Education for World Citizenship: Beyond national allegiance

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Abstract

A resurgence of national and international interest in citizenship education, citizenship and social cohesion has been coupled with an apparent emergence of a language of crisis (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2006). Given this background, how can or should one consider a subjective sense of membership in a single political community? What this article hopes to show is that confining the subject of citizenship or patriotism to a national framework is inadequate in as much as there are grounds to argue for a more expansive and, at the same time, integrated outlook. Patriotism, like Citizenship, is still open to interpretation and potentially in danger of falling short of a richer conception. Education, therefore, needs to incorporate inclusive practices and encourage an integrative mindset in order to accommodate: increasingly complex identities, associations, experiences and continuing changes in the political landscape. In this article, the author argues for the importance of learning ways in which to value and respect diversity while working towards a principle of unity in diversity. Cultivating a subjective sense of membership in a single world polity is vital in matters pertaining to sustainability and justice.

In response to considering possible ways of sharing a subjective sense of membership in a single community and some implications for Citizenship, Patriotism and Citizenship Education, this article looks to three areas: ways in which to understand the notion of citizenship and patriotism, cultural crises and the notion of a cosmopolitan nation and, finally, the personal dimension to education for world citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship, patriotism, citizenship education, world citizenship, diversity, cultural crisis

... contemporary democratic theory begins from the supposition that meaningful democratic citizenship requires that citizens share a subjective sense of membership in a single political community. (Williams, 2003, p. 210)

Introduction

At first glance it would seem difficult to imagine how citizens may share, ‘a subjective sense of membership in a single political community’ given increasingly common experiences of changes: in migration, increasingly complex identities and the general impact of globalisation. Different national contexts will, undoubtedly, offer different perspectives of citizenship and membership. Traditionally, how membership is felt at a subjective level will also vary accordingly.
In Britain, for example, notions of citizenship and ‘Britishness’ have tended to be backward looking, trying to construct a sense of identity and culture through a cultural heritage and history of the past. Alternatively, an interdependent sense of nationality, as in the examples of Scotland and Canada, has held people’s allegiance together, albeit through association with another dominant nation. The example of South Africa, however, presents a notion of common allegiance to its constitution that is forward looking in an effort to promote national unity. Looking back, understandably, is not considered desirable given the South African context and its history.

Initially, experiences of national allegiance appear varied. Global socio-economic and political shifts, however, have resulted in more shared encounters and concerns. This is evident with respect to understanding citizenship, patriotism and a sense of belonging, for example, where former attitudes are being questioned and under review. In recent times, these former conceptions, particularly in England, have been contested in a number of ways. Confusion and tension has occurred with attempts to understand what is meant by a common culture and what notion of ‘Britishness’, for example, citizens can identify with. This is where education in Britain has identified Citizenship Education as a significant way to address such issues with a potentially vital role to help promote a notion of membership, as citizens, in a shared, single political community.

In Britain, Sir Bernard Crick, former government citizenship advisor and Emeritus Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College University of London, describes citizenship education as bringing about a change in the ‘civic culture of society’ (Crick, 2002). Interest in civic culture, in Britain, continues to generate discussion in the public sphere of government and policymaking, helped along by the media, and resulting in highlighting particular issues. Among the various aspects of citizenship, affected by current public debate is the subject of identity. This has been related to increased concern and debate about youth disaffectedness and youth culture, the notion of ‘Britishness’ incorporating another contentious issue, namely immigration.

Citizenship education, in Britain, has largely been a political and public response to a sense of crisis. A sense of crisis is nothing new in times of significant changes. Citizenship education has certainly been a cause of significant amendments to the National Curriculum for England and Wales and employed in the nation-building project. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the call for social cohesion by government, and the founding of institutes like the Centre for Social Cohesion (http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/) is a direct response to recognition that the national community is increasingly diverse. It may also be an attempt to alleviate any fear of social fragmentation as a consequence of a multicultural Britain.

Fear for the loss of civic culture and civic responsibility, not to mention national sovereignty, seems to have prompted calls for instilling a sense of patriotism, or national pride, in education. Hence, the sustained debate about ‘Britishness’.

Citizenship has in the past meant the privileging of persons who share a commonality against those who do not; such as those sharing the same language, values, practises and experiences. The nation-building project has historically been supported by patriotic sentiment. One need only look at examples of propaganda posters from...
the great world wars, or the rhetoric in the public media in times of more recent conflict. Instilling a sense of patriotism has helped generate and reinforce particular attitudes and commitments, pledging allegiance to preserve what is common between those who share mutual interests against those others who are perceived to pose a threat to the national interest. In recent times perpetuating a sense of crisis has helped strengthen arguments for cultivating patriotism through citizenship education.

A further challenge besetting those in education is how citizenship may best be understood and, in the British context at least, what notions of Britishness ought to be promoted. There are undoubtedly various interpretations as to the nature and culture of citizenship, and Western liberal thought has dominated the field in the literature. Whilst I draw from a predominantly Western canon and refer to examples from the British context, I make the following conjecture: What emerges from the discourse is not, I would suggest, exclusive to Britain or Western societies. Instead concerns about diversity, unity, identity and social cohesion are extensively, and more frequently, encountered trans-nationally.

Taking into account policies and educational reforms that have taken place over recent years in a number of countries, a political and social angst about citizenship and civic culture is fast becoming an international experience. The recent debate about ‘civic deficit’ by the Civic Experts Group (2006) in Australia and the decision to make citizenship education in secondary schools a compulsory part of the National Curriculum for England and Wales (2001) are examples. Cultivating a culture of angst and renewed emphasis on civic culture in Britain, have been growing concerns about youth civic engagement, or rather disengagement, and young people’s knowledge, or lack thereof, of democratic processes and interest in social cohesion. These issues are arguably concerns shared trans-nationally.

