requires them to introduce policies and practices that actively promote race equality.

Absence of discrimination is a prerequisite if individuals and communities are to flourish within a multicultural society, but it is insufficient to guarantee the full participation of all citizens within such a society. Diversity also needs to be 'given public status and dignity' and politicians need to work together with other citizens to 'develop a new social and cultural policy capable of nurturing ethnic identities' (Parekh, 1991, p. 197). In other words:

'British' must be seen as fully including the ethnic minority communities. But the minority communities being seen as British does not imply their denying their 'ethnic' origins and identity (Figueroa, 2000, pp. 59–60).

What is needed is a vision of multiculturalism that recognises that each individual has multiple identities. It needs to be founded on human rights and must be inclusive of all, including white communities (Osler, 1999; Osler & Starkey, 2000).

Modern Britain is often referred to as a multicultural society. What this usually means is that the processes of post-war immigration have led to the

development of 'visible' minority communities. The term multicultural is often used synonymously with ethnic minority or non-white, so that communities or neighbourhoods which are referred to as multicultural are usually assumed to have significant numbers of African, Caribbean or Asian residents. The concept of multiculturalism is often exclusive of white communities, which may mistakenly be assumed to be culturally homogeneous.

Recent constitutional reform, including the establishment of a Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly, and the development of a new settlement between Britain and Northern Ireland, have led to increased interest and debate on what it means to be British and how citizenship is related to national and regional identities. So, for example, what does it mean to be British and Scottish? Meanings of nationality and national identity are being re-examined and re-defined. It is within this new political and constitutional context that a new vision of multicultural Britain may be forged.

The Race Equality Code of Practice for Schools

In order to enable British schools to implement the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the Commission for Racial Equality issued schools with a statutory code of practice on the duty to promote race equality. We comment on the consultation draft (Commission for Racial Equality, 2001). The duty requires public authorities, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The guidance covers issues such as admissions policies and the collection and analysis of data by ethnic group. Schools are expected to set targets for improving the performance of underachieving groups. It stresses that the policy must be applied irrespective of the number of ethnic minority children in the school.

Race equality is important, even if there is no one from an ethnic minority group in your school or local community. Education plays a vital role in influencing young people, because the views and attitudes they form as pupils or students will probably stay with them for the rest of their lives. Also, racist acts (such as handing out racist literature) can happen in schools with no ethnic minority pupils (Commission for Racial Equality, 2001, p. 6).

The legislation requires schools to prepare a written statement of policy for promoting race equality. The code of practice provides an example of how one school set about drafting and using such a statement. All members of the school community, including parents and pupils, had opportunities to be involved. The draft policy was discussed in Citizenship lessons and the pupil council was given responsibility, along with the school governors and the school's senior management, for monitoring the implementation of the policy.

The code of practice recognises the importance of the school having a clear statement of values and the need for staff training in the implications of such a values statement for their teaching and for the procedures and ethos of the school.

The opportunity provided by Citizenship to engage pupils in dialogue about the race equality policy and the values of the school is also clearly signalled.

Inadequate Curriculum Guidance

Rather than supporting the code of practice on race equality, the official guidance for implementing Citizenship, sent to schools in England by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), fails to give any lead in how issues of race equality are to be addressed. The scheme of work for Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14) simply suggests that an audit of Citizenship provision and a planning framework can be derived from a series of questions linked to the main headings in the programme of study (QCA, 2001).

There are just three thematic headings: *Rights and Responsibilities; Government and Democracy; Communities and Identities*. Under the third of these, the guidance suggests three topic headings of which the first is *Me and my local community*. The authors of the guidance list what they consider to be the relevant concepts from the official programme of study for this topic, namely: identity; community; local networks; local organisations; participating and contributing; diversity; difference. It is implied that the scheme of work for this unit could be based on a series of questions:

- What are my identities?
- What groups/communities do I belong to and how can I contribute to them?
- What do I think about my local community?
- What concerns my community and who influences it?
- What is the diversity and difference in my community and how is it celebrated?

