

Cultural education and the good citizen: a systematic analysis of a neoliberal communitarian policy trend

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Introduction

This chapter delivers an analysis of notions of ‘good citizenship’ in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of policies targeting the cultural literacy of young people in the UK over the past decade, based on the findings of a systematic policy review. This review, methodological details about which are given later, included the analysis of 28 policy documents in the field of cultural literacy in the UK published since 2007. The chapter examines how, through these documents, the state defines and frames the parameters of what constitutes good citizenship in this policy field, in terms of practices, identities and values (Pykett et al, 2010; De Koning et al, 2015).

After first introducing the core concepts of good citizenship and cultural literacy that inform the chapter as a whole, the chapter provides details of the systematic review methodology and how this was deployed in this research, as well as contextual information on cultural literacy policies in the UK. It then moves into a detailed discussion of the findings of the review. Through fine-grained analysis, we show that these policies have been shaped by the intervention of a neoliberal¹ economic logic aimed at constructing young people into neoliberal subjects, and that culture has been understood in strongly nationalist terms, conceiving of the importance of nationalist sentiment in the context of perceived challenges associated with diversity.

Based on this analysis, we argue that framings of good citizenship in this policy field reflect a neoliberal communitarian model of governance. This model, which has been influential in the study of the integration of new immigrants, captures the demands placed on non-citizens to prove that they are deserving of citizenship as a ‘double helix’

comprised of the neoliberal responsibilisation of prospective citizens as hard-working contributors to the economy, alongside a communitarian emphasis on the need for these prospective citizens to assimilate into the national culture (Schinkel and Van Houdt, 2010; Van Houdt et al, 2011). This chapter shows that this neoliberal communitarian model shapes the policing of citizenship for existing citizens as well, suggesting the relevance of this model to understanding the policing of belonging within as well as beyond the state.

Good citizenship and cultural literacy

Parameters of inclusion and exclusion are constructed and sustained by states through a variety of formal and informal practices, and serve to produce the meaning of belonging, identifying and categorising those who are considered to be members of the in-group, defined against perceived others. These parameters do not map neatly onto the legal definition of citizen and non-citizen; rather, the parameters intersect with racialised and gendered differences to construct some citizens as belonging more than others (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Bhambra, 2015; Bosworth et al, 2018). A primary way in which states construct parameters of belonging is by invoking ideals of good citizenship that frame the ideal practices, identities and values that the citizens of the state should hold. The focus here is on *acts* of citizenship rather than status (see Isin and Nielsen, 2008), that is, the norms dictating the ways in which citizens enact their belonging to the state (Pykett et al, 2010; De Koning, Jaffe and Koster, 2015). This is particularly evident in relation to education, which has long been seen as a policy field within which states 'make' future citizens (Brooks and Holford, 2009). Formal citizenship education programmes provided in schools have emerged as a particular focus of scholarly research on this subject. Such programmes tend to focus on democratic practices and active citizenship (Bennett et al, 2009; Hartung, 2017; Hammett, 2014) but have also been utilised as a space to educate young people about multicultural realities (Brooks and Holford, 2009). In the UK, for example, following on from the recommendations of the Crick Report (Crick, 1998), perceptions that multiculturalism was undermining community cohesion and driving different communities, defined in terms of ethnic identity, to lead segregated lives (Cantle, 2001) led to the introduction of a citizenship education curriculum in schools. The aim was to find or restore a sense of 'common citizenship' and to create 'common ground between

different ethnic and religious identities' (Cantle, 2001: 17) by promoting values such as respect for the rule of law.

While programmes such as these promote norms of good citizenship through formal education, wider state practices in regards to education also serve to 'discipline' the cultural context and promote it as a 'prescriptive aspect' of membership in the political community (Bhandar, 2010: 331). In this respect, learning about the development of cultural belonging and citizenship-in-practice extends well beyond the scope of citizenship education. It is these expanded practices that are the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Although cultural literacy offers a useful terminological and analytical device for identifying and accounting for expansive cultural learning, we contest the origins of the term and seek to reframe it. Initially coined by Hirsch (1988), 'cultural literacy' refers to the ability to comprehend a cultural context and be able to participate in it. A diametrical direction to learning was put forward, advocating a focus on core knowledge and hard facts, along with the prioritisation of shared knowledge over personalised learning and skills. Stemming from the principles of essentialist education (Bagley, 1934), this framework was couched in concerns about developing collective memory, heritage and values. Politically, it has been justified through concerns with improving disadvantaged pupils' access to certain types of knowledge.

