ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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From Teaching Citizenship to Learning Democracy

Over the past decades there has been a world-wide resurgence of interest in questions about education and democratic citizenship, both from the side of educators and educationalists and from the side of policy makers and politicians (for an overview see, for example, Osler & Starkey, 2006). In new and emerging democracies the focus has been on how education can contribute to the formation of democratic citizens and the promotion of a democratic culture, while in established democracies the focus has been on how to nurture and maintain interest in and engagement with democratic processes and practices. At stake in these discussions are not only technical questions about the proper shape and form of education for democratic citizenship but also more philosophical questions about the nature of democracy and the possible configurations of citizenship within democratic societies.

In discussions about the state of democracy two trends can be discerned (see McLaughlin, 2000). On the one hand there are worries about the level of political participation and political understanding, while on the other there are wider concerns about social cohesion and integration. In England the final report by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools – known as the Crick Report after its chairman Bernard Crick – not only claimed that there were "worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life" (Crick, 1998, p. 8) and that the current situation was "inexcusably and damagingly bad" (ibid., p. 16). The report also argued that this situation "could and should be remedied" (ibid., p. 16).

Within these discussions there are particular anxieties about the role and position of young people. The notion that young people have lower levels of political interest, knowledge and behaviour than adults has been well documented. While some argue that this is a normal phenomenon of the life cycle and that political interest increases with age, there is evidence which suggests a decline in political interest and engagement among young people compared to previous generations – at least, that is, with respect to official politics. In response to this some have argued that young people have a different and very distinct political agenda so that a decline in engagement with official politics does not necessarily imply disengagement with social and political issues more generally. Others maintain, however, that young people do not have a distinctive new political agenda of their own.

Although the evidence about levels of political interest and participation is inconclusive, young people, seen as "citizens in the making" (Marshall, 1950, p. 25), have become a principal target of government initiatives aimed at countering the

perceived trend of political and social alienation. Citizenship education has become the cornerstone of these initiatives. In England citizenship education was incorporated into the National Curriculum in 1988 as one of the five cross-curricular themes and became a compulsory National Curriculum subject at secondary level for students at Key Stages 3 and 4 (aged 11–16) in 2002. This was complemented by non-statutory guidelines for citizenship education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) at Key Stages 1 and 2 (aged 5–11). In Scotland "responsible citizenship" was listed as one of the four capacities all education should aim to promote and develop in the context of the new national Curriculum for Excellence, launched in 2004 and implemented from 2010 onwards.

While I do not wish to downplay the significance of citizenship education – not in the least because young people themselves have indicated a lack of knowledge and understanding in this area (see, for example, White, Bruce & Ritchie, 2000) – the inclusion of citizenship in the formal curriculum runs the risk of masking a deeper problem concerning young people's citizenship. The point I wish to make in this chapter is that the teaching of citizenship represents at most a partial response to an alleged 'crisis' in democracy. This is why I argue that there is a need to shift the focus of research, policy and practice from the teaching of citizenship towards the different ways in which young people 'learn democracy' through their participation in the contexts and practices that make up their everyday lives, in school, college and university, and in society at large.

The shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy makes it possible to overcome the individualistic conception of citizenship that underpins much recent thinking in the area of citizenship education. The focus on learning democracy makes it possible to reveal the ways in which such learning is situated in the unfolding lives of young people and how these lives, in turn, are implicated in wider cultural, social, political and economic orders. It ultimately is this wider context which provides opportunities for young people to be democratic citizens – that is to enact their citizenship – and to learn from this. The shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy emphasises, in other words, that democratic citizenship should not be understood as an attribute of the individual, but invariably has to do with individuals-in-context and individuals-in-relationship. From a research point of view this means that it is only by following young people as they participate in different formal and non-formal practices and settings, and by listening to their voices, that their learning can be adequately understood. This, in turn, makes it possible to acknowledge that the educational responsibility for citizenship learning is not and cannot be confined to schools and teachers but extends to society at large.

