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The search for a moral compass and a new social contract in the context of citizenship education

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Some observers regard South Africa as one of the most violent, lawless and morally depraved societies in the world. Several other countries around the world can be shown to be similarly afflicted. In South Africa's case, this condition might be because of political transformation, particularly the lingering effects of the struggle against past injustices (apartheid, racism) inflicted on sections of the population. The social instability has been exacerbated by an influx of migrants and a resultant increase in diversity. One way of attempting to assuage this situation is to harness the school subject known as 'citizenship education' for guiding the upcoming generations into committing to a new moral compass, that is, awareness or consciousness with a conscience, and to an accompanying new social contract. Finding a rationale for such a moral compass and social contract that all the citizens of South Africa and of other similarly stricken countries would be prepared to commit to is a daunting task because people tend to be subjective in reflecting about their personal and group views, particularly about their religious beliefs and convictions. Closer examination reveals, however, that despite all the diversity, differences and conflict prevalent in societies, people are potentially able to share a set of basic values that arguably could form the core of the sought-for moral compass. Citizenship education could be functional in bringing home to the next generation the notion of henceforth living in accordance with the precepts of such a moral compass and social contract.

Keywords: Citizenship education; Morality; Moral compass; Social contract; Religion.

Introduction

Much has been written in the recent past regarding a range of atrocities perpetrated on individuals and communities in many parts of the world because of the social circumstances that have developed since the end of the Second World War. Although a tendency seems to have emerged recently for countries to be more protective of their national borders (Trump, Brexit), most national borders have become permeable (Dill 2012:541). This situation has created problems for countries having to accommodate large numbers of migrants from areas afflicted by violence, poverty and other adverse social conditions (the *damnés de la terre* [Ludlum 2002:192]). Several European countries currently have to cope with relatively large numbers of migrants from the Middle East because of conflicts in that part of the world; other European countries are contending with an influx of migrants from their former colonies. (The Netherlands, for example, has to accommodate Indonesians, Surinamese people and North Africans, some of them with strong Islam faith connections [Veugelers 2011:477].) It is against this background that, in his address to the European Parliament on 14 November 2018 (Strasbourg), South African President Ramaphosa cautioned Europeans against right-wing tendencies, protectionism, foreigner hate and xenophobia.

South Africa is also currently struggling to accommodate large numbers of migrants, particularly from the north. The same applies for Uganda that, in November 2018, experienced an influx of illegal immigrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Literature abounds with references to other countries having to cope with problems associated with diversity: South Korea, Honduras, Congo, Sudan, the Philippines, Senegal, countries accommodating Kurds, Eastern Europe, Myanmar, Rwanda, Guatemala, El Salvador and others (cf., for instance, Kim & So 2018; Koonce 2018; Kopp & Mandl 2018; Marshall 2018; Nguyen 2018; Ngwokabuenui 2015). In most cases, the migrants attempted to escape from dire circumstances. Today, the number of people displaced by conflict is at an all-time high, and migration because of conflict, climate change and economic strains is set to increase. The number of international migrants is expected to grow to around 400 million people by 2050. In a global world, all forms of risks will cross national borders and become global problems requiring global solutions (International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity 2016:4). In South Africa, as will be discussed below, the problems associated with the presence of increasing numbers of foreigners come on top of already existing

Note: HTS 75th Anniversary Maake Masango Dedication.

conflict, tension and violence because of the social and political change that took place in 1994 with the advent of full democracy, some of these phenomena as after-effects of the country's apartheid past. Radical change often impacts on the lives of citizens in terms of their individuality, rights, livelihood, community formation, human relations and interactions, as Swamy, Paluri and Koshy (2017:3) observed.

These new conditions have brought about a plethora of moral problems for the citizens of countries such as South Africa.

Problem statement

Both the citizens of the host countries and the migrants, and also the citizens of countries that have undergone radical social and political change, seem to experience all kinds of pressures because of the unfamiliar circumstances that have been forced upon them. In terms of the *social space and ethical/ moral behaviour or function theory*, the theory that functions throughout this article as analytical instrument (space constraints do not allow a detailed discussion of the theory; cf. Van der Walt 2017:footnote 5), the social space of the indigenous population(s) and the migrants as well as of populations that have undergone radical social and political change has been affected by the increase in diversity and by a variety of tensions. Although most populations in any case display historic ethnic, linguistic and cultural variety, the diversity has increased because of the influx of migrants, people with 'foreign' ethnicities, languages, religions, personal acumen and material cultures. Many feel uneasy about the situation: they perceive their economic security to be slipping away; their social status and privileges to be eroding; and their cultural identities to be under threat from 'somebody who does not look like them or sound like them or pray as they do' (Obama 2018). As Marshall (2018:44) observed, the challenges are of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature, complex and nuanced with multiple dimensions.