Over the last decade, there has been revived interest in cultural literacy in the UK. A focus on cultural literacy and related concerns about the universal acquisition of core knowledge has informed recent education policy reforms (Gov.uk, 2013d, 2015b) in a political context marked by declarations about the limits of multiculturalism and a concern with reinvigorating a shared sense of Britishness and shared British values. However, cultural literacy has been thoroughly critiqued in terms of both its theoretical underpinnings and its practical applications. In particular, it has been viewed as elitist, aimed at prioritising national identity and universalising Western values (Woodhouse, 1989; Schweizer, 2009). It has been criticised for relying on oversimplified, linear conceptions of teaching and learning that position learners as passive recipients of knowledge (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Giroux, 2005).

Different definitions of cultural literacy can be identified in contemporary policy and research. The Cultural Literacy in Europe network (no date), for example, understands cultural literacy as an 'ability to view the social and cultural phenomena that shape our lives as being essentially readable' (see also Segal, 2014), while Maine, Cook

1 and Lähdesmäki (2019) deploy a definition based on dialogic forms of
 2 interaction and collaborative co-construction. In these cases, cultural
 3 literacy goes well beyond a narrow focus on knowledge acquisition and
 4 entails knowledge, skills and broader dispositions.

5 In line with these approaches, we deploy ‘cultural literacy’ in a
 6 manner significantly removed from Hirsch’s earlier definition. We adopt
 7 critical sociological perspectives on culture (Hall, 2000), considering
 8 it as a system of meaning that is fluid, contextualised, relational
 9 and dynamic. We draw on sociocultural understandings of learning
 10 (Bruner, 1996) that highlight the relational, culturally mediated and
 11 historically bounded elements of the process. Overall, we invoke a
 12 broad understanding of cultural literacy that captures the political,
 13 aesthetic and normative aspects of culture in the fullest sense.

14

15 **Method**

16

17 The question guiding our research into constructions of the good
 18 citizen in UK cultural literacy education policy was as follows: how has
 19 the ‘good citizen’ been framed in UK cultural literacy policy over the
 20 past decade? To answer this question, we conducted a systematic policy
 21 review of documents published over the past decade. This qualitative
 22 approach enabled us to identify, interrogate and analyse the content of
 23 relevant policy in detail.

24 A systematic search for eligible sources examining cultural literacy
 25 education – defined as formal and informal educational activities related
 26 to cultural identity, cultural practices and cultural heritage –was carried
 27 out using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and
 28 Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al, 2015). The policy
 29 and legislative document repositories of the Westminster government,
 30 as well as the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments, were
 31 searched using the following search string: (Youth OR young OR child
 32 OR pupil) AND (education OR learn OR participate OR knowledge)
 33 AND (art OR dance OR drama OR film OR music OR theatre OR
 34 history OR commemoration OR museum OR galleries OR libraries
 35 OR poetry) AND (culture OR identity OR heritage OR creativity).

36 Searches were limited to documents published between January 2007
 37 and June 2018.² In addition, manual searches of these repositories were
 38 undertaken to ensure that no relevant documents had been missed.
 39 After the removal of duplicates, 162 documents were screened against
 40 inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria included the date
 41 of publication, together with relevance to cultural literacy, and also

restricted the data set to those documents classed as an expression of policy.³ This included policy papers, statutory and non-statutory guidance, and legislation. A random sample of 10 per cent of all inclusion/exclusion decisions was blind-reviewed by another member of the coding team. After this initial screening process, 28 documents were deemed eligible for in-depth review.

Of the reviewed documents: 15 related to England only; eight related to Wales only; five were UK-wide; and one related to Northern Ireland only. The process did not return any results for Scotland. The lack of representation of Scottish and Northern Irish policy documents is an unfortunate result of a lack of relevant documents having been published in this time frame.⁴ However, the presence of Welsh policy documents allowed for some analysis of the devolution dynamic within this policy field.