Crick’s call for change can be attributed to the fact that citizenship has been undergoing changes and the civic culture of most national communities, at the grassroots, increasingly reflects a global community, or its effects, in some way. Global trends, which have contributed greatly to the changes experienced in citizenship, need to be acknowledged, understood and accommodated in some way if nations and their citizens desire social cohesion and progress. This is not to undermine the sovereignty of the nation state, but rather remind us that nations need to align themselves more closely to an expansive vision and redefine their roles as members of an international community. Anthony Giddens elucidates on the consequences of approaching citizenship:

The nation state is not disappearing or losing its power in the world, but it is being reshaped, especially in the West and especially in Europe.
Giddens (2000, p. 20)

The gradual emergence of a global era cannot be ignored. Effectively, a growing awareness in public discourse of the global effects of the actions of nations and their people, relying on a growing interdependency between nations has brought about, for better or worse, a more expansive outlook. As Giddens (2000), recalling the American sociologist Daniel Bell, writes: ‘... the nation-state becomes too small to solve the big problems but too big to solve the small ones’. A multi-layered stance
on citizenship, therefore, is appropriate given the already apparent global influences in the community at every level.

Education in global citizenship, or world citizenship, therefore, requires familiarisation with and understanding of the network of relationships and processes that pertain to a complex and multifarious world, inclusive of the local community to which citizens belong. By engaging in aspects of this ongoing debate, which are pertinent to the discourse for citizenship education and civic culture, the following argument will emerge. A world-embracing vision derived from cultivating a primary allegiance beyond one’s country to principles of justice, unity in diversity and ‘the worldwide community of human beings’ (Gutmann, 2002; Nussbaum, 2002, cited in Banks, 2004) is imperative in matters of sustainable development and justice. It follows, then, to say that education for ‘meaningful democratic citizenship’, which ‘requires that citizens share a subjective sense of membership in a single political community’ (Williams, 2003), must work to cultivating a common allegiance to the ‘worldwide community of human beings’.

A cosmopolitan approach is, indeed, compatible with, and reinforces, liberal values. Some liberals frame and contain their arguments about citizenship and patriotism to a national context (Tamir, 1995; Rorty, 1998; Miller, 2000; Callan, 2006). In the same vein, Melissa Williams (2003), has argued for citizenship as shared fate within the context of arguing for civic nationalism. I would wish to argue that this same notion lends itself to a notion of world citizens in an emerging global civic culture. As world citizens in an international ‘community of shared fate’, the implicit need in a liberal democracy is recognition of universal principles, such as basic rights and opportunities of all citizens as fundamentally equal. An international civic culture, something identifiable in institutions such as the United Nations and human charters, as in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, ensures the potential to secure individual rights and freedoms. One need only look to the 2008 State of the World’s Human Rights Report by Amnesty International to see a catalogue of cases of human rights violations in various national contexts to understand a moral and political global landscape where collective consciousness and action are required from the international community. It is no wonder that appeals are thus made by Amnesty International for governments to:

... show the same degree of vision, courage and commitment that led the United Nations to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sixty years ago. (Amnesty International, 2008)

Consequently, respect for the oneness and diversity of humanity is a primary liberal principle upon which to build just institutions at global, national and local levels. A primary liberal principle of equality needs to be reinforced by a principle of unity in diversity to be fully appreciated. Inherently, notions of citizenship cannot conceptually be confined exclusively to national boundaries. With the emergence of a global era, conceptions of citizenship have continued to evolve and cosmopolitan arguments seem most conducive to supporting liberal principles. Citizenship is more than membership of an Athenian city-state, or even the modern notion of the nation state. There are, thus, important implications for the need to evaluate and
reconceptualise the notion of citizenship and subsequently patriotism in order to accommodate citizens and nations states as they evolve.

A more expansive notion of interdependency with cultural, political and social complexities is supported by a notion of citizens as members of a moral and political community. For this reason inclusive principles and practices, respectful of differences and the uniqueness of others, are crucial to the discourse of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Respecting diversity is not concerned solely with tolerance, however. Neither can it be sustainable for meaningful democratic citizenship in a global context for any nation that a dominant culture demand assimilation into its practices irrespective of the complex associations and attachments of its citizens and hope, thereby, that its citizens will feel a love for the state. Where states have enforced a dominant culture over their diverse populations, without accounting for particular cultural, religious group considerations, the consequences are striking. Consider aboriginal groups whose cultural and political rights have been suppressed to the point of near extinction of their practices and heritage.

Education for Global or World Citizenship can support the efforts to help gradually realise mutual goals in the ongoing project, not just of nation-building but inter-national or world-building polity, taking into consideration the citizen as a political and moral person. It is important, therefore, that citizens see themselves as members of a single world community in order to respect rights and differences. What is important, for education, is emphasis upon critical and respectful evaluation of citizenship and patriotism in the classroom in accordance with an ever-changing world.

Understanding patriotism or citizenship today may require a different, perhaps richer and more expansive, conception than those understood in the past. Critical engagement necessitates a need to examine the challenges presented in understanding the relationships and the role of citizens as members of a single moral and political international community as well as national and local communities as well.

Citizenship, Patriotism and Change: A Culture of Crisis and its Effects on Civic Culture

Understanding Citizenship and Patriotism

An important consideration is that Patriotism like Citizenship has and continues to experience change over time. How such changes are accommodated is vital to understanding citizenship and, consequently, patriotism. The increasingly apparent nature of citizenship as multi-layered and complex may be largely attributed to the forces of globalisation and a global network of systems. The world has, thus, become more accessible than before. As Anthony Giddens puts it, ‘... there is a much higher global level of integration than ever before ... we are in a new kind of society in our relation to science and innovation ...’ (Giddens, 2000).