I begin this chapter with a reconstruction of the discussion about citizenship and its development in Britain since the Second World War. This reconstruction reveals a shift away from a more comprehensive conception of citizenship that was prominent after the Second World War towards a much more individualistic approach from the 1980s onwards. As a result of this shift, it has become increasingly difficult to acknowledge the situatedness of citizenship. I argue that this trend is also evident in recent developments in citizenship education, most notably in the premise that the alleged crisis in democracy can be adequately addressed by (re)educating individuals.

I outline the problems associated with such an individualistic approach where the emphasis is on the individual per se rather than on the individual-in-context and in-relationship. Against this background I argue for an approach to citizenship education that takes its point of departure in the learning that takes place in the real lives of young people – in school and in society at large. In the concluding section I sketch the implications of this view for research and policy and for the practice of citizenship education.

CITIZENSHIP IN BRITAIN AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Writing in the aftermath of the Second World War, T.H. Marshall in his essay "Citizenship and Social Class" (Marshall, 1950) delineated a view of citizenship which was to inform the social liberal consensus of the post-war period up to the 1970s. According to Roche (1992, pp. 16–17), Marshall's theoretical framework represents the "dominant paradigm" in citizenship theory in Britain and has continued to represent the touchstone for discussions about citizenship. Mann (1987, p. 34) has even suggested that in relation to Britain Marshall's view of citizenship is "essentially true."

Marshall defined citizenship as "a status bestowed on all those who are full members of a community," and argued that "(a)ll those who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Marshall, 1950, pp. 28–29). Marshall took an historical approach which focused on the development of citizenship rights in modern societies. His main thesis was that modern citizenship includes three different kinds of rights: civil, political and social rights. Civil rights, that is the rights necessary for individual freedom, such as "liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice" (ibid., p. 74), developed largely in the eighteenth century. Political rights, including the right to vote and to stand for political office, followed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Social rights, which mainly developed in the twentieth century, include "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (ibid., p. 74). According to Marshall each of these kinds of rights corresponds to a particular set of institutions. Civil rights are protected by the court system; political rights correspond to institutions of local government and parliament; while social rights are associated with the welfare state.

Although Marshall's analysis can be read as a description of the development of citizenship rights in Britain, his main concern was with solving the problem of how citizenship and capitalism could be reconciled. The growth in wealth created by capitalism had created the conditions for increasing social rights. Yet, at the very same time these rights posed a threat to the capitalist system since they were collectivist by nature and required increased public expenditure and taxation. For this reason Marshall argued that "in the twentieth century citizenship and the capitalist class system [were] at war" (Marshall, 1950, p. 87). Marshall believed, however, that social rights, institutionalised within the framework of the welfare state, could

ultimately mitigate the worst excesses of the market. In line with the functional analysis he was advocating, he introduced the notion of the 'hyphenated society', the constellation of democratic-welfare-capitalism where "the parts are meaningless except in their relationship with one another" (Marshall, 1981, p. 128). Social rights thus rendered citizenship compatible with capitalism by 'civilising' the impact of the market. Fundamentally, he believed that the expansion of social rights would irrevocably ameliorate and cut across class differences and inequalities. Although there was conflict and controversy in the post-war period over the type of policies that were needed to achieve the expansion of citizenship, Marshall's ideas secured "a continued commitment to social justice and social integration through the growth of social rights" (France, 1998, p. 98). Marshall held that with the post-war construction of the welfare state, the progress of citizenship as a rounded and meaningful status was complete.

Notwithstanding the importance of Marshall's work for the understanding and advancement of citizenship in post-war Britain, his ideas have over the past decades been criticised for a number of reasons (for a detailed overview see Faulks, 1998, pp. 42–52). One of the issues Marshall did not explore, was the possibility that the state may work in the interest of one class or group of elites, rather than function as a neutral referee – an assumption which was "naïve even in the context of 1950s Britain" (ibid., p. 44). Faulks concludes, therefore, that although Marshall argued that citizenship requires a social dimension to make it meaningful for most individuals, ultimately the social rights he advocated are "paternalistic and dependent upon the condition of the market economy" (ibid., p. 51). Marshall did not see, in other words, "that meaningful citizenship demands active participation by citizens who possess the necessary resources to facilitate participation" (ibid., p. 51). By failing to transcend the agency-based approach to citizenship, Marshall did not consider "the structural constraints which the market and coercive state place upon the distribution of the resources necessary for citizenship" (ibid., p. 51).