A thematic analysis of the documents was undertaken using an iterative, inductive approach to the generation of codes and themes guided by the aims and objectives of the review. To create initial codes, the coding team independently read one eligible document. Results were compared and agreed codes were developed through discussion to create a coding matrix. This process was then repeated until all documents were reviewed in-depth. A random sample of 10 per cent of each document was moderated by a second reviewer to ensure the consistency of approach.

Context: cultural literacy policy in the UK

Responsibility for policies for young people's cultural literacy in the UK involves both national and local governments. The focus of this chapter is the national tier. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland share these responsibilities with the Westminster government; however, the Westminster government is solely responsible for policies related to cultural literacy in England.

Learning about cultural identity, diversity and participation occurs both within and outside of classroom settings. In schools, cultural literacy is captured in traditional subjects such as history, art and music, as well as in formal citizenship education, which was introduced into school curricula at the turn of the 21st century and is focused on the exploration of a variety of social and political topics, including in relation to cultural diversity (cf Gov.uk, 2013c). Outside of the school environment, educational practices that also contribute to cultural literacy policy objectives are extensively delivered by semi-independent

bodies that sit at ‘arm’s length’ from the government and are often perceived to offer a more efficient model of governance. These bodies are sponsored by the government, for example, the Arts Council sits at arm’s length from the government and is responsible for the delivery of major policy programmes, and cultural institutions such as the National Gallery and the British Museum also often sit at arm’s length from the government.

The governance environment shaping the cultural literacy policy landscape has faced significant fiscal constraints due to the challenging financial context that emerged over the past decade. Following the global financial crisis in 2008, the UK experienced a period of recession, and since 2010, a programme of efficiency savings and budget cuts has been embarked upon by successive Westminster governments (Pollitt, 2010). The effect of this reduced funding is illustrated in the spending power of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In 2010, the DCMS budget was cut by 25 per cent (HM Treasury, 2010) and then again in 2015 by 20 per cent (Clark, 2015). An overall budget reduction of 5.1 per cent was agreed for the 2019/20 financial year (National Audit Office, 2017).

More recently, the decision to leave the European Union (EU) (‘Brexit’) is set to significantly shape the policy environment for cultural literacy. In June 2016, the UK voted by 51.9 per cent to 48.1 per cent to leave the EU after a political campaign rooted firmly in anti-immigration and anti-diversity sentiment (Hobolt, 2016). The impact of Brexit on cultural literacy programmes is not fully known at the time of writing, but critical challenges for the creative industries and for educational programmes reliant on international cooperation have already been identified (DCMS Committee, 2018; Department for Education, 2018).

Neoliberal cultural education

Turning now to the findings of the analysis, there is strong evidence of a neoliberal thrust to the policy documents, which is evident in their statements about the value of learning about culture. In a minority of cases, this is conceptualised intrinsically as ‘the enriching value of culture in and of itself’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 15). However, the majority of the time, the value of cultural literacy is understood instrumentally in terms of its contribution to other primary aims of government. For example, it is conceptualised in terms of the contribution that culture makes to the national economy and, therefore, the importance

of investing in cultural education to build economic growth. Culture is seen to ‘provide the fuel for the wider creative economy’ (Gov.uk, 2018a: 13) and as an investment in the future growth of the national economy:

The UK’s future will be built at the nexus of our artistic and cultural creativity and our technical brilliance. The Centre for Economics and Business Research 2018 World Economic League Tables identify this particular blend of creativity and technology skills as the driving force behind the UK’s strong economic prospects over the long term. (Gov.uk, 2018a: 4)

Many of the documents further emphasise the importance of culture to economic growth through statistical statements that serve to monetise this value. For example, the ‘Culture White Paper’ states that, ‘In 2014, the economic contribution of museums, galleries, libraries and the arts was £5.4 billion, representing 0.3% of the total UK economy. This is up 59% (in nominal terms) since 2010’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 16). Setting the context of cultural education in such strongly economic terms means that learning about culture is then viewed through the lens of the added value that it brings to the UK economy. For example, it is noted that ‘[t]he creative industries ... are at the heart of the nation’s competitive advantage’ (Gov.uk, 2018b: 2).

Conceptualising the value of culture as economic means that the purpose of cultural education is understood as producing citizens who can contribute to this economic value, ‘creating the workforce of the future in a sector that continues to help to drive forward the UK’s growth agenda’ (Gov.uk, 2013a: 5). Workforce creation is thus a central theme across the documents. This is expressed primarily through the language of ‘skills’ to be developed for use in the cultural economy. For example, the documents set out plans for programmes aimed specifically at building skills to work in the cultural sector (Gov.uk, 2016b, 2017b).