These questions largely avoid a critical approach. It is true that the first question supposes a model of multiple identities, which suggests a cosmopolitan rather than nationalist model of democracy. The fourth question, about concerns, could provide an opportunity to raise issues of justice, equity or discrimination, but as formulated it does not invite this approach. The question of who defines and gives voice to the concerns of the community is inevitably contentious and political but it is not suggested by the current formulation. The questions seem to avoid questions of power within the local community. Perhaps it is felt that this may involve politically sensitive issues. However, Citizenship is the intended site within the curriculum for developing ‘political literacy’ and it is anomalous for the scheme of work to shy away from this.

The further topic heading *national identities* is followed by some even less relevant questions. The knowledge to be acquired is defined by the key words: diversity; government; responsibilities; voluntary work; stereotyping and prejudice; media; national identity; legal and human rights and responsibilities. The structuring questions are:

- How can different communities learn from each other?
- How do I understand diversity and how is it represented locally, nationally and globally?
- How tolerant am I of diversity and difference?

- What are the legal and human rights and responsibilities that underpin society?
- What systems protect and enable our rights and responsibilities?

The existence of publicly recognised ‘communities’ is thus accepted uncritically. This may well imply that the authors of the guidance have a model based on a monolithic ‘majority community’ and differentiated ‘minority communities’.

Whilst there is to be consideration of diversity ‘nationally’, there is no examination of the concept ‘nation’, nor indeed ‘state’. Although human rights are said to underpin society, there is no reference to the role of the state in protecting rights or to the concept of state as a political entity transcending diverse ethnic and cultural groupings. None of the questions addresses the proposed topic of ‘national identity’ let alone nationalism, which involves the defining of national identity in restrictive terms for political ends. Whilst the topic heading *national identities* is given in the plural, there is no indication whether this refers to different national identities within Britain, or whether it is an invitation to consider the concept of the cosmopolitan democracy.

In fact, the very concept of democracy is absent from the theme of ‘communities and identities’, being reserved for the theme ‘government and democracy’. This has the effect of de-politicising the essentially political notions of community and identity. It denies students the opportunity to consider how political parties and movements manipulate these notions in order to stoke racism, nationalism and xenophobia. By linking democracy only to government, the programme neglects possibilities for democratic participation of children and young people in other institutions including the family, the school and the workplace.

The failure of the curriculum guidance to engage with political issues, indeed its tendency to de-politicise multiculturalism, is a further example of the education service in Britain providing less than enthusiastic support to initiatives intended to be mainstreamed across all policy areas. The code of practice for schools from the Commission for Racial Equality, which is the main instrument for implementing the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act within the education service, emanates not from the education ministry (Department for Education and Skills, DfES) but from the Home Office. It remains to be seen whether school inspectors, local education authorities and schools are prepared to support its implementation wholeheartedly.

Sweden’s National Action Plan to Combat Racism

A ‘national action plan to combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination’ was agreed by the Swedish government in February 2001. Whilst emanating from the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, the document is an attempt to mainstream across all areas of government and it gives a significant role to education.

The Swedish government asserts that this action plan is amongst its highest priorities. It presents antiracism as an essential element in protecting and promoting democracy. The plan was drawn up in the light of:

Acts of violence and harassment of a racist, anti-Semitic or homophobic nature. Those attacked have included individual immigrants, homosexuals,

Jewish people and Roma (Romany), active anti-racists, and journalists, polemicists, police officers and politicians in their capacity as representatives of the democratic society. Crimes of this nature are also attacks on democratic governance and the fundamental principle of the equal worth of all people (Government of Sweden, 2001, p. 6).

Like the duty imposed on British schools under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Sweden also requires schools to promote race equality:

The Education Act (1985: 1100) states that educational activities shall be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values and that everyone who works in schools must promote respect for the worth of the individual and respect for our common environment. The Education Act was strengthened and sharpened in 1998. Everyone in the school system must now work actively to combat all forms of offensive treatment such as mobbing and racist behaviour (Government of Sweden, 2001, p. 34).