FROM THE WELFARE STATE TO NEO-LIBERALISM

It was, however, not the theoretical weakness of Marshall's arguments that led to a decline in the impact of his thinking. Much more importantly, his optimistic belief in the welfare state as the impartial guarantor of social justice was overtaken by actual transformations in the industrialised world, such as the decline in autonomy of the nation state and the globalisation of production and consumption, and by related social and cultural changes. These developments have radically altered the way in which citizenship is comprehended by individuals and groups in both privileged and marginalised positions.

In Britain, the challenge to the post-war consensus primarily came from the 'New Right' from the mid-1970s onwards. It followed a sustained period of economic and political unrest and was championed by Margaret Thatcher who insisted that a culture of 'welfare dependency' had become endemic in society. Here Thatcher was intuitively following neo-liberal thinkers such as Frederick Hayek, in arguing that social rights and welfare state provision more generally undermine rather than support

individual freedom because they weaken personal responsibility and civic virtue. For neo-liberalism "the only way to engender good citizenship is to see as its basis the individual freely choosing to act in a responsible way" (Faulks, 1998, p. 68). This helps to explain why Thatcher sought to counter and reverse the development of social citizenship by returning to the traditional liberal idea of free markets and limited government. She did so, however, within a neo-liberal rather than a classical liberal framework. The difference between the two ideologies is very well captured by Olssen.

> Whereas classical liberalism represents a negative conception of state power in that the individual was to be taken as an object to be freed from the inter-ventions of the state, neoliberalism has come to represent a positive conception of the state's role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation. In classical liberalism, the individual is characterized as having an autonomous human nature and can practice freedom. In neoliberalism the state seeks to create an individual who is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur. (Olssen, 1996, p. 340)

The idea of 'limited government' does not mean weak government. The state has to be strong to police and safeguard the market order. Gilmour summarises the apparently contradictory logic of Thatcherite 'authoritarian liberalism' as follows.

> There was no paradox in rhetoric about 'liberty' and the rolling back of the state being combined in practice with centralisation and the expansion of the state's frontiers. The establishment of individualism and a free-market state is an unbending if not dictatorial venture which demands the prevention of collective action and the submission of dissenting institutions and individuals. (Gilmour, 1992, p. 223)

Although the explicit individualistic rhetoric with its "valorization of the individual entrepreneur" (Hall *et al*., 2000, p. 464) was softened under John Major in the early 1990s, the emphasis on personal responsibility and individual choice was retained. In important areas such as civil service and government reform, the Thatcherite agenda was in fact speeded up under Major.

FROM SOCIAL RIGHTS TO MARKET RIGHTS: THE ACTIVE CITIZEN

The foregoing makes clear that one of the most central aspects of the Conservative governments of Thatcher and Major was the redefinition of the relationship between individuals and the state and hence the redefinition of the very idea of citizenship. Faulks (1998, p. 124) describes the redefinition of citizenship as a shift from social rights to 'market rights,' which comprise "the freedom to choose, the freedom to own property and have property protected, the freedom to spend money as one sees fit, and the right to be unequal." At the centre of this vision stands the active citizen, a 'dynamic individual' who is self-reliant and takes responsibility for his or her own actions, rather than depending upon government intervention and support, and yet possesses 'a sense of civic virtue and pride in both country and local community'

(ibid., p. 128). This particular form of active citizenship comprised "a mixture of self-help and voluntarism whereby competition and rigour of market relations would supposedly be 'civilised' by concern for one's community and country" (ibid., p. 128). Although it was underpinned by a perceived need for shared values and reciprocal obligations and loyalties, active citizenship was in effect more concerned with the individual as an autonomous chooser and individual economic consumer in the market place, than with the promotion of community values. Thatcherism, with its individualistic emphasis, only succeeded in increasing social division, rather than creating the basis for community spirit to emerge.