Alongside this focus on economic value is an emphasis on the benefits of cultural literacy at an individual level. Learning about culture is seen to be making a significant contribution, for example, to educational attainment, referencing research which shows that young people who participate in culture are more likely to go on to higher education. This framing is then used to underpin arguments that schools should ‘promote cultural education as a means of raising the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 23). This framing is

once again grounded in an economic logic, which is particularly evident in discussions of ‘talent’. Good cultural education is conceptualised as that which ‘supports talent early on’ (Gov.uk, 2015a) and supports ‘a strong and sustainable pipeline’ into the creative industries (Gov.uk, 2018b: 18).

Alongside this focus on economic growth is an emphasis on the potential impact of cultural literacy programmes on local communities. In some instances, this is expressed in relation to community cohesion, where it is framed as having value in its potential to build safe, strong and ‘resilient’ communities (Gov.uk, 2017c), and to ‘address social isolation and foster community engagement’ (Gov.uk, 2018a: 20). Yet, the economic value of this impact is again evident. Culture is seen to have value in its role in underpinning local-level regeneration, where it ‘has the potential to transform communities’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 9). Under this economic logic, ‘[t]he development of our historic built environment’ is seen as driving ‘regeneration, job creation, business growth and prosperity’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 36). Cultural education, then, is contextualised with reference to the value of culture in driving regeneration to secure future local economic growth, linking this regeneration-focused understanding of value back to the perceived need for cultural literacy to build a culturally competent workforce.

There is also an emphasis in the documents on the international sphere. Primarily, this is expressed in relation to the value of cultural literacy to the ability of the UK to exert influence internationally: ‘The UK is a leader in soft power. We are respected for our strong and stable democracy, our belief in individual liberty, our diversity and our freedom of expression. Our culture celebrates these values’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 42). Here, international cultural programmes are seen as a way in which to pursue liberal values. Yet, this framing also has an additional economic aspect. Cultural education programmes based in the UK are valued because they produce future citizens who will be ready to maintain and build upon the UK’s international reputation and influence within the context of a globalised economy. This is expressed particularly in relation to the UK’s departure from the EU, as in the following: ‘The UK is a global leader in culture and creativity and, as we leave the European Union, we are committed to maintaining our position on the world stage, to driving creative innovation, and to producing talent that is recognised the world over’ (Gov.uk, 2018a: 43).

The way in which cultural education is linked to Brexit is a further indication of the intervention of an economic logic into the sector. As the UK’s economic future, as well as its place on the international

stage, have become less certain as a result of the decision to withdraw from the EU, there are indications that the impetus to demonstrate the added value that cultural education programmes provide are becoming more important in terms of both justifying public expenditure on such programmes and framing the objectives that such programmes are designed to achieve.

Communitarian cultural education

Alongside the neoliberal thrust of the policies identified in the preceding section sits an overtly communitarian character. Within the policy documents, cultural education is understood as something that is practice-based and ‘teaches children how to participate in and to create new culture for themselves’, as well as something that is ‘knowledge-based and teaches children about the best of what has been created and is currently being created’ (Gov.uk, 2013a: 6). The documents reflect the view that the government ‘should no more dictate a community’s culture than we should tell people what to create or how to create it’ (Gov.uk, 2016a: 13). However, it is also noted that ‘[k]nowledge of great works of art, great music, great literature and great plays, and of their creators, is an important part of every child’s education’ (Gov. uk, 2016a: 21). Indeed, many of the documents contain a cannon of British literary ‘greats’, including works by the Brontë sisters, Dickens, Conan Doyle and Darwin, as well as a particular emphasis on the work of Shakespeare. What emerges, then, is an institutional cannon of what counts as ‘high’ culture, which every young person should have knowledge of, and other forms that young people may choose to engage with based on their own preferences for creative expression.

This narrower, institutional definition of cultural education sits in tension with ambitions expressed in many of the policy documents to tackle the under-representation of particular groups of young people in cultural education activities, and generally an awareness of the barriers to young people accessing such opportunities. For example, it is noted that ‘[a]lthough there have been some notable improvements there remain gaps with black and minority ethnic and disabled people consistently under-represented in arts, heritage and museum engagement’ (Gov.uk, 2018a: 20). Stated ambitions to tackle such under-representation focus predominantly on including young people from diverse backgrounds into the narrower, institutionalised cannon of what constitutes culture, such as classical music or ballet, rather than redefining the cannon to reflect demographic diversity.