Notions of patriotism, like citizenship, have also experienced and continue to experience changes, according to particular contexts and values in societies over time. Thus there have been various interpretations of what patriotism implies. Patriotism may be understood as a sense of loyalty to, or love of, country. Love of country
may be interpreted in many ways, thus taking various forms. It all really depends on how we choose to interpret patriotism.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the notion of ‘country’ has also varied conceptually with time. For the purpose of understanding changing concepts it is useful to consider, briefly, how changes to notions of country have come about. This is particularly interesting in reference to how civic life and citizenship is understood. An expansive notion of love of country, patriotism or citizenship is not, necessarily new. However, mechanisms of rapid global growth have helped increase greater interdependence among nation states, thus reinforcing a potentially more cosmopolitan perspective of the world. Implicit in the term interdependence are notions of mutual assistance, support, interaction and cooperation, increasingly necessary for political considerations and public policy. Concerns about sustainability and security have become unmistakably global. Environmental concerns, a prime example, have placed countries in a position of accountability to one another, forcing governments to acknowledge pressing concerns, which demand the need for collaboration and the urgency of commitment to action. In this way, physical borders, and it could be said political borders too, are, indeed, artificial constructs. Viroli (1995, p. 47) comments:

Fatherland is not a natural reality but an institution: it is ‘a new erected state [novi status] which now we call properly the Commonwealth [Rempulicam], or our Country [Patriam]’. Like one common ship under the direction of a pilot, our country is ‘a certain common state [unus aliquis status]’ under one prince or one law. Our love or charity (amor et caritas) for our country comes therefore from the persuasion that our own safety and the safety of our property rest upon the safety of our country. For this reason we rejoice at the good of the commonwealth and we suffer at its miseries.

Institutions, like a ship, not only require a pilot but also individuals who, together, constitute the society, which establishes law and order in order for the ‘common ship’ of the state to come into being and sail effectively on its course. Briefly, States are territories that have generally been historically shaped with experiences and boundaries shifting with time and particular contexts. Viroli’s references to notions about: ‘Fatherland’, ‘State’ and ‘Commonwealth’ illustrate the changes in language and consequent varied conceptions about the notion of a country.

There is a hermeneutics to understanding change: gathering and interpreting a shared conception of values from a social, cultural and historical heritage helps construct a conception of a shared community. Similarly, the relationship cultivated between citizens and the state experiences shifts too and is subject to change.

Change is inevitable with time. What matters is learning how to understand change and developing attitudes and practices, which are conducive to change for the better. Diverse perspectives in a plural society need to be inclusive of citizens and communities, consultative in nature, in order to help construct future integrative and cohesive communities. This is the implication of some who aim to provide ways with which to cope and understand global change from a socio-political and historical perspective. Most of our current understandings of citizenship are based on the
historic convergence of boundaries of citizenship (territorial, cultural, national, linguistic, institutional and moral) that are now pulling apart (Williams, 2003, p. 209).

Dustin provides a model that demonstrates the need for institutions, individuals and communities to adapt understanding in order to construct new meaning and vision for a potentially robust and comprehensive concept, or ship, in which to sail. Evidently, a positive influence of global change is the possibility to provide a more fluid way in which citizens can relate to their country and the rest of the world. Diverse communities have brought with them multiple identities. According to Giddens education and citizenship can help promote tolerance of multiple identity. This important value can be promoted in what Giddens describes as a, ‘cosmopolitan nation, ... which enables every citizen to live comfortably with several identities, to be English, British, European, and perhaps even a citizen of a wider emerging world society’ (Giddens, 2000, p. 21).

Another fundamental aspect of change is how it has affected and transformed everyday life: ‘we do not experience our lives as fate, as previous generations tended to do’ (Giddens, 2000, p. 20). Being destined to follow on in a trade or profession or being a woman destined for domesticity are no longer determined or expected. Admittedly, this is probably more the situation in developed rather than other developing countries. The restructuring of citizenship, institutions and societies to accommodate the global transformations as Giddens describes, have also, he adds, had an impact on emotional lives.

Giddens (2000) identifies four consequences of approaching citizenship. The first of these is the major impact as a consequence of change on, ‘sovereignty and the nature of national identity’. He describes the nation state, especially in the West, as being reshaped, and he claims a direct consequence is the experience of a ‘fuzzy sovereignty’, leading to potential conflicts or new possibilities for peace.

For Giddens (2000, p. 21) this notion of a ‘fuzzy sovereignty’ is experienced in Europe where, ‘nations are everywhere seeking to redefine their past, and recapture a new identity for the future’. On the one hand, this can be the cause of conflict; he gives the example of Kosovo here. On the more positive side of a newfound optimism, Giddens draws on the experience in Northern Ireland, claiming, ‘the peace process in Ireland, whether it is successful or not, would not have been possible without it ... A citizen can be in Northern Ireland, connected to Ireland, connected to the UK, but also—crucially connected to the European Union’.

In an attempt to, ‘recapture a new identity for the future’, attempts have been made to redefine patriotism and national identity, describing patriotism as the glue of a society. This is precisely how Gordon Brown has presented patriotism. In a speech promoting ‘Britishness’ Gordon Brown (2006), then speaking as Britain’s Chancellor of the Exchequer, not yet Britain’s Prime Minister, urged supporters of the Labour party to:

... embrace the Union flag ... a flag for tolerance and inclusion ... We have to be clearer now about how diverse cultures which inevitably contain differences can find the essential common purpose also without which no society can flourish.
He called for his party and its supporters to be ‘unashamedly patriotic’:

... just as in wartime a sense of common patriotic purpose inspired people to do what is necessary, so in peace time a strong modern sense of patriotism and patriotic purpose which binds people together can motivate and inspire.