In fact, since the 1998 Education Act there is a requirement on Swedish headteachers to draft, implement, monitor and evaluate an action plan to prevent and combat all forms of offensive treatment of pupils and their staff in schools. However, the national action plan paper admits that not all schools and local authorities have presented 'quality reports' that evaluate the implementation of their antiracism action plan. Similar concerns have been noted in England (Osler & Morrison, 2000).

One important initiative by the Swedish government was to declare 1999 as Basic Values Year and to launch a Basic Values Project. This has produced a handbook for schools that stresses the need to listen more to children and young people. It also provides guidance on the role of the school in promoting common values and directly combating those values that are inimical to democracy:

Schools should not be value-neutral but should clarify basic values and tolerance limits. The principle of the equal worth of all people is a democratic value that cannot be interpreted away. In interpersonal relations there should be no distinction between the worth of different groups of people and attitudes which deny this principle — such as *Nazism, racism, sexism, and the glorification of violence* — shall be actively brought out into the open and combated (Government of Sweden, 2001, p. 36, our emphasis).

This policy of openly confronting expressions of racism and xenophobia contrasts sharply with the declared policy of the British government's adviser on citizenship education and the stance taken by the DfES and successive ministers in avoiding the use of the terms racism and antiracism (Crick, 2000). In Sweden, democracy is the fundamental value that underpins the constitution and hence also its schools. It follows that the promotion of antiracism as a measure to promote democracy can be presented as a national policy supported by all democratic parties.

In Britain, where there is no written constitution, there is no formally agreed set of basic values. This means that education in basic values has no touchstone. Values can be presented as party political and therefore the product of political bias. For instance, whereas Sweden's action plan aims to combat homophobia, the

British government was unable to fulfil its commitment to repeal a clause of the Local Government Act that has been widely interpreted as essentially homophobic.

With respect to education, the national curriculum for England aims to pass on 'enduring values', but these are not made explicit, nor are they linked to human rights and democracy. It is hardly surprising, then, that the subject of Citizenship in schools in England is perceived as itself open to accusations of bias and that those drawing up guidelines attempt to de-politicise the subject.

Conclusion

Mainstreaming the fight against racism in Europe requires both general policies and practices and specific anti-racist initiatives. In education there need to be both general policies to promote inclusion and integration and specific initiatives to actively combat racism and other anti-democratic discriminatory practices. Programmes of citizenship education are a specific initiative through which antiracism can be promoted and realised in schools. A major obstacle to ensuring the success of such programmes is the tendency to de-politicise the concept of citizenship. This is particularly the case in Britain.

Whereas the values of Sweden are set out in its constitution and those of Europe are clearly set out in a number of instruments and treaties, notably the European Convention on Human Rights, the basic values of Britain and England remain vague. This lack of clarity provides a political space that is colonised by xenophobic nationalists, antipathetic to Europe, and often prone to sexism and homophobia. From this space they may act to fundamentally undermine democracy.

Across Europe, the curriculum subject of Citizenship can provide a forum in which anti-democratic values and practices can be, in the words of the Swedish policy document, 'actively brought out into the open and combated'. Only when this happens can antiracism genuinely be mainstreamed within citizenship education. The mainstreaming of antiracism needs an understanding that it is essential to democracy. As the example of Sweden illustrates so clearly, it is by linking antiracism to democracy rather than exclusively to multiculturalism that it can start to receive the widespread acceptance it requires.