By focusing on the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, the call for active citizenship was based on a particular diagnosis of society's ills, in that it was assumed that what was lacking in society were active and committed individuals. The explanation for society's problems was thus couched in individualistic, psychological and moralistic terms – the result of a lack of individual responsibility, rather than an outcome of more structural causes such as under-funding of welfare state provisions or the loss of political control resulting from privatisation of public services. In this way active citizenship followed the strategy of blaming individuals rather than paying attention to and focusing on the structures that provide the context in which individuals act. Ironically, therefore, active citizenship exemplified a de-politicisation and privatisation of the very idea of citizenship.

CITIZENSHIP AND CAPITALISM

Many analysts see the emergence of the New Right as a radical break with the past, particularly with the social liberal consensus that existed in the first decades after the Second World War. They mainly hold Thatcher responsible for the breakdown of the welfare state and the erosion of social rights. While it is clear that Thatcher had a huge impact on British society – even though she claimed that 'such a thing' did not exist – and while it is also clear that successive Conservative governments had been highly effective in reshaping the political agenda, the demise of the welfare state cannot be exclusively accounted for by a change in political ideology and rhetoric forged by Conservative governments. Faulks suggests that the development of the post-war consensus that gave rise to increased and improved welfare provision and expanded social rights should not simply be understood as a victory of the working class over the ruling class. The development of social rights was also the product of the needs of the ruling class to maintain modern production. The expansion of social citizenship was, in other words, due "to the mutual benefits it secured for capital and labour" (Faulks, 1998, p. 108).

From this point of view, it is hardly surprising that social rights came under pressure when the needs of capitalism changed in the 1970s as a result of the increasing globalisation of production. The relatively brief period of managed capitalism in which production and consumption were mainly confined to the borders of the nation state gave way to a much more anarchic form of global capitalism in which governments were under pressure to offer suitable conditions to global capital in order to remain a player in the global economy. Unlike Marshall's expectations, this created

a situation in which the 'war' between citizenship and capitalism returned. Social citizenship, as it had developed in the post-war era, was increasingly seen as an impediment to Britain's competitiveness in the world economy. Viewed from this perspective the Thatcherite agenda of the 1980s can be understood as "an attempt to adjust to the new realities of capitalism by reducing impediments to capitalist investment, such as trade union and social rights, and opening up Britain's economy to increasing globalisation" (Faulks, 1998, p. 121). The neo-liberal ideology of individualism, choice and market rights suited this situation much better than the old ideology of collectivism, solidarity and social rights.

When Labour came to power in May 1997 there were high hopes for a radical change, including the expectation that the welfare state would be rebuilt. These expectations, which were fuelled by the Labour Party itself, have, however, not fully materialised. With respect to citizenship, Labour mainly sought to ameliorate the New Right position by using communitarian ideas to emphasise the importance of social values and social responsibilities. But in key areas such as education and health care – the main pillars of the welfare state – Labour has simply continued with the rhetoric and practice of choice, delivery and accountability, thereby positioning citizens as consumers of 'high quality' social services, rather than as those who participate in democratic decision making about the fair distribution of collective resources (see Biesta, 2004[a]; 2010[a]). In this respect the Labour government continued the individualistic neo-liberal line of thinking that was a prominent feature of preceding Conservative governments.

THE IDEA OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The foregoing discussion of the development of citizenship in post-war Britain not only provides the factual background for my discussion of the idea of citizenship education. It also serves as a framework for understanding and evaluating recent developments in this field. What it allows me to show is that developments in citizenship education have stayed quite close to the individualistic conception of citizenship that emerged in Britain in the 1980s. Since this is only one of the ways in which the 'problem of citizenship' can be understood, it becomes possible to argue – as I will do below – that the idea of citizenship education as a process of making young people 'ready' for democracy, is only one of the ways in which democratic learning can be promoted and organised, and not necessarily the best way.