In several cases, indigenous populations have been lashing out against the threat perceived to be posed to their communities by the migrants. Reactions such as racism, the perpetuation of social inequalities, alienation, segregation, micro-aggression, the sending of denigrating messages, xenophobia, violence, murder, stigmatising, discrimination, stereotyping and labelling, marginalisation, exclusion, a deep divide between 'us' and 'them', and seeing the 'other' as a threat have been recorded (cf. Chang, Pak & Sleeter 2018:3; Kim & So 2018:103, 109; Koonce 2018:102). Banks (2008:132–133) adds to this list the plight of stateless people, of refugees and of people fleeing over porous boundaries, and the increased racial, ethnic and religious tension and conflict, and also the 'differential exclusion' experienced by people not born in the country.

As much of the focus in this research was on South Africa, it is necessary to attend briefly to its history of racism and the current problem of economic inequality, the most pressing questions of social tension in the country at this point in time. The sought-for moral compass should be amenable to also addressing these issues. The arrival of European settlers in the 17th century inaugurated a social system that later became known as 'apartheid' or separate development. This system was legalised after the take-over of government by the National Party in 1948 and remained in force until the white-dominated government had to relinquish power to the black majority in 1994. The apartheid system as well as the struggle against the injustices of the system resulted in various forms of violence and social disobedience, much of which still lives on in daily life. Many of the lines of social fracture caused by the apartheid system still persist today, and steps have to be taken to change them into more socially just arrangements. More than two decades after the advent of full democracy in 1994, South Africa remains 'profoundly unequal' (Christie 2016:434–435).

Despite shifts in apartheid's race and class configuration because of the programme of black economic empowerment, the burden of poverty and poor education is still shouldered disproportionally by black people. According to Christie (2016:435), the policies of everyday life today follow the rhythms of 'a fundamentally unequal neoliberal political economy'. The social inequality can be most starkly observed in the education sector where a de facto two-tier education system has developed: a smaller, better performing system accommodating the wealthiest 20% – 25% of the population and a larger system that caters to the poorest 75% – 80% of the population, the performance of which Spaull (2013:6) describes as 'abysmal'.

Those having succeeded in benefiting from the black economic empowerment programme have in many cases grasped the political power in the country, and this has led to another form of inequality, namely between the 'elements of the elite (who) have benefitted handsomely' and the ordinary citizens (Plaut & Holden 2012:349–350). These inequalities, together with weak economic growth since 2008, have placed pressure on ordinary households, which in some cases have found expression in social unrest. In 2016, South Africa witnessed as many as 11 protests per day, most of them against inadequate service delivery by the government (Solomon 2016:7). University students also have expressed their dissatisfaction with the current 'illegitimate systems of authority and exploitation' (Naidoo 2009:154). The same applies for the situation in the schools. The Minister of Education, Angie Motshega, recently observed: 'There is a correlation between high levels of criminality in the community which is transported into schools. Guns come from communities; the knifing and anger come from communities' (Daniel 2018).

It is clear that the social spaces of both indigenous populations and migrants have been detrimentally affected by the influx of the latter, and that the lingering effects of social change are having a detrimental effect on the lives of South Africans. Something has to be done to bring about a new 'normality', a situation in which populations can settle into a new modus vivendi enabling them to go on with their lives in peace.

In other words, a moral compass and a new social contract should be developed that could help modern, increasingly diversified populations and populations having to cope with social change to deal with the challenges.

Reference to a 'moral compass' brings to the fore the second dimension of the *social space and ethical/moral behaviour or function theory* (Van der Walt 2017: footnote 5), namely the moral aspect. As the social spaces of many indigenous communities (populations of countries) have been thrown into turmoil and anomie by social conflict as a result of past injustices, the influx of large numbers of migrants, a new approach to moral behaviour, a new moral compass, should be developed in order to regain social equilibrium. The new sought-for moral compass:

> [*I*]nvolves a reflective sharpening of our own moral awareness – a conscious examination of the values and principles by which we choose to live, how these have influenced the decisions we have taken, and (more importantly) the part that moral choice plays in shaping our own future and that of the world around us. (Thompson 2018:ix, 2)

The question addressed in the research reported in this article was: can a moral compass (a supreme moral criterion [Kenny 2008:222] or a Rawlsian 'overlapping consensus') be developed and implemented that could, in the context of citizenship education in schools, contribute to bringing about a new modus vivendi in increasingly diverse and socially transforming communities? This is an important question in the world of the 21st century. In his Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture, Obama (2018) lamented: 'Too often, decisions are made without notions of human solidarity or a ground-level understanding of the consequences that will be felt by a particular people, in particular communities'. This sentiment was echoed by Judge Dikgang Moseneke, retiring Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, when he said in his farewell speech on 04 December 2018 that South Africa needed 'a common code of ethics' (as reported on South African radio, 05 December 2018).