Looking at how a ‘common patriotic purpose’ has been interpreted and implemented in different contexts in the past and from examples of present day, there may be few inspiring examples. Brown’s inclusive, unifying vision of embracing the Union flag asks for a different commitment to change or motivation from its citizens than to another example, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. There, the sense of patriotism promoted in its soldiers is quite different and ethically questionable. To be ‘unashamedly patriotic’ demands care and attention, avoiding extreme forms of nationalism, which have been known not to be tolerant of diversity.

Cultural Crises and a Notion of the Cosmopolitan Nation

In the process of responding to change and restructuring communities to accommodate change, nations have, and continue to experience, social and political anxiety. In light of this, concern for national cohesion has translated into the emergence of a perceived social crisis incorporated in newfound angst about youth apathy and political participation; diversity, unity, allegiance, citizenship; and, more recently again in the media in Britain, patriotism, identity and ‘Britishness’.

Citizenship, with its long tradition of being nationally bound, is presented with the challenges of an international landscape both from within and outside national borders. The visibly increasing diversity of people and widening economic and political relationships formed have created a new priority to reconstruct and orient some map of meaning about citizenship, belonging and, leading from that, notions of patriotism amidst rapidly changing features of national communities.

It is difficult to comment upon all aspects of the challenges facing change in the context of national communities. But for the purposes of this section, I will consider some dominant themes. Among these are: coping with a multi-cultural society and its diverse populations as a result of recent and past migration, the fear of loss in a sense of civic pride and active political participation in young people. It is important to consider how to understand patriotism in light of these issues.

Migration is certainly not a new phenomenon but has been a strong contributing factor to understanding notions of diversity. In Britain, for example, the recent expansion of the European Union has meant an increase in movement and migration, something that has attracted much attention in the media, particularly where citizenship and civic culture is concerned.

What has become increasingly apparent nationally, in Britain certainly, is that second- and third-generation migrants have assimilated to a dominant national culture but have also successfully associated with the minority cultures of their parents and grandparents. This presents a new dimension to what it is to be British, for example. The conjecture here is that this experience reveals a more complex notion
of identity and belonging that is not exclusive to Britain but may be found elsewhere too. Such changes have introduced an interesting challenge to the discourse of citizenship and patriotism. Contemporary Britain may, indeed, be a fusion of cultures. However, a recent survey carried out in Britain among Asian youth, has suggested that there is always a danger that less dominant cultures may have to assume or assimilate to the dominant culture to feel accepted and have a sense of belonging to their community. Over a third of the Asians in a survey commissioned as part of BBC Asian Network’s Asian Nation (2007) agreed that they needed to ascribe to being a ‘coconut’, a person who acts or thinks like a white person, to be accepted and ‘get on’ in the UK. This certainly has ramifications on questions concerning ‘Britishness’, sovereignty and any notion of national identity.

Nevertheless, a hybrid identity, where there exist multiple attachments with rich experiences of association and identification with other cultures, are becoming increasingly commonplace. This may translate in multiple forms of meaningful, subjective citizenship. A sense of belonging to more than one community is possible, in the same way as the earlier example of the Irish citizen who can identify with a multiple sense of community that extends to the rest of Europe (Giddens, 2000). A young person in Britain with migrant parents, for example, can identify with multiple languages, cultures, religion, have a hybrid identity, and still feel British.

Cultural, national, and global identifications and attachments are complex, interactive, and contextual. The ways in which they influence an individual’s behaviour is determined by many factors. (Banks, 2004, p. 8)

Diversity in citizenship is important and integral to understanding citizenship in a global community. There’s no doubt that young people face a variety of challenges and experience more complex moral, social and political relationships than previous generations.

Amid a growing sense of crisis, one consequence is concern for the youth culture of a nation. This may well be a universal pattern of intergenerational human concern of the older generations caring for the future of their young. At such times it is important not to cultivate what has been described as ‘a cult mentality’. Cultivating this kind of ethos seems to perpetuate anxiety. This may not be the most helpful way to engender social cohesion. It is increasingly the culture of fear, fear of national disintegration, which threatens social cohesion and is perpetuated by:

... a cult mentality that precludes meaningful dialogue about effective reform. A cult mentality routinely commits to simplistic slogans and dogma while remaining unreflective about attending assumptions, implications, and alternatives. (Stein, 2001, cited in Richardson & Blades, 2006, p. 14)

In Britain the subject of young people and how education can best serve them has been a huge and ongoing debate, which does not seem to be exclusive to Britain. Alan Sears and Emery Hyslop-Margison (2006) produce some valuable insight into research carried out and present an interesting account of ‘the Cult of Citizenship Education’. They draw attention to the pattern of a culture of crisis emerging across a number of countries over recent years, with particular reference to a culture of
people’s civic attitudes and behaviour, which contributes to a ‘cult-mentality’ particularly towards young people.

Public perception and the general discourse of citizenship can become vulnerable to clichéd, stereotyped depictions of young people. A label given to young people who wear hooded sweaters, as ‘hoodies’, is one example in Britain where young people have been perceived to suggest menacing behaviour if seen to be wearing a particular type of garment. Almost certainly, the outcome of these kinds of public discourse, assisted by the media and political figures, determinates the relationships cultivated and the subsequent civic culture promoted. Against this backdrop, there is a need to sensitively consider how best to respond to and include young people in civic society.

The claim here is that, essentially, citizenship education needs to be multi-layered, as is already adopted in citizenship education for England and Wales. The implementation of a multi-layered approach to the subject includes three strands with a proposed fourth. These are: social and moral development, community involvement, political literacy and the fourth recommendation to be included, identity and diversity: living together in the UK. This fourth strand holds promise, proposing to unpack discrete areas, which would best be addressed directly in order to appreciate how individual citizens can integrate with others in their community. Most important would be how to consider the relationship between these aspects and not merely consider them as independent strands.