Although citizenship education is not a recent invention (see, for example, Batho, 1990), there can be no doubt that in the English context a major impetus for recent initiatives has come from Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. The brief of this group, set up by the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, was "(t)o provide advice on effective education for citizenship in schools – to include the nature and practices of participation in democracy; the duties, responsibilities and rights on individuals as citizens, and the value to individuals and society of community activity" (Crick, 1998, p. 4). The group was also expected to produce "a statement of the aims and purposes of citizenship education in schools" and "a broad framework

for what good citizenship in schools might look like, and how it can be successfully delivered' (ibid., p. 4).

The Advisory Group, which consisted of representatives from a very broad political spectrum, argued that effective education for citizenship should consist of three strands. Firstly, social and moral responsibility: "children learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other" (Crick, 1998, p. 11; emphasis in original). Secondly, community involvement: "learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community" (ibid., p. 12; emphasis in original). Thirdly, political literacy: "pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values" (ibid., p. 13; emphasis in original). Along all three lines the Advisory Group emphasised that citizenship education "is not just knowledge of citizenship and civic society; it also implies developing values, skills and understanding" (ibid., p. 13).

According to Kerr (1999, p. 79), the Advisory Group placed "considerable stress on the outcomes of effective citizenship education ... namely active and responsible participation." What eventually ended up in the Citizenship Order (the official guidelines for the teaching of citizenship), was considerably different to the recommendations of the Advisory Group. This particularly weakened "the holistic impact of the Citizenship Advisory Group's final report" (ibid., p. 79). In the Citizenship Order the following three attainment targets for Key Stages 3 and 4 were specified: (1) Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens; (2) Developing skills of inquiry and approach; (3) Developing skills of participation and responsible action (see ibid., p. 83).

THREE PROBLEMS WITH THE IDEA OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The framework for citizenship education in England has been criticised from a wide range of different angles (see, for example, Beck, 1998; Garratt, 2000; for a 'temperate' reply see Crick, 2000; see also Crick, 2007). My concern here is not with the specific content and shape of the proposals and practices but with the more general idea of citizenship education, that is, with the idea that an alleged crisis in democracy can be adequately addressed by (re)educating individuals, by making them 'ready' for democratic citizenship through education. I basically see three problems with this line of thinking.

The first problem with the idea of citizenship education is that it is largely aimed at individual young people. The assumption is that they, as individuals, lack the proper knowledge and skills, the right values, and the correct dispositions to be the citizens that they should be. This not only individualises the problem of young people's citizenship – and in doing so follows the neo-liberal line of thinking in which individuals are blamed for their social malfunctioning. It also individualises citizenship itself, most notably through the suggestion that good citizenship will follow from individuals' acquisition of a proper set of knowledge, skills, values

and dispositions. One could, of course, argue that citizenship education can only ever be a necessary, but never a sufficient condition for the realisation of good citizenship. This is, for example, acknowledged in the Crick Report, where it is emphasised that "(s)chools can only do so much" and that we "must not ask too little of teachers, but equally we must not ask too much" (Crick, 1998, p. 9). Yet the underlying idea is that schools "could do more" and, more importantly, that they "must be helped" (ibid., p. 9). The latter point suggests that even when the wider context is taken into consideration, it is first and foremost in order to support the effective 'production' of the good citizen.

The second problem I wish to highlight, concerns the assumption that citizenship can be understood as the outcome of an educational trajectory. The idea of citizenship-as-outcome reveals a strong instrumental orientation in the idea of citizenship education. The focus is mainly on the effective means to bring about 'good citizenship' rather on the question what 'good citizenship' actually is or might be. The instrumental orientation clearly comes to the fore in Crick's contention that "(t)he aim of the new subject is to create active and responsible citizens" (Crick, 2000, p. 67; emphasis added). Indeed, the overriding concern has been about how to best engender a particular species of citizenship amongst young people. It has been to find the 'best' and most 'appropriate' methods and approaches of teaching citizenship to young people – of achieving what is regarded to be a common goal that they can aspire to. I therefore agree with Hall *et al*. (2000, p. 464), that the "contemporary political and policy discussion is for the most part much less concerned to critically interrogate the concept of active citizenship, than it is to debate how such a thing might be achieved." I wish to suggest that a continuous interrogation of the possible meanings of citizenship, a continuous "public dialogue about rival value positions" (Martin & Vincent, 1999, p. 236) should not only be at the very centre of democratic life, but also at the very centre of citizenship education.