The core argument of this article

The following train of thought unfolds in this article. The point of departure is that the social space of indigenous populations and of populations undergoing social and political change has been further affected by the influx of migrants in the sense that it has resulted in increasing already existing diversity (multi-culturalism and multi-religionism) and social tensions. These circumstances have intensified the call for a new approach to morality as a prerequisite for bringing about a new modus vivendi.

The second argument is that, according to the constructivist-interpretivist approach, the individuals involved in the unfortunate circumstances sketched above are so *subjectively* involved in their own personal social spaces, in their unique personal circumstances, that they are in principle incapable of developing a consensual moral compass that could guide them through the maze of their new circumstances. It will

then be argued that in, theory, such a moral compass could be developed on the basis of the major religions and/or of policy documents, such as declarations of human rights and national constitutions. It will finally be argued that the furthering of a widely accepted moral compass and concomitant social contract should ideally occur in schools, particularly in the context of citizenship education, that is, in the subject that currently in South Africa is charged with the task of forming, guiding, leading and equipping the learners (students) as future citizens of the country (the region and even the world) to live peacefully with other members of society, including the members of migrant communities. As members of national, international and transnational communities, modern citizens need to develop a moral sense of where they wish to go, of how to live peacefully with others and how to commit to these ideals. The conclusion of the article revolves on the question of whether such a new moral compass and social contract can indeed be developed.

Considerations with regard to the development of a moral compass

As indicated with reference to Thompson (see above), the moral compass firstly entails the awakening of a stronger moral awareness – the sharpening of the values and principles according to which people (decide to) live. The values and principles that people live by usually are determined by, and flow from their life view and world view, and in the final instance, from their religious commitment and convictions. According to Van der Walt (1999:51), a person's faith commitment exerts a directive role in his or her life and behaviour, and his or her life view forms a channel or link between the person's faith and/or beliefs and daily existence. Space constraints do not allow an exhaustive discussion of how the different religions (both mainstream and peripheral) determine the respective world views that flow from them and hence determine the values and principles that form the substance of a person's morality. What matters most in situations where one has to deal with diversity, injustice and social inequality is that a person should be secure in his or her own identity, firm in their own faith as a prerequisite for respectfully connecting with the 'different other' (Olthuis 2012:2, 7).

The question then becomes: which ethical approach would be the most appropriate to follow and apply in the circumstances outlined in the Introduction and Problem Statement above? An entire dissertation would be required to argue in favour of or against any of the following approaches to this ethical dilemma: should one assume an approach characterised by moral relativism or absolutism, by determinism, laissez faire, compromise or pragmatics, or should one follow the tenets of a major religion, the no-harm approach, a tolerant approach, a utilitarian or an entitlement approach, Kant's categorical imperative approach, Rousseau's sublime maxim/golden rule? Each of these approaches has much that counts in its favour and also much that could be raised against it. For purposes of the research reported in this article, it was decided to follow the route of

simply asking: what does it entail for a person to behave in such a manner that he or she will not only feel comfortable and 'at home', safe and justly treated in his or her community (country, nation, state) but will also be able to contribute to the good of all other members of that community, to a peaceful modus vivendi among people who differ widely in many respects, in brief, to the well-being of society? What does it mean and what does it take for an individual to be 'a good person' contributing constructively and meaningfully to the well-being of a good and peaceful society? Each person should discover answers to these questions for himself or herself in the context of their religious commitment. To illustrate, Tripp (2010:36) answered these questions for himself by referring to Galatians 5:14: 'The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself" … It is only when I love God above all else that I will ever love my neighbours as myself' (for a similar argument from a Muslim perspective, see Davids 2018:684).

The purpose of the research reported in this article was not to develop an answer to all the questions above from a single religious, life-conceptual, ethical or moral point of view or vantage point, but to discover whether a moral compass and a concomitant social contract could be developed that people of widely divergent religious, life-conceptual and ethical backgrounds could accept and associate with. To find such a moral compass at this particular juncture in the history of South Africa and other countries similarly afflicted with social maladies is of the greatest importance in order to ensure social peace and stability. This is particularly important in a secular context, in other words, a social-political dispensation in which there is a de facto divide between the public sector (the state, public schools) and religion (as practised in private homes and in religious institutions).