This focus on a sense of shared culture is mirrored in relation to shared history and heritage. Activities such as visits to museums, galleries, monuments and historic sites are intended to ‘celebrate our nation’s rich heritage’ (Gov.uk, 2018a: 8), with heritage understood in strongly national terms, as in the following: ‘All young people should know about our national icons and understand the key points in our history that have shaped our national character and culture. We will support specific programmes to commemorate the events and people that make our nation what it is today’ (Gov.uk, 2013a: 8). These ‘national icons’ include individuals such as Queen Victoria, Emily Davison and Florence Nightingale⁵ (Gov.uk, 2013b), and particular emphasis is also given to commemorating the First World War. In part, this can be explained by the timing of the data collection in relation to the centenary of the First World War but it also reflects the way in which history and heritage is conceived of within cultural education with a specific narrative of British history at its centre, where the aim is to ‘know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world’ (Gov.uk, 2013b: 1).

Where the study of other cultures and histories is considered, this is primarily as a means through which to cast the British experience in international perspective, rather than for other cultures to be studied in and of themselves. For example, in England, young people study Ancient Greece in school to examine its ‘influence on the western world’ and then study a non-European society ‘that provides contrasts with British history’ (Gov.uk, 2013b: 5). The local experience of national histories, such as Anglo-Saxon and Roman cultures, is also emphasised, alongside internationally recognised world heritage sites. For example, national parks are understood to be ‘the soul of Britain. They are the centre of our imagination. When people think of Britain, wherever they are, they imagine these landscapes’, which ‘tell the story of our nation’ (Gov.uk, 2016b: 2). Returning to the institutional definition of culture identified earlier, the focus on history and heritage expressed in the documents shows that this definition is also, first and foremost, national, with learning about specifically British histories and cultures being the main priority for cultural education.

It is apparent from these findings, then, that to conceptualise cultural education is also to conceptualise the relationship between culture and particular forms of collective identity. Through statements about ‘great’ works of art and about national history and heritage, the analysis suggests

the importance of a particular expression of British culture sitting at the heart of cultural education policy. However, this expression is distinctly different in the Welsh policy documents, where mentions of 'Britain' are far less frequent. Rather, the emphasis is specifically on Wales and Wales' place in the world as a 'unique country, with its own culture, language and government' (Welsh Government, 2008g: 5). The aim of cultural education is to 'celebrate and conserve Wales' outstanding heritage' (Welsh Government, 2008c: 11) through engagement in heritage and traditions specific to Welsh culture (Welsh Government, 2008a). Particular emphasis is placed on religion as a part of the national culture, 'allowing learners to appreciate the significance, value and impact of the rich Christian heritage and dynamic multi-faith composition of Wales past and present' (Welsh Government, 2008d: 8), contributing to a uniquely Welsh focus of policy ambitions for cultural education. While the institutional definition of culture embedded within cultural education is still understood in strongly national terms in the Welsh documents and, as such, the function of cultural education – to educate young people about *national* culture – remains the same, the expression of what counts as national is different. These multiple understandings of the national are a direct consequence of the multinational character of the UK.

A focus on shared national culture is also found in relation to an emphasis on 'fundamental British values', guidance in relation to which was introduced in 2014 and placed a duty on all schools and other providers of educational activities to promote these values as part of the wider 'Prevent' strategy that aims to stop the radicalisation that is seen to underpin the occurrence of terrorist attacks in the UK (Gov.uk, 2011). One of these values is 'mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (Gov.uk, 2014: 5), with schools required to ensure that young people 'be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance' (Gov.uk, 2014: 4). This emphasis is also found in the conceptualisation of citizenship education in England, where young people explore 'diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual understanding' (Gov.uk, 2013c: 3). This emphasis on tolerance and mutual understanding can be understood in light of the emergence of these agendas from securitised concerns about radicalisation following a rise in terrorism in major English cities, as well as from a longer-standing perception that as a result of multiculturalism, these cities were becoming increasingly divided and that this was driving social exclusion (see also Cattle, 2012).