In their discussion of a prevailing ‘cult mentality’, Sears and Hyslop-Margison refer to research carried out with young people, examining the differences between public perception and young people’s responses to issues pertaining to civic knowledge, sentiment, and engagement. Importantly, this research points to concern expressed about what has been described as the growing ‘ignorance’, ‘alienation’ and ‘agnosticism’ among young people.

... Citizens, especially young ones are often described as ignorant of the basic information required to function as citizens; alienated from politically participating in their societies; and agnostic because they supposedly do not believe in the values that support democratic citizenship. (Richardson & Blades, 2006, p. 15)

These concerns correspond with Giddens’ statements about change and its consequences on citizenship. Among other things, he identified concerns about identity and diminishing trust in political institutions and politicians. Perhaps what has occurred over time is a change in the dynamics in the relationships between citizens, political institutions and politicians. Contrary to public perception, young people are potentially more knowledgeable than previous generations with their ability to access the world more readily. Perhaps young people need to be trusted in their capacity to engage in matters of importance to the community, to critically evaluate different viewpoints, even those not shared by the dominant culture. What is interesting and important to note about studies carried out in a number of countries with young people by Hahn (in 1998) and Chareka (in 2001), cited by Sears and Hyslop-Margison (2006), is that they found young people, ‘alienated from the formal political process’, nevertheless:
Young people in both studies were willing to participate in community activities or in advocacy when they see themselves actually making a difference ... (Hahn (1998), Chareka (2004) cited in Richardson & Blades, 2006, p. 19)

This reinforces the view that not all young people are in such a state of social and political malaise. In fact, quite the contrary, young people’s involvement in voluntary groups, gap years and environmental activities demonstrate concern. It’s quite the reverse to what some policy makers may think, particularly when discussing civic deficit. As research in Canada confirms, some youth have different perceptions about civic engagement, and are actively engaged in the community while somewhat cynical of partisan politics (ibid., p. 19). This supports the conclusions of Sears and Hyslop-Margison in their chapter, based on such research, that it all really depends on how we interpret political participation and civic engagement. Perhaps what this shows is that change in the socio-political climate is emerging and thus a new politics is needed. In his speech to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations on politics, Gordon Brown (2007) spoke of Britain needing:

... a new type of politics which embraces everyone in the nation and not just a select few, a politics that is built on consensus and not division, a politics that is built on engaging with people and not excluding them, and perhaps most of all a politics that draws upon the widest range of talents and expertise, not narrow circles of power

Naturally, politicians make speeches, which some may cynically say is all part of the rhetoric. But perhaps there is something seriously worth considering in what Brown says even if it is part of an eloquent political speech. ‘A new type of politics’ as described by Brown, suggests possible revisions of how citizenship and patriotism have been formerly understood. This is potentially refreshing for political relations. What can be learnt from past conceptions about patriotism and citizenship and what kinds of relationships will a liberal democracy encourage with a vision of democracy that is inclusive and unifying with all its diversity and looks to a new kind of politics? The role of education cannot be ignored here.

The discourse surrounding citizenship and patriotism seems more heightened than before: with renewed debate about education for citizenship, whether patriotism is important and whether it should be taught in schools. Views are quite divided. There is general concern, still, about what is meant or understood by patriotism. Then there is the matter of how to teach patriotism, a concern expressed especially among teachers. There has been some suggestion that with knowledge and increased participation in democratic processes, attachment to one’s country will increase, thereby creating more responsible and loyal citizens. However, knowledge about democratic processes is not enough in itself.

A new kind of politics has, indeed, emerged with the environmental crisis urging each of us to remember the now familiar slogan to ‘think global and act local’. This has also filtered down to citizenship education classes, where children have been encouraged to think and act as responsible and caring citizens about the environment and
‘fair-trade’, for example. But perhaps another slogan to consider may also be worthwhile: to see the global in the local. This way, citizens can look to the everyday experiences of the world and the increasing diversity of people in the community and hopefully be encouraged to believe that they are each a meaningful part of the nation-state and that it acknowledges, reflects, and values their cultural group and them as individuals.

To think global and act local demands that individuals be informed and aware of their role to assist in safeguarding interests pertaining to environmental sustainability or as consumers. However, to see the global in the local, can be perceived positively as noticing the influences, the choices and variety offered within the immediate community, as is increasingly the common experience. Recognition of diversity, if encouraged and cultivated in education, can lead to acceptance of and value in difference. Difference need not be a cause of social fragmentation or indifference. Moreover, recognising difference has the potential to demonstrate the way in which communities are no longer isolated from the rest of the world since the world is more frequently visible in the local sphere. This is another way to look at how we form relationships with our immediate environment and make connections with the rest of the world in very concrete terms.

Earlier the impact on sovereignty, identified by Giddens as a consequence of approaching citizenship in light of global changes, invites the question whether patriotism does, indeed, matter and, if so, how to understand it in light of what has been outlined above.

**The Personal Dimension: Education for a New Politics**

Viroli attempts to explain the artificial construct of the institution of the state, a place where individuals are united by persuasion of reasons of personal or collective safety. He presents an outlook of how societies and individuals have built their socio-political, and no doubt moral relationship, based on security from some perceived threat or some notion of individual gain. Like Viroli, Benedict Anderson’s more acclaimed description of a nation as an ‘imagined community’ has been influential in furthering the debate and helping to reconceptualise the notion of nations and, thus, citizenship. Anderson’s analogy lends itself to arguing for a world community. His ‘imagined community’ is an abstract community united by values agreed upon. The education project for citizenship is vital, then. It can be instrumental to engage in ways in which it may be possible to imagine a tolerant, inclusive, community, and become active in a cosmopolitan nation.