Why individuals might find it difficult to develop the sought-for moral compass in and for an increasingly diverse community

The claim encapsulated in the heading above can be defended on the basis of constructivism–interpretivism, in other words, as discussed, the fact that there are several approaches to the so-called ethical dilemma.

People hold subjective views of their lives and of the world based on their respective cognitions of their surroundings. There is a real world that we experience but meaning is imposed on the world by us rather than existing objectively and independently from us. There are therefore many ways to structure the world, and there are many meanings or perspectives regarding any event or concept (Duffy & Jonassen 1992:3).

Constructivist-interpretive theory suggests that people's perceptions of reality are never expressions of an 'objective' world, but are rather subjective constructions of personal experiences in and of the world and its phenomena. Knowledge is always epistemically mediated through interpreted experience; in this process, observations are selected and interpreted (Van Huyssteen 2006:16). Interpretivism is based on assumptions of nominalism, rationalism and voluntarism (Packard 2017:536). In other words, the names given to experiences on the grounds of authenticity, plausibility and criticality are specifically constructed and more important than a matter of empirical fact (Chapman 2017:3–4). In this process, it tends to overlook the interests of the 'other'.

Constructivism–interpretivism furthermore highlights human intentionality as a key determinant of behaviour (Packard 2017:536). According to interpretivists-constructivists, people see the world through a lens of intentionality rather than causality, in terms of 'becoming' rather than of 'being', of relationships and interactions rather than as static or deterministic social entities or phenomena (Packard 2017:537); they tend to argue that reality is constantly being reconstructed in interactions with others by assigning an individual meaning to an event or an experience. The individualism and even self-centredness that might follow from this approach could lead people to use their own interpretations in attempting to understand reality and other humans, as well as the social, historical, religious and moral aspects of their lives.

Personal perceptions of reality make it difficult for individual members of a community to develop a commonly accepted and acceptable moral compass: each person expects others to act in a specific way in accordance with the image that they have created of and for them. Individuals tend to develop subjective meanings based on their experience towards certain objects or things (Chapman 2017:4), such as about what would count as morally acceptable or wrong. They tend to develop varied, personal, subjective meanings and to look into complexity of meanings rather than narrowing meaning into a few ideas, consensus or a generalisation (Haddadi et al. 2017:1082). Different lenses analyse the world in different ways – not simply as it is but also as it might be (Chapman 2017:4).

Another obstacle in the way of an individual creating a moral compass for all to commit to is the fact that perceptions of the world and of others and their behaviour take place on different levels of sophistication and complexity (Leutwyler, Petrovic & Mantel 2012:111–112). This situation can be exacerbated by an influx of large numbers of 'foreigners' into a community, particularly if every individual or group is hyper-sensitive about their own socio-political context (Dill 2012:541, 543, 546; Gladwell 2000:146).

For a new community composed of indigenous people (among others, struggling with past injustices) and migrants to make a new modus vivendi come into existence, all those involved have to transcend their limitations as individuals and even as individual communities, including the tendency of each individual and community to follow their own

conscience as their lodestar. According to a constructivist-interpretivist perspective, the achievement of such consensus seems unlikely. A society that has no single religious, cultural, social or political base tends to take recourse in ethical subjectivism (Thompson 2018:45).

The chances of developing a common moral compass based on the tenets of mainstream religions are only marginally better

The next question to be asked is whether a community will be able to develop a new moral compass on the basis of one or more of the mainstream religions (McKay & Whitehouse 2015:450). There are grounds for expressing doubt about this. *Revision World Networks* (2018) and Thompson (2018:223) demonstrated that there are deep divides between religious people who hold autonomous, heteronomous or theonomous views of morality. Scheepers and Van der Slik (1998:678) refer to another moral divide, namely between liberals and religious conservatives. Liberals believe that morality originates beyond the self, whereas conservatives believe that morality is divinely inspired; it is derived from a universal source, usually God himself. McKay and Whitehouse (2015:450) in turn underscore the divide between orthodoxy (conformity of belief) and orthopraxy (conformity of praxis). Thompson (2018:34ff.) enumerates a number of other perspectives or theories that people tend to use as vantage points when reflecting on morality: descriptivism, prescriptivism (normativity), axiology (a value perspective), meta-ethicalism (an analytic approach), moral realism, cognitivism, emotivism, expressivism, naturalism and metaphysics. Given all these approaches to morality and 'the good', chances are slim that a convergent view (consensus) about morality and moral behaviour will emerge.