The idea of citizenship as outcome is also problematic because it is fabricated on the assumption that citizenship is a status that is only achieved after one has successfully traversed a specified trajectory. I suggest that citizenship is not so much a status, something which can be achieved and maintained, but that it should primarily be understood as something that people continuously do: citizenship as practice (see Lawy & Biesta, 2006). Citizenship is, in other words, not an identity that someone can 'have,' but first and foremost a practice of identification, more specifically a practice of identification with public issues, that is, with issues that are of a common concern. This implies that a culture of participation should be a central and essential element of democratic citizenship.

As long as citizenship is conceived as outcome, it places young people in the problematic position of not-yet-being-a-citizen. Indeed, as France has argued, citizenship "is generally understood as an adult experience" and, as a result, being young is only seen as "a transitional stage between 'childhood' and 'adulthood'" (France, 1998, p. 99). Such an approach, set alongside my concerns about citizenship as outcome, fails to recognise that young people always already participate in social life; that their lives are implicated in the wider social, economic, cultural and political world; and they are not isolated from these processes. In effect, being a citizen

involves much more than the simple acquisition of certain fixed core values and dispositions. It is participative and as such it is itself an inherently educative process as it has to do with the transformation of the ways in which young people relate to, understand and express their place and role in society.

This is precisely the point where the question of learning arises – which brings me to the third and final problem with the idea of citizenship education. One obvious problem with any educational strategy, including the teaching of citizenship, is that there is no guarantee that what young people learn is identical to what is being taught. Proponents of the idea of 'effective' education may want us to believe that it is only a matter of time before research provides us with evidence about the teaching strategies that will guarantee 'success.' Yet apart from the question what counts as 'success' and who has the right to define it, they seem to forget that what students learn from what they are being taught crucially depends on the ways they interpret and make sense of the teaching, something they do on the basis of a wide and diverge range of experiences (see Biesta, 1994; Bloomer, 1997). Education is a process of communication, which relies upon the active acts of meaning making of students and it is this unpredictable factor which makes education possible in the first place (see Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2001; Biesta, 2004[b]). Moreover, young people learn at least as much about democracy and citizenship from their participation in the range of different practices that make up their lives, as they learn from that which is officially prescribed and formally taught. Even where a school includes exceptional internal democratic arrangements – such as a school council or other ways in which young people are enabled to participate meaningfully in the collective decision making about their educational experience – this still only represents a small proportion of the environment in and from which young people learn. They learn as much, and most possibly even more, from their participation in the family or leisure activities, from interaction with their peers, from the media, from advertising and from their role as consumers – and they often learn different and even contradictory things (see also Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009).

All this suggests that the learning of democratic citizenship is situated within the lives of young people. The way in which young people make sense of their experiences – including their experience of citizenship education – depends crucially upon their own perspectives which are, in turn, shaped by the outcomes of previous learning and meaning-making (see Dewey, 1938[a]). But young people's perspectives – and hence their learning and action in the area of democratic citizenship – are also influenced by the wider cultural, social, political and economic order that impacts upon their lives. It is at this point that the individualistic approach to citizenship education and the individualistic understanding of citizenship itself reveals one of its main shortcomings as it tends to forget – or at least downplays the significance of – the situations in which young people live and act. As France (1998) has argued, it is not enough to expect or to enforce young people to become active citizens.