... citizens in a democratic society work for the betterment of the whole society, and not just for the rights of their particular racial, social, or cultural group ... becoming a citizen is a process. Education must play an important role in facilitating the development of civic consciousness and agency within students ... . (Gonçalves e Silva cited by Banks, 2004)

Many aspects influence society and the psychological is an important one to help understand how societies’ actions are based on the way that relationships are
understood. The psychologist H. B. Danesh (1997) has presented a very interesting argument on how individuals and societies have in the past, and can hope in the future, to relate. He describes three societal models: the authoritarian, the indulgent and the integrative. Each society has its orientation, worldview, intellectual life and relationship. There isn’t enough space to elaborate upon Danesh’s work apart from saying that he presents a socio-moral account of how societies with these particular influences have translated this into four aspects of life within the society. What is conducive to a progressive, liberal cosmopolitan outlook of society, and one that he prescribes to as desirable, is the integrative model. Briefly, instead of an orientation to power, as in the authoritarian model, or pleasure, as in the more adolescent indulgent model, the integrative society and its citizens are orientated to growth. It’s worth considering, for a moment, Danesh’s description of the different worldview perspectives of each of his models and the relationships held in each between the individuals and their respective societies. The authoritarian society is dichotomous to the rest of the world and the relationship is hierarchical between the state and members of its society. The indulgent model of society has a worldview that Danesh describes as indiscriminate. The relationship held between this society and its people is not cohesive but chaotic, a model akin to a neo-liberal individualistic society. The integrative society, however, has a worldview that respects unity in diversity and its relationship is consultative, not a hierarchical distribution of power but one where members are equally valued and decision making is achieved through consultation. Danesh points to a society that thinks and acts for the prosperity of all people, with individuals who would more readily commit to a more expansive, cosmopolitan, notion of society. The worldview, of unity in diversity, promotes, and is supported by, an intellectual life of creativity and the consultative relationship cultivated encourages growth and creativity.

This model is well suited to supporting a liberal cosmopolitan perspective in a global era with a ‘higher global level of integration than ever before’. It is one way in which to support the educational project to introduce citizenship education in communities increasingly experiencing diversity by looking at relationship fostered. These relationships look to the psychological and moral considerations in: interpersonal, inter-institutional relationships, as well relationships between communities.

A cosmopolitan nation and Danesh’s model of an integrative society, which encourages a consultative relationship between the state, its institutions and its citizens, seem mutually compatible when revisiting notions of patriotism and citizenship. Both notions of a cosmopolitan nation and an integrative society would allow for and accommodate a principle of unity in diversity where citizens may flourish equally. Successful relationships in this model require an integrative attitude and an environment that is orientated to growth, as Danesh describes. In order to understand how this may be possible it is important to consider the personal aspect of citizenship education.

In ‘Citizenship as Identity, Citizenship as Shared Fate and the Functions of Multicultural Education’, Melissa Williams distinguishes the personal aspect, or psychological dimension, as implicit and integral to the subjective notion of citizenship. (Williams, 2003) This dimension is arguably a vital aspect of citizenship.
and community building as I’ve already tried to suggest. The personal aspect is fundamental to cultivating and supporting multiple, existing and future relationships, which affect citizens and communities at any level in the project of social cohesion.

The personal aspect of citizenship is a key aspect of how patriotism and citizenship may be understood. This approach can be associated with, and supported by, views expressed by Joseph Carens when he says:

One way to belong to a political community is to feel that one belongs, to be connected to it through one’s sense of emotional attachment, identification, and loyalty. (Carens cited by Williams, 2003, p. 210)

A subjective sense of membership in a single political community relies upon creating a sense of belonging. Isaiah Berlin recognises this, fundamentally, as a ‘human need’. Berlin describes belonging as a human need as significant as that for food and shelter, although this is stated in a context of belonging in a fraternal sense to membership of a community from birth:

The sense of belonging to a nation seems to me quite natural and not in itself to be condemned, or even criticised ... But in its inflamed condition ... it is totally incompatible with the kind of pluralism I have tried to describe ... (Berlin cited by Burtonwood, 2006, p. 14)

In pluralist societies, whose members represent a variety of political, cultural and religious communities, this inflamed notion is dangerous and understandably an area where teachers fear to tread when asked to teach patriotism. The ‘inflamed condition’ can also be likened to, and its members subject to, what Eamon Callan describes as ‘idolatrous love’ of country, the possibility of love being corrupted or a hierarchical relationship, a ‘vertical relation of reverence between patriot and country ... a quasi-deified nation’ (Callan, 2006, p. 531).

Here there is an affinity between Callan and Danesh’s description of hierarchical relationships, which are not conducive to a socio-political community. It is also worthwhile asking the object of love in the imagined community, which we share with other strangers in a community. Is it the cultural language, history, traditions shared, in other words an ethnic nationalism? Or rather is the object of devotion the values, liberal or cosmopolitan, which are observed regardless of ethnicity or group affiliation, a community of shared fate? (Williams, 2003). Through cooperation and interaction with others, caring for principles, valuing each member as a member of equal worth, the ties of affection and attachment deepen, not in an idolatrous way but as a form of care or concern. There is nothing to say that the circle of a community bound by national borders with others cannot extend to a world community.

For liberal nationalists the primary allegiance is to liberal values shared in a bounded community of the state. For cosmopolitans, the primary allegiance is to the community of humanity and global justice. The two positions of liberal nationalism and cosmopolitanism need not be in conflict as Kok-Chor Tan (2005) argues persuasively. National sovereignty may be fuzzy but is not redundant. It is just that, for cosmopolitans, the basic structure of society and social justice is global. Feelings
of patriotic attachment are legitimate and need not be aligned with a sense of attachment to political membership. In fact Tan argues that as far as liberal principles of distributive justice are concerned, liberal principles are universally applicable and need not be confined to national borders. Kok-Chor Tan (2004) sums up the two positions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism providing a very compelling explanation of how citizens may adapt to a globally integrative environment without compromising other attachments.