REFERENCES

- ALIBHAI-BROWN, Y. (1999) *True Colours: public attitudes to multiculturalism and the role of the government* (London, Institute of Public Policy Research).
- ARNOT, M. & DILLABOUGH, J-A. (Eds) (2000) *Challenging Democracy: international perspectives on gender, education and citizenship* (London, Routledge Falmer).
- CANTLE, T. (2001) *Community Cohesion: a report of the independent review team* (London, Home Office).
- COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY (2001) *Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality: a guide for schools* (London, CRE).
- COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (1999) *Mainstreaming the Fight Against Racism. Commission report on the implementation of the Action Plan against Racism*. http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamri/docs/implem_en.pdf

- COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2000) *Project on 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' . Resolution adopted by the Council of Europe Ministers of Education at their 20th Session, Cracow, Poland, 15–17 October 2000*. DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 40. (Strasbourg; Council of Europe).
- CRICK, B. (2000) *Essays on Citizenship* (London, Continuum).
- DELANTY, G. (2000) *Citizenship in a Global Age: society, culture, politics*. (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (1998) *Action Plan Against Racism* (Brussels, Communication from the Commission (COM (1998) 183 final of 25 March 1998).
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2000) *SOCRATES: guidelines for applicants* (Luxembourg, Office for official publications of the European Communities).
- FIGUEROA, P. (2000) Citizenship education for a plural society, in: A. OSLER (Ed) *Citizenship and Democracy in Schools: diversity, identity, equality* (Stoke on Trent, Trentham).
- GILLBORN, D. & MIRZA, H.S. (2000) *Educational Inequality: mapping race, class and gender, a synthesis of research evidence* (London, Office for Standards in Education).
- GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN (2001) *National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Discrimination* (Stockholm, Written Government Communication 2000/01, p. 59).
- HELD, D. (1995) *Democracy and the Global Order: from the modern state to cosmopolitan governance* (Cambridge, Polity Press).
- HOME OFFICE (1999) *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Home Secretary's Action Plan* (London, Home Office).
- KALDOR, M. (1995) European institutions, nation states and nationalism, in: D. ARCHIBUGI & D. HELD (Eds) *Cosmopolitan Democracy: an agenda for a new world order* (Cambridge, Polity Press).
- LISTER, R. (1997) *Citizenship: feminist perspectives* (London, Macmillan).
- MACPHERSON, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* (London, The Stationery Office).
- OFFICE FOR STANDARDS IN EDUCATION (1999) *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils: school and LEA responses* (London, OFSTED Publications Centre, March).
- OSLER, A. (1999) Citizenship, democracy and political literacy, *Multicultural Teaching* 8, pp. 12–15 & p. 29.
- OSLER, A. (Ed) (2000a) *Citizenship and Democracy in Schools: diversity, identity, equality* (Stoke on Trent, Trentham).
- OSLER, A. (2000b) The Crick Report: difference, equality and racial justice, *Curriculum Journal* 11 (1): 25–37.
- OSLER, A. & HILL, J. (1999) Exclusion from school and racial equality: an examination of government proposals in the light of recent research evidence, *Cambridge Journal of Education* 29, pp. 33–62.
- OSLER, A. & MORRISON, M. (2000) *Inspecting Schools for Race Equality: OFSTED's strengths and weaknesses* (Stoke on Trent, Trentham).
- OSLER, A. & STARKEY, H. (2000) Citizenship, human rights and cultural diversity, in: A. OSLER (Ed.) *Citizenship and Democracy in Schools: diversity, identity, equality* (Stoke on Trent, Trentham).
- OSLER, A. & STARKEY, H. (2001) Citizenship education and national identities in

France and England: inclusive or exclusive? *Oxford Review of Education*, 25, pp. 287–305.

PAREKH, B. (1991) British citizenship and cultural difference, in: G. ANDREWS (Ed) *Citizenship* (London, Lawrence and Wishart).

PAREKH, B. (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. (London; Runnymede Trust).

QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY (2001) *Citizenship Key Stage 3 Scheme of Work* (London, QCA).

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT (2000) *Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal* (London, Cabinet Office).

STARKEY, H. (2000) Citizenship Education in France and Britain: evolving theories and practices, *Curriculum Journal*, 11, pp. 39–54.