> As a society we have to recognise that young people need a stake in the society
> or community in which they live. During the last 15 years this has been reduced
> by the erosion of social rights and the expression of social power by certain

adults. This has led to fewer opportunities in both the community and employment for young people to move into the adult world. It is important therefore to recognise that without these opportunities many young people will not feel any desire to undertake social responsibility either to their local or national community. (France, 1998, pp. 109–110)

I agree with France that the 'problem' of citizenship is misunderstood if it is conceived as an abstract unwillingness of young people to become active in social and political life. The problem always has to be constructed as one of young-people-in-context, which means that it is as much about the young people as it is about the context in which they live and learn. It is, in other words, the actual condition of young people's citizenship which has a crucial – and perhaps even decisive – impact upon the ways in which young people can be citizens and upon the ways in which they learn democratic citizenship.

CONCLUSIONS: FROM TEACHING CITIZENSHIP TO LEARNING DEMOCRACY

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the evolution of the theory and practice of citizenship in post-war Britain. Against this background I have discussed recent initiatives in citizenship education in England, focusing on the general thrust of the idea of citizenship education. Although I do not wish to argue against citizenship education – schools can make a difference – I have suggested that the prevailing approach to the teaching of citizenship is problematic for two related reasons. On the one hand this has to do with the fact that the 'problem' of citizenship is mainly understood as a problem of individuals and their behaviour. On the other hand it is because the response to the 'problem' of citizenship so conceived focuses mainly on individuals and their knowledge, skills and dispositions. I have argued that the problem of citizenship is not about young people as individuals but about young people-in-context which is why citizenship education should not only focus on young people as isolated individuals but on young people-in-relationship and on the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of their lives. This suggests a different direction not only for citizenship education itself, but also for research and policy. My case for a shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy is meant as a marker of such a change in direction.

One of the main implications for research lies in the need to focus on the ways in which young people actually learn democracy. It requires research which aims to understand the various ways in which young people can actually be democratic citizens and learn from this. It asks, in other words, for a contextualised understanding of the ways in which young people learn democracy, one which gives a central role to their actual 'condition of citizenship'. It is only by following young people as they move in and out of different contexts, practices and institutions and by trying to understand what they learn from their participation, or non-participation, in these contexts, that we can actually begin to understand what is going in the lives of young citizens in Britain today (for an example of such an approach see Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009).

The shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy also has implications for policy makers and politicians. If policy makers and politicians are really concerned about young people's democratic citizenship, they should pay attention to and, even more importantly, invest in the actual conditions under which young people can be citizens and can learn what it means to be a citizen. What I have in mind, here, is not only investment in economic terms, although the resources that make real and meaningful participation of all citizens, including young citizens, possible, are of crucial importance for the ways in which young people can learn democracy. Policy makers and politicians also need to invest in a different way, in that they need to think very carefully about the impact of their policies and strategies on young people's perceptions of democracy and citizenship. What, for example, do young people learn from the fact that the government's interest in education only seems to be about test-scores and performance in a small number of academic subjects? What do young people learn from the fact that the government supports an educational system where those with money have a much better chance of success in life? And how does the experience of unemployment, poverty and bad housing impact upon young people living under these conditions? There are powerful 'lessons in citizenship' to be learned in everyday life which means that the educational responsibility cannot and does not stop at the point where an effective system of citizenship teaching is in place. The educational responsibility extends to the very conditions of young people's citizenship, because these conditions define the context in which they will learn what it means to be a democratic citizen.

Finally, the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy also has important implications for citizenship education itself. One implication is that questions about the definition of citizenship should not be kept outside of citizenship education, but should be part and parcel of what citizenship education is about. What constitutes 'good citizenship' is not something that can be defined by politicians and educationalists and then simply set as an aim for young people to achieve. This does not mean that citizenship education should only be about the exploration of the possible meanings of citizenship. If learning democracy is situated in the lives of young people, then citizenship education should also facilitate a critical examination of the actual conditions of young people's citizenship, even it leads them to the conclusion that their own citizenship is limited and restricted. Such an approach would provide the basis for a much deeper understanding of and engagement with democratic citizenship than what lessons in citizenship might be able to achieve.