... the purpose of a common nationality, in the view of liberal nationalists, is to enable citizens to transcend the local and parochial bonds and ties of family, kin, and tribe, and to extend the scope of their moral universe to also encompass strangers (who are fellow citizens). Shared nationality, therefore, motivates citizens to tend to the needs of compatriots who are otherwise strangers by making them all fellow members of a shared ‘imagined community’ (to borrow Benedict Anderson’s famous phrase). This reason for cultivating a shared nationality operates as an equally compelling reason for ‘cultivating humanity’, to borrow Nussbaum’s inspiring phrase ...

So understood as an expansionary moral project, there is nothing in the liberal nationalist idea of affinity to suggest that our moral world has to cease suddenly at our national borders. (Kok-Chor Tan, 2004, p. 104)

Martha Nussbaum rightly reinforces the liberal idea that we are all ‘created equal’ and bear ‘inalienable rights’. But she goes further to point to a weakness. The liberal seems to be ‘preoccupied with looking after the rights of the local branch of the species’, forgetting the cosmopolitan critique, as she puts it, ‘... that their rights matter as human rights and thus matter only if the rights of foreign humans matter, too’ (Nussbaum, 1996); What matters, institutionally is an integrative network, a system of cooperation in a world of interdependency. It is the ‘expansionary moral project’ and the ‘meaningful subjective membership’ of a single political and moral community to which education must focus on. The conjecture here is that education needs to begin with the personal aspect of citizenship.

It seems reasonable to suggest that citizens’ need to belong is accompanied by the need to feel that their contribution is meaningful and of value. If the liberal cosmopolitan egalitarian principle of equal worth is to be upheld institutionally then this must translate in the way citizens identify with others in order to strengthen relations. This concerns the civic culture desired in a cosmopolitan nation and global order. Banks’ comments supports this view:

Individuals can develop a clarified commitment to and identification with nation-state and the national culture only when they believe that they are a meaningful part of the nation-state and that it acknowledges, reflects, and values their cultural group and them as individuals ... (Banks, 2004)

It is important that education be involved in developing a wider, comprehensive picture of different perspectives in the community. In terms of a multicultural society where there will be differences, education can assist in developing acknowledgement
and understanding of differences and work on exploring common understanding and areas of concern which citizens share. A change in civic culture needs to acknowledge differences. John Tomasi introduces a helpful way to describe the importance of the relationship between public values and what he calls, ‘society’s ethical background culture’. According to Tomasi (2001), the ethical background culture:

... serves as a kind of map of meaning, a map that influences the way anyone making a life within that society finds the world morally intelligible. A society’s public values unavoidably influence the society’s background culture, thus informally influencing how well the social world in practice delivers or makes available many personal, non-public payoffs ... (Tomasi, 2001, p. xvi)

Recognising a ‘shared nationality’ where all have rights and need to belong to an imagined community extends to and highlights the notion of interdependency, in order to safeguard and work for the betterment of the whole society. Once again, an integrative approach would present a more desirable way of understanding individual maps of meaning. As such, it is important to take into account the social and ethical background culture of society when looking to civic culture and education for citizenship. It is important to emphasise the relational aspect of the subjective notion of membership in a single political community. As Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey (2005) claim, citizenship involves:

... making connections between our status and identities as individuals and lives and concerns of others with whom we share a sense of community. (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 5)

Making connections in this way with others in the community, which may be the imagined community of the nation, or other states, lend itself more towards a liberal cosmopolitan integrative view. Osler continues to describe citizenship as: ‘... a feeling, status and a practice ... immediately experienced as a feeling of belonging to a community’ (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 9). The importance of teaching world citizenship would mean that individuals would be encouraged to consider the rights of the individuals and cohabitants of a world community of multiple states and nations.

To ‘make connections between our status and identities as individuals and lives and concerns of others with whom we share a sense of community’ as Osler describes, does, I would suggest, require a particular mindset, an integrative attitude, which citizenship education can help nurture. It is important, given what I’ve tried to suggest that citizenship education help students to feel comfortable with various identities and attachments they have. Banks (2004) quotes Stephen Castles introducing a concept, which suggests the ‘human need’, to use Berlin’s words, to live in a global community: ‘Students need to be educated in ways that will enable them to function effectively in multiple communities’.

Wider commitments to attachments make it possible to discuss matters that relate to sustainable development, social justice and individual and collective responsibility. The psychological aspect of citizenship and identity needs closer attention and I have written on citizenship and identity and aspects of the self, more precisely the
notion of an integrated self elsewhere (Golmohamad, 2004), but cannot give space to this here.

Citizenship does, indeed, imply membership of a political community. However, it is important to add at this point, that the present social, moral and political climate is pregnant with reasons to highlight the importance of considering the subjective sense of membership in a single political community; particularly citizenship as shared fate. The environment is just one example why it’s important to consider the arguments for citizenship as ‘shared fate’.

One visible example of how a citizen may conceive of themselves sharing subjective membership of a single, I would suggest, world community, is a thirteen year old by the name of Severn Suzuki (1992), who, representing The Environmental Children’s Organization (ECO), addressed an assembly of adult representatives of world leaders, organisations and worldwide communities at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Below is her complete speech, which needs to be read in full:

Here, you may be delegates of your governments, business people, organizers, reporters or politicians—but really you are mothers and fathers, brothers and sister, aunts and uncles—and all of you are somebody’s child.

I’m only a child yet I know we are all part of a family, five billion strong, in fact, 30 million species strong and we all share the same air, water and soil—borders and governments will never change that. I’m only a child yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world towards one single goal. In my anger, I am not blind, and in my fear, I am not afraid to tell the world how I feel ...

