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Constructing identities: the ethno-national and nationalistic identities of white¹ and Turkish students in two English secondary schools

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This article investigates how 15-year-old white and Turkish students in two Inner London comprehensive schools, one in a predominantly working-class area (Millroad School) and the other in a more middle-class environment (Darwin School), construct their identities. Drawing on mainly qualitative data from documentary sources, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, the work points to a range of factors affecting identity formation processes, such as macro-political approaches and school dynamics. The research found that at Millroad School, which celebrated diversity and where students' conflict was ethnic or racial, young people found safety in their national(istic) identities. In contrast, at Darwin School, which tried to integrate students on the basis of common British citizenship and where there was only low-level ethnic conflict, young people developed hybrid ethno-national identities. This article raises important questions about how to create community cohesion in conflictual environments so as to promote both diversity and solidarity.

Keywords: hybridity; school dynamics; social class; ethnic conflict, community cohesion

Introduction

Notions of citizenship, Europe and multiculturalism have had a difficult relationship in post-war England. The politics of Europe were undercut by the special relationship with the United States, the geographical detachment from continental Europe, and England's post-war role in the Commonwealth. Consequently, the European dimension received little attention and, unlike multicultural education, did not specifically appear amongst the cross-curricular themes and dimensions of the National Curriculum despite the 1988 Resolution by the Council of Ministers of Education to strengthen in young people a sense of European identity (Council of Ministers of Education 1988) and the 1991 policy statement to promote a sense of European identity (Department of Education and Science 1991). In contrast, England has been more successful in conceptualising her national identity as multicultural despite a paradigm shift after the 1985 Swann Report (Department of Education and Science 1985) from the core values of the liberals and the moderate left (i.e. equality, fairness, social justice) to the New Right (i.e. excellence, self-reliance, realism). While the Conservative Governments under Thatcher (1979–1990) promoted Englishness and largely excluded minority ethnic communities from the concept of nationhood, the New Labour Governments under Blair (1997–2007) and Brown (since 1997) adopted a more inclusive approach of what I would call 'multicultural Britishness', reasserting Britishness through citizenship education.

The aim of this paper is to show how two Inner London comprehensive schools attempted to make sense of the national, European and multicultural agendas for its diverse populations and to

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analyse how, in these contexts, young people construct their identities. While the data I draw upon derive from a larger exploratory comparative case study of white and Turkish students, located in two English and two German secondary schools (Faas 2007a, 2008), this article focuses on white and Turkish youth in the two English schools. The Turkish Muslims are a particularly under-researched group (Faas 2007b). None of the scant research on this minority ethnic group (for example, Sonyel 1988; Küçükcan 1999; Enneli, Modood and Bradley 2005) has hitherto explored the range of factors affecting their identities. Moreover, research in the sociology of education has hitherto focused on either white and minority ethnic identities (for example, Gillborn 1990; Sewell 1997; Phoenix 1997; Nayak 1999) or political identities (for example, Convery et al. 1997; Osler and Starkey 2001), whereas the present article considers how the two intersect.

It was mainly for *political reasons* that mainland Turks, Turkish Cypriots and Kurds sought refuge in England. There are around 80,000 mainland Turkish people in England, and 120,000 Turkish Cypriots (Consulate General for the Republic of Turkey 2004). The first wave of male Turkish Cypriots fled their increasingly politically unstable island to seek refuge in England in the 1950s and 1960s (Sonyel 1988). The wave of migration from mainland Turkey only gained momentum after the military coup by General Evren in 1980. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, most of the Kurds arrived in England as refugees. As a result, many young Turkish Cypriots are now in their second generation whereas most first-generation mainland Turks were born in Turkey. Turkish people have faced enormous conflict and marginalisation in terms of employment and education, and have often been the victims of racism and Islamophobia (Archer 2003; van Driel 2004). Calls, such as those by the Conservative MP David Davis, for Muslims to integrate more into British society renewed the debate on the compatibility of national (i.e. British) and multicultural agendas (i.e. Islamic culture), particularly in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 London bombings and the failed attacks in Glasgow and London in 2007.