Religious experience provides a framework of which moral tenets and behaviour are parts. This, in itself, can be an obstacle in attempting to develop a moral compass that all would be willing to commit to. In the modern multi-faith world, people find themselves exposed to religious diversity and hence confronted with the truth claims of many different religions (Barnes 2018:283). In line with what has been said above about constructivism-interpretivism, the moral codes associated with the different religions or faiths can be seen as interpretive accounts of theophany and religious experience. In some cases, believers regard moral behaviour as part of the religious person's response to their religious experience and their interpretation of, for instance, the Golden Rule. In Buddhism, basing its position on the Upanishads, moral behaviour is characterised by following the Noble Eightfold Path and the Five Precepts in order to maintain a good Karma. In Christianity, believers follow the biblical precept of loving God and the neighbour, as formulated in the Great Commandment (Matthew 7:2; Luke 6:31). The Islamic view of morality is based on the Koran and the Hadith. By reaching out to others, believers will develop an inner moral quality that the Koran refers to as 'the fear of God'. Jewish morality,

based on the Torah and Talmud, is based on the covenant mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:4; all behaviour should attest to the believer's love of God. Hindu morality, based on the Upanishads, focuses on fulfilling duties, including moral obligations, for the sake of God because doing so will lead to Moksha (a good rebirth). Sikh morality, following the hymns of the Gurus, is aimed at serving a personal God. It teaches union with him through meditation and surrender to his will (cf. McDowell & Brown 2009).

McKay and Whitehouse (2015) question a simplistic one-on-one relationship between religion and morality, as if they were two rigid monoliths. Under McKay and Whitehouse's (2015):

> … pluralistic approach which fractionates … religion and morality …, the relationship between religion and morality expands into a matrix of separate relationships between fractionated elements. Thus, some aspects of 'religion' may promote some aspects of 'morality', just as others serve to suppress or obstruct the same, or different, aspects. (p. 465)

Their view ties in with that of Rawls, as discussed in Tilson (2018:1068), namely that in pluralist, liberal democracies, people tend to be freer to speak their mind in accordance with their conscience. In such democracies, the societies are less homogenous, and a wider range of religious and non-religious life modes are available options for people to avail of as their conscience dictates.

It is clear from the above that, based on the ultimate doctrines and the metaphysical beliefs as well as the cultural variability (McKay & Whitehouse 2015:450) of the respective religions, it is not very likely that a common moral foundation or common moral compass will emerge from diverse religious commitments.

According to Donovan (1986:368–369), some researchers argue that to assume that once differing religious beliefs are downplayed a common moral code will emerge is to ignore the fact that similar rules and precepts may be adopted as means to quite different ends. The nature of those ends will determine the sense in which the precepts are understood and applied by those who follow them. Two people engaged in the same act may in fact not be involved in the same act in a moral sense. Common maxims as may be found in various religions (tell the truth, do not kill, respect the property of others, feed the starving) do not necessarily reveal any underlying commonality if one penetrated right down to the ultimate principles of the respective belief systems. The acts may reflect only a coincidental and superficial similarity of means to quite different ends.

Nevertheless, it seems possible to derive a modicum of common moral ground from their respective views of how people should behave towards others. Most religions, as indicated above, have views about showing mercy to people in need, to assist, to aid and comfort them and to be hospitable and forgiving. The discovery of a number of such shared moral precepts (for instance, versions of the Golden Rule)

among different religions seems to offer *prima facie* evidence for moral common ground as a reality (Donovan 1986:368).

People holding essentially different views about the 'way the world is' do commonly, nowadays, in multicultural societies find themselves acting side-by-side in situations of common concern (Donovan 1986:37). It seems unlikely, however, that the members of a particular community (such as all the citizens of a particular country), both in their individual and in their communal or societal capacity, will reach complete consensus regarding either the format or the contents of a moral compass based on religious or life-conceptual consensus.

The chances of developing a common moral compass based on national and international consensus documents seem to be best

The solution to the problem of not being able to find complete consensus, common moral ground and hence a generally acceptable moral compass, might seem to lie in the formulation of universal declarations *without reference* to ultimate personal and group views or to the precepts of religions or belief systems. This was the route followed at the San Francisco meeting that drafted the *United Nations Charter* in 1945 and later the *Geneva Convention*. The purpose of the UN meeting regarding the former was to promote international peace and preventing conflict by resorting to an acknowledgement of the rights of people (Thompson 2018:164). People wished to ensure that never again would anyone be unjustly denied life, freedom, food, shelter and nationality. International pressure was mounting to develop a set of standards 'against which nations could be held accountable for the treatment of those living within their borders'. In 1948, the members of the United Nations adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The preamble of this Declaration asserts that: 'Recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' (Nieuwenhuis 2007:30).