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us to behave in the world. You teach us:
not to fight with others,
to work things out,
to respect others,
to clean up our mess,
not to hurt other creatures
to share—not be greedy

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?8

Conclusion

For the purpose of this article I have tried to limit my arguments to thinking about the experiences and responses to some changes over time concerning patriotism and citizenship and its influence on civic culture and education. The growing pains and anxieties of the global world and the emerging integration of those forces have lead to increased diversity and interdependency within and between nations. The ‘culture of crisis’ can be interpreted as a response to these changes. One outcome is a generation which can more readily access and relate to the world at many levels. But it has proven to be a time when the notions of patriotism and citizenship being bound and limited to the boundaries of the nation state are being challenged. A ‘new politics’ is emerging.
The ‘fuzzy sovereignty’ to which Giddens refers describes one way to consider changes in the political community, a window of opportunity for a possible new kind of democracy, which holds an integrative outlook with inclusive practises. An integrative cosmopolitan nation is not only attractive as a notion but also conducive to moving forward with change for the betterment of all, if liberal nationalists are ready to take up the challenge. A new politics is emerging and citizenship education needs to adapt to it. A principle of unity in diversity can help develop social cohesion at every level, respectful of the rights and needs of others while holding on to what the individual regards meaningful to themselves.

Non-reflective and unexamined cultural attachments may prevent the development of a cohesive nation with clearly defined national goals and policies ...

Balancing unity and diversity is a continuing challenge for multi-cultural nation-states. In most nation-states in the past, citizenship education was designed by powerful groups to promote their: social, economic and political interests and to eradicate the cultural characteristics of diverse groups. Unity in most nation-states has been achieved at the expense of diversity. Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression; diversity without unity leads to Balkanisation and the fracturing of the nation-state. (Introduction, in Banks, 2004)

Aspirations to build just and cohesive communities based on principles of justice and unity in diversity means that the education project can work to creating a robust cosmopolitan conception of democratic citizenship. The personal, relational aspect of citizenship can support a curriculum for world citizenship to reinforce the notion of meaningful democratic citizenship at every level. Education for citizenship provides a space for students to learn more about what Giddens describes as the ‘democratisation of emotions’ (Giddens, 2000, p. 21): ‘True democratisation of everyday life is just as important as formal democratisation in the political sphere ...’. This can help make citizenship meaningful and a way in which citizens can gradually develop understanding of how it may be possible to ‘think global and act local’ or even ‘see the global in the local’, exploring ways in which immediate everyday life can contribute to global understanding and change. There are already well known global campaigns concerned with collective interests, the millennium goals just one example.

Education for World Citizenship can assist a great project to educate the ‘critical spirit’, as Giddens (2000, p. 25) calls it. The critical spirit describes ‘... critical engagement with one’s own position in society and an awareness of the wider forces to which all of us as individuals are responding.’

The sobering perspective of a thirteen-year-old in 1992 helps to remind us of and reinforce the view that basic fundamental issues concerning human rights, human dignity, social justice, and the moral community of human beings, extend beyond national boundaries and national allegiance. It’s vital for students to engage in a process of consultation about fundamental issues and concerns and more importantly the caring relations that can be fostered through engagement with others in
an environment that is open, reflective and encourages an orientation to growth in learning and action. As to examples of practice, I have written on this elsewhere (Golmohamad, 2007). There I discuss a particular example of a learning environment, where I follow an integrative model of theory and pedagogy. Here different perspectives are shared from theory and experience of cultures, examined in consultation and interactive classroom situations. Perhaps students are best suited to critically and reflectively engage with the question of whether patriotism is important and how, if it is important, it may be conceived. This is something that should be open for consultation.

To, ‘share a subjective sense of membership in a single political community’, for this writer means to extend one’s allegiance to the community of humanity and a liberal-cosmopolitan global notion of justice. Citizenship education needs to look to engage beyond national allegiance and patriotism in the way it has been understood and used in the past as a form of ‘idolatrous love’. An allegiance to justice and humanity, however, is critical for citizenship education to prepare citizens to better serve their country and for a sustainable future.

Notes

1. In his essay entitled ‘decline and revival’, Maurizio Viroli (1995) gives a socio-historical account of different notions of ‘patriotism’ and the different conceptions of love and allegiance, which were consequently determined. Viroli offers socio-historical insights into ways in which patriotism has been understood including differing notions of patria whether love and loyalty to the republic and common liberty and the common good, the king or literally the soil of the country of birth.

2. William Dustin (1999) provides a model by which to understand this. He describes a relationship between a vertical hermeneutical and a horizontal homeostatic dimension. According to Dustin, we interpret meaning from a heritage of past and existing cultures, history, and experiences. From this we construct new, alternative, imagined future communities that are inclusive of individuals and communities. At the centre of these two axes is citizenship.

3. The others are identified as: ‘the impact of globalisation on political legitimacy and trust in politicians’, ‘the changing nature of the economy’ and ‘the fundamental changes in civil society’.

4. An estimated 60% of combatants in the DCR conflict are children, and 35% of these children are recruited voluntarily. The child soldiers are often supported in their endeavours by the community at large, and are led by a sense of patriotism and promises of prosperity. See http://www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest/pittsburgh/2005/09142005.html

5. In recent times public perception that hooded garments imply menacing behaviour in young people was reinforced when shopping centres decided to ban such clothing from shopping malls. This was also supported and reinforced by local police. See http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4159/is_20030525/ai_n12738159


7. Jessica Shepherd in a recent article for the Guardian, a national broadsheet newspaper, reveals the rise of interest and concern about the debate on national identity and patriotism in citizenship lessons in Britain. She discusses different perspectives on how important it is to teach patriotism based on a recent study asking for responses to questions on patriotism from students and history teachers. See http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/jul/17/schools.uk

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