Again, there is variation here with regards to devolved contexts. In the Welsh data, greater emphasis is evident on developing Welsh young people as global citizens. For example, it is '[t]hrough engaging, practical and integrated activities' that 'children can learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them and develop an understanding of their rich cultural and religious heritage in Wales' (Welsh Government, 2008d: 12). This engagement with diverse cultures is framed both in terms of the cultural diversity to be found in Wales (Welsh Government, 2008b, 2008d) and in terms of diverse cultures around the world (Welsh Government, 2008e, 2008h, Gov.uk, 2017b). Educational providers are framed as having a 'responsibility to help students understand that their fate is inextricably linked to the lives and decisions of others around the world' (Welsh Government, 2008i: 5). The aim is to develop 'in every learner a sense of personal and cultural identity that is receptive and respectful towards others', preparing them for 'life as global citizens' (Welsh Government, 2008f: 6). However, this commitment coexists alongside the aforementioned distinctly nationalist institutional definition of Welsh heritage and culture.

For Northern Ireland, mentions of a distinctly Northern Irish collective culture are sparser than in the Welsh or British cases, with the main emphasis placed on understanding cultural differences within communities in Northern Ireland. For example, this involves 'knowing about aspects of their cultural heritage, including the diversity of cultures that contribute to Northern Ireland', at the same time as 'discussing the causes of conflict in their community, and how they feel about it' (CCEA, 2007: 95). This distinct emphasis has arisen in Northern Ireland as a country that has recently experienced significant civil conflict and, here, intercultural learning has therefore taken on a specific meaning and purpose to build understanding between communities. It is notable that in policies targeted elsewhere in the UK, sensitivity to other 'difficult pasts', including in relation to colonial legacies and enduring marginalisation, is absent.

Conclusion

These findings highlight the ways in which policy regarding the development of cultural literacy has been conceptualised in the UK over the past decade. In this final section, we discuss these findings, arguing that the functioning of cultural literacy within UK policy can best be understood with reference to a 'neoliberal communitarian' model of governance.

Neoliberal communitarianism is a model of governance which highlights that neoliberalism and communitarianism do not always exist in isolation from one another. Rather, it combines these as two seemingly contradictory threads within the same model: the individualising logics of neoliberalism, which emphasise responsibility and self-regulation (cf Clarke, 2004); alongside the collective focus of communitarianism on shared culture and values (cf Van Leeuwen, 2015). These threads exist in a 'double helix' (Schinkel and Van Houdt, 2010) through which they are deployed simultaneously to responsibilise citizens in order to reduce the perceived burden they present to the state, and to police the nationalist parameters of inclusion and exclusion in diverse contexts (Schinkel and Van Houdt; 2010; Van Houdt et al, 2011; Van Houdt and Schinkel, 2013). The focus of existing research into neoliberal communitarianism has focused, for the most part, on the integration of foreign-born future citizens through citizenship tests and other measures; however, the findings of this research suggest that this model is also shaping the way in which the cultural literacy of young UK-born people as future citizens is imagined in UK policy.

The neoliberal strand of the double helix is evident in the intervention of a neoliberal economic logic into learning about culture and belonging, and this is seen in the lengths to which the policies go in order to demonstrate the 'added value' that cultural education brings to the economy and society. This is explained in direct terms, with reference to how educational programmes can equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to fill gaps in labour markets in creative industries, and in indirect terms, for example, with reference to boosting the health and well-being of young people and thus reducing public health-care costs, as well as in articulating a vision of culture as an individual pursuit.

It is through these mechanisms that the policies express an aim for cultural literacy to construct 'neoliberal subjects', being responsible for their own choices and capable of self-regulation to become productive contributors to the national economy with little dependence on the state. Within this responsibilising process, the risks associated with growing uncertainty are individualised and removed from state responsibility (Clarke, 2004; Clarke and Newman, 2012; Hammett, 2014). This focus on neoliberal governmentality has its roots in longer-standing trends associated with New Public Management that date back to the late 1970s, which seek to re-conceptualise the role of government as one of steering policy rather than directly managing its implementation. However, it also reflects more recent attempts to

1 reduce the size of the state in response to financial constraints imposed
2 on the public sector in the wake of the post-2008 recession (Skelcher
3 et al, 2013).