In a sense, this *Declaration* may be viewed as 'a global affirmation of moral common ground', according to Donovan (1986:372), because 'it reflects ethical norms defined by common consent amongst nations whose members include the widest possible range of religious affiliations'. Respect for human rights and the rule of law, enumerated in the *Declaration* of the United Nations, has 'become the guiding norm for the majority of nations, even where the reality falls far short of the ideal' (Obama 2018). In addition to its later acceptance of the *International Bill of Human Rights*, the United Nations has adopted more than 20 principal treaties further elaborating human rights. By the end of 1995, most of the countries in the world were members of the United Nations, and these principles were incorporated in the constitutions of around 185 of them. In South Africa, for instance, the Constitution stipulates in subsection 39(1) that conventions such as the United Nations' *Declarations* and treaties *must* be considered (Oosthuizen 2011:28). Other organisations followed this pattern. African states formulated their own *Charter of Human and People's Rights* (1981); Muslim states created the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (1990) (Nieuwenhuis 2007:30–31).

In its *Declaration*, the General Assembly of the United Nations did not refer to 'common moral ground' but rather to 'a common standard for all peoples and all nations' consisting of a number of rights and fundamental freedoms. The fact that European, African and Muslim states found it necessary to formulate their own charters or declarations is proof that even an appeal to 'a common standard for all peoples and all nations' cannot ensure complete consensus about what should be regarded as morally justifiable. Strong arguments could be raised also against the supposed universality of United Nations documents; these documents have mostly been compiled by a ruling elite among the nations, in many cases dominated by North-Atlantic states.

The sought-after moral compass and social contract in the context of citizenship education

Despite the doubts so far raised about the possibility of ever successfully developing and applying a new moral compass in and for society based on total consensus, in and for education in general, and in and for citizenship education in particular, many observers agree that efforts should be made to this effect. The point of departure here is that the purpose of education for democratic citizenship should be to form the *gebildeter Mensch*, the educated human being, that is, a person equipped with the ability to analyse, discriminate and reflect on the self and on the society of which they are members and into which they have been educated (guided, led, formed and equipped) to be members (Byram 2010:319). 'Educatedness' has a moral dimension, as Marshall (2018) explains:

> Future leaders and scholars need heightened awareness of living within dynamic and plural societies and understanding issues of social change cum development … leaders can be powerful advocates for social justice, including education for all, at global, national and community levels. Humankind in a global age must balance and reconcile two impulses: the quest of distinctive identity and the search for global coherence … an understanding that diversity is a gift … and that embracing diversity is a way to learn and grow. (pp. 31, 44)

What is required, she continues, is the ability to see others as they see themselves. In this process, we resort to our conscience (our personal moral compass), implying that we possess some innate knowledge of what is good or what we should do in the particular circumstances. The fact that conscience is more developed in some people than in others implies that even if conscience is a 'natural or innate skill or potential', it has to be formed through education and upbringing (Thompson 2018:117, 119).

Authors such as Dill (2012:541) insist that schools should begin preparing people morally for the challenges of the new global society in which all boundaries appear to have faded away. Citizenship education should be reframed so that it can be used for bringing home to the upcoming generations the consciousness and competences needed to prosper in a more tolerant, just and peaceful world. The citizenship education that he envisages, like all pedagogical ideals, should embody a vision of the good (2013: Introduction). It should have a fundamental moral purpose, namely of developing and instilling in the upcoming generations a moral compass that they can follow throughout their lives. Although doubting whether Westerners, typically inclined towards an individualistic neo-liberal world view, would be capable of participating in this effort, Dill (2012:542–543) offers the contours of a citizenship education in schools that would not only embrace a new moral compass for a more diversified society but also bring it home to students. The citizenship education that he envisages is characterised by awareness of 'the whole world' and of the larger consequences of citizens' actions. This awareness of the 'world as a whole' will ideally lead to an understanding of all as a single people, as a common humanity, with obligations to one another – in other words, a consciousness with a conscience. As future citizens of their nation, students will learn to see themselves as active participants, part of the human race, of the world, all one group, people with a global consciousness and a moral conscience. Dill is aware of the fact that his position creates lofty moral expectations: an awareness of 'the other' perspective, a single humanity as the primary level of community, and a moral conscience (the moral compass) that would guide people in their efforts to act for the good of the world (all of humanity).

In a sense, Dill's view of what citizenship education could achieve in terms of developing and employing a new moral compass in the education of the upcoming generations jibes with Banks' (2008:129) notion of transformative citizenship education and Iyer's (2017:4) notion of transformational educational ideals. In Banks' view, this approach will help students to acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to function effectively within their own cultural community, their nation-state and region, and also in the global community. A transformative citizenship education will help the students to interact and to deliberate with their peers from diverse racial and ethnic groups. According to Iyer, transformational education aims at giving all citizens a fair chance in their own country as well as in an increasingly globalised world. While Banks and Iyer's views do not seem to place the same emphasis on the moral dimension of citizenship education as Dill's, they have an unmistakeable moral base: the purpose of transformational education is to help students to understand their multiple and complex identities, the ways their lives are influenced by globalisation and what their roles *should be* in a globalised world, and how to take action to create a just and democratic community and society (Banks 2008:135), and they should aim at giving all citizens *a fair chance* in their own country and in the world. As Dill (2013:Introduction) has argued, educators need to

operate with a more capacious understanding of citizenship and not with narrow political definitions.

A moral compass can in principle be developed as part of a new social contract

Marshall (2018:45, following the lead of Terence McLaughlin) and others insists that, in principle, a moral compass could be discovered or developed for the purpose of finding a balance in diversity and be employed as the guiding norm for good behaviour, also in teaching and learning (schooling), and in particular as a fundamental proposition in citizenship education.

The following arguments support this contention.

Firstly, Shakespeare might have had a point when he makes Lady Macbeth say to her husband that 'the milk of human kindness' prevents him from acting immorally. (Some literary critics opine that her use of the word 'milk' implies him to be childish or childlike and hence unable to take the necessary steps to usurp the royal power.) Despite the 'ethical subjectivity' that seems to prevail in a society that does not possess a common religious, social, political or cultural base, and where people differ from one another so greatly that it is unlikely that they would share the same values, all people have in the deepest of their being an understanding of what it means to act and behave in morally justifiable ways (Rawls 2008:539). Thompson (2018:3) likewise states that no rational being can escape moral responsibility, for refusing to consider whether something is right or wrong is itself a moral choice. When it comes to moral issues, he argues (Thompson 2018:45–46), people try to persuade others about how they should behave. They argue as though there were some objective truth about which different people, in principle, agree. If right and wrong depended only on personal and individual tastes, there seems little point in discussing moral issues at all, for one could never reach a conclusion or get beyond simply comparing preferences. It is only when people get carried away on the waves of religious or other forms of extremism and fanaticism (Van der Walt 2018:34–40) that they tend to lose touch with what would be regarded as good for humankind and for the world (cf. the examples of anti-social behaviour mentioned by Kirkham and Durham [2014:61]). Thompson's view chimes with the doctrine of common grace, one of the pillars of Kuyperian theology. If a modicum of consensus could not be reached among people who hold different moral views and values, no Rawlsian reflective moral equilibrium can be achieved, and society would fall into anarchy (Thompson 2018:53, 55, 103). A social contract (Rawls 2008:535) combined with a moral compass, therefore, not only seems viable among very diverse people but is also indispensable in and for a peaceful society. Order, as Biesta (2011:151) correctly affirms, remains important for the everyday conduct of our lives.

Secondly, although religion and religious beliefs tend to lead to diverse views and approaches to ethics and morality, there

is an element in all religions that points to a deep-seated understanding of what would count as morally justifiable and acceptable behaviour. According to Kirkham and Durham (2014:62), 'one need not look far for examples of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and others making extraordinary sacrifices for the good of humanity' (cf., for instance, Davids 2018). Despite the differences between religions, and despite the disparities that might exist between religious convictions and behaviour on the ground, there seems to be sufficient grounds for appealing to faith-based morality as a general foundation for socially and morally acceptable behaviour. Also in this respect, the emergence of a moral compass seems viable.

Thirdly, universally endorsed documents such as the United Nations' *Declaration*, while not appealing to norms rooted in religious conviction, embody norms based on common consent, and as such form the basis for acceptable moral behaviour among nations and their citizens. Kirkham and Durham (2014) support this view by referring to the:

> [*E*]mergence of a range of configurations of law and religion that implement, with varying degrees of effectiveness, the widely-accepted norms of freedom of religion or belief embodied in international human rights documents and in constitutions worldwide. (p. 63)

These international agreements contribute to the social contract and the moral compass that we strive for. They embody the basic human rights that should be allowed for every human being, irrespective of the sort of political, social or religious community in which he or she lives (Thompson 2018:180).