4 In addition to this focus on neoliberal governmentality, the findings
5 also demonstrate that UK policy conceives of learning about culture and
6 belonging as related to specifically national expressions of culture, and
7 it is through this framing that a communitarian form of governance is
8 also evident from the findings. While policy discusses local, sub-national
9 cultures to a more limited extent, the primary thrust of the focus is
10 on the national culture, with scant mention of cultures as they exist
11 internationally or globally. The role of cultural literacy programmes,
12 then, is taken to be to instil in young people a strong awareness and
13 understanding of national culture as it relates to collective, national
14 identity – be that British, Northern Irish, Welsh or Scottish.

15 This nationalist conceptualisation of cultural literacy can be
16 understood in light of British policy trends over the course of the
17 early 21st century that have emphasised the need to strengthen national
18 identity as a source of binding sentiment in diverse, multicultural
19 communities. This is embodied in the language of ‘British values’ that
20 began to gain political salience in the early 2000s as a result of the
21 perceived need to strengthen the integration of diverse communities in
22 light of the threat of home-grown terrorism and civil disorder (Crick,
23 1998; Cante, 2012; Ragazzi, 2017), and that was then later articulated
24 as ‘muscular liberalism’, positing that a stronger sense of national
25 identity was needed to prevent communities from becoming isolated
26 from society and thus – it is claimed – more vulnerable to terrorist
27 radicalisation (Basham and Vaughan-Williams, 2013). Commentators
28 have interpreted this as a ‘backlash’ against the perceived failure of
29 multiculturalism to provide a focus of belonging in diverse societies
30 (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). In the examined period, there has
31 been a marked policy shift away from multiculturalism and towards
32 the strengthening of national belonging through a focus on so-called
33 ‘fundamental British values’. It is against this bedrock that we see
34 ‘neoliberal communitarian’ approaches to cultural learning emerge.

35 References to cultural practices beyond the nation are primarily
36 treated as ‘other’ cultures to be compared against ‘our’ culture. While, on
37 the one hand, this could be understood as a kind of ‘global orientation’
38 (Parkeh, 2003) within cultural literacy programmes, whereby young
39 people are encouraged to explore and examine international cultures
40 while remaining grounded in their own national culture, on the other
41 hand, it can also be understood with regard to the ways in which

a sense of exceptionalism has long pervaded British identity. Here, Britain is imagined as advancing liberty and justice both at home and internationally (Atkins, 2015), and this notion of British exceptionalism appears central to how the international is treated in the policy documents, with a particular focus on advancing soft power to promote core liberal values.

In conclusion, these dual strands of neoliberalism and national communitarianism found in the data suggest that cultural literacy policies promote a particular vision of good citizenship through a neoliberal communitarian model of governance. The policies function to construct the parameters of good citizenship by culturally defining the national community to which good citizens subscribe, while, at the same time, placing expectations of self-responsibility and self-regulation on these citizens in a context of neoliberalisation. This analysis mirrors closely the character of integration policies aimed at foreign-born people applying for citizenship, and, in turn, suggests the relevance of the neoliberal communitarian model to understanding the policing of belonging within as well as beyond the state.

Notes

- ¹ In this article, we use ‘neoliberalism’ to refer to policies that emphasise the deregulation of the economy, the freedom and self-dependence of the individual, and the retrenchment of the state from the lives of individuals and communities (cf Hall, 2011).
- ² The decision to analyse documents published after 1 January 2007 was made on the basis of criteria set by the wider research project in which this study was based. The date was chosen in order to capture the period within which all countries studied within the context of the project had been members of the EU.
- ³ For the purposes of the review, policy was defined as an authoritative statement of a proposed course, principle or codification of government action, which typically states matters of principle and focuses on action (stating what is to be done and by whom).
- ⁴ Had we opted for a wider time period to capture search results, we may have considered policy documents associated with a review of cultural policies undertaken in Scotland in the early years of the 21st century (see, for example, Scottish Executive, 2003). However, as noted, the parameters of the search were framed in relation to wider considerations in the research project of which this analysis formed one part; as such, it was not possible to include these earlier documents.
- ⁵ It is notable that all of the icons listed here are women. While not the focus of this chapter, this is distinctly different to how history has been constructed

in other policy documents, for example, in the Life in the UK citizenship test, where British history is presented as male-dominated (cf Brooks, 2013).

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