In sum then, a moral compass containing the following elements seems to emerge from the line of argumentation followed so far. The deepest core of the compass would consist of an appeal to individuals' innate understanding of what is right and what is wrong, good and bad, and what would constitute justifiable behaviour. It would also contain an appeal to individuals' innate sense of responsibility to others, to their empathy and moral imagination. The next element or component of the moral compass would be the deep-seated and innate understanding in all religions about what would be morally acceptable behaviour. This constitutes an appeal to common faith-based morality. The final or outer element of the moral compass would be an appeal to the international understanding about what is regarded as acceptable moral behaviour among the nations of the world and their citizens. This layer would ideally be rooted in a deep-seated understanding of what human rights mean and how they should be respected. In the final analysis, however, the moral compass – in the sense of a deep-seated moral awareness, conscience and consciousness – is not a matter of counting heads or of consensus but of personal conviction that is deeply rooted in a person or a group's life view, and in the end their religious commitment. What would count as good or acceptable behaviour is a matter of principle and the value system held by an individual or a community.

The three arguments resulting in the tentative formulation of the moral compass above support the contention that the South African citizenry should enter into a new social contract. Rawls (2008:536–538), following Locke, Rousseau, Kant and others (Strauss 2009:510, 512), uses a variety of expressions to describe the nature of this contract: a fair agreement between people who differ in many ways, cooperation on terms to which people agree as free and equal persons, a set of principles that free and equal persons assent to under circumstances that are fair, obligations that they recognise as self-imposed, an agreement in a situation of equality, a scheme of cooperation without which no one could have a satisfactory life, a workable scheme as a necessary condition of the welfare of all, leaving aside those aspects of the social world that seem arbitrary from an amoral point of view, and several more. The contract is an agreement to live and behave according to an agreed-upon moral compass; it embodies a measure of consensus or a significant set of principles (Rawls 2008:540) about what would count as good and bad in society that transcends individual (personal, life view, religious) preferences and commands universal acceptance, a universal awareness with a conscience and a sense of what is socially acceptable or not. Rawls's proposition is that a well-ordered society is effectively regulated by a shared conception of values, particularly the value of justice (Strauss 2009:511). Actions and behaviours such as ignoring traffic lights and other rules of the road, the violation of women and children, the killing of farmers and of foreigners, and the looting of the latter's shops and properties will therefore count as breaches of the social contract and a renunciation of the accompanying moral compass.

Citizenship education as a school subject should bring home to the learners the compulsion to commit to a new social contract and to the underlying moral compass. In doing so, citizenship education might contribute to the moral maturity of the upcoming generations and thereby to their personal integrity, which, according to Thompson (2018:141), is the ability of applying one's basic values to your decision-making processes that enables you to live in a way that allows your personality to be expressed in what you do.

Nolan (2009:13) regards a person with this level of integrity as an 'organic individual', a person able to overcome his or her self-centeredness and who is willing to work towards the interests of all other people.

Conclusion

According to the Nelson Mandela Foundation, in its deliberations with the Economic Freedom Party on 26 November 2018 (as reported on South African radio on 27 November 2018), South Africa is a violent society, riddled with crime and characterised by moral turpitude. There are many reasons for this situation, including the divide between the rich and the poor, a 37% de facto unemployment rate (nearly 60% youth unemployment), political parties contributing to the social and economic instability, state

capturing, weak management of state-owned enterprises combined with a slump in the world economy. However, these should not be used as excuses for the moral depravity that currently seems to reign supreme. All South Africans should be intent on a revival of a moral conscience to act for the good of others, the country and the world. The school subject 'citizenship education' could make a contribution in this regard in that it could help the upcoming generations to commit to a new moral compass, that is, a vision of the good, a normative understanding of what people should become and do to ensure a new modus vivendi, of what the term 'the good person' means and what it would take to make all South Africans as well as all world citizens flourish in their particular social spaces, what human rights mean, and how the rights of others can be protected and respected in those spaces.

'Life orientation', the South African school subject designated to offer citizenship education (Arendse & Smith 2018:48), has for all intents and purposes become non-operational; in many schools, the subject is not being taught anymore (Le Cordeur 2018:9). It will probably be replaced by history as a compulsory subject. Time will tell if the new history syllabus will embody citizenship education in a form that will be effective in bringing home to the upcoming generations the notion of committing to a new moral compass and social contract. In principle, this can only be achieved if citizenship education is based on a capacious, maximalist understanding of morality and citizenship, and not on narrow political definitions.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

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