Research methodology

This paper draws upon post-structuralist notions of a fragmented society, in which identities are multidimensional, hybrid and shifting (for example, Hall 1992; Caglar 1997; Mac an Ghaill 1999; Rassool 1999; Tizard and Phoenix 2002), to explore how young people construct their identities. The advantages of a post-structuralist approach to the study of identities were that it opened up the possibility of a non-unitary subject with multidimensional identities and also reflected the shifting nature of society. Crucially, in a post-structuralist framework, identities are not fixed, static and of a binary nature (e.g. white/black) but are discursively negotiated and renegotiated. The notion of performativity (Butler 1997) was important for the design of the broader study because, from a deconstructionist position, performative suggests that ethnic and political identities are a continual establishment and articulation of binaries. The linking of techniques of the self (Foucault 1988) and performance opens up an exploration of the ways in which the social context (e.g. schools, government policies) mediates how subjects deal with the lived realities of specific institutional locations (Mac an Ghaill 1999).

The concept of *identity/identities*, meaning the communities young people felt they belong to, was also crucial for the conceptualisation of this study. In contrast, the notion of *identification* refers to the reasons and discourses students employed to identify with a particular community (e.g. Britain). It is also important to differentiate between *hybrid* (for example, Hall 1992; Tizard and Phoenix 2002) and *hyphenated* identities (for example, Caglar 1997). Hybrid identities, according to Bhabha (1990), can be understood as 'mixed' identities that emerge as a result of the interconnections between diasporic or ethnic affiliations and political identities such as 'being British'. In contrast, the notion of hyphenated identities, as understood by Caglar (1997), relates more to territorial or political identities, such as African American, rather than the emergence of

a new identity. The fact that many young people in this study constructed their identities along ethnic and political dimensions, rather than mediating between two territories, suggests that the notion of hybrid identities is perhaps more accurate when analysing contemporary youth identities. One of the theoretical implications of this article is thus the need for researchers to reconceptualise the way we think about identity formation and to consider the interconnections between ethnic and political identities.

In this article, I draw primarily on the qualitative data obtained from documentary sources, student focus groups (single-sex and mixed-sex groups of white and Turkish youth) and semi-structured interviews with students and teachers.² The main reason for including single-sex groups in the research design was to explore whether or not the topics and group dynamics between the two sexes were different. However, the data analysis revealed that most of the student discourses around discrimination, peer group interaction and identity formation cut across gender divisions, unless specifically stated in the article. I chose two ethnically mixed secondary schools in an Inner London borough with a multicultural teaching approach and an interest in Europe. The predominantly working-class catchment area of Millroad School was at the centre of violent outbreaks in the past five years between rival Turkish and Kurdish heroin gangs and fights between African Caribbean and Turkish youth gangs. In contrast, Darwin School is situated in the west of the same borough in a more affluent, residential area with few signs of any ethnic tensions.³ Table 1 summarises the school profiles.

The white and Turkish youth therefore will have experienced quite contradictory messages about citizenship, multiculturalism and Europe. The school approaches emphasise either diversity (Millroad School) or commonality (Darwin School). Although the schools were in the same national framework, the identity formation processes were rather different.

Ethnic conflict and national(istic) identities

Millroad School, located in a predominantly working-class environment, mediated national identity through the politics of cultural diversity; and, in so doing, reasserted the concept of cultural pluralism that was the prevailing English educational approach in the 1970s and early 1980s. The school established an extra-curricular Turkish Enrichment Class to enable students to read, write and speak in Turkish and also offered Turkish at GCSE level. During fieldwork, I observed a Turkish Kurdish Celebration Week with Turkish music and dance performances during assemblies. The following excerpt also shows that Millroad School celebrated its ethnic and cultural diversity:

Table 1. Summary of the school profiles of the two English schools.

Characteristic	Millroad School	Darwin School
School population	1204 students, 26% Turkish	1507 students, 2% Turkish
Location	Working-class inner-city	Middle-class inner-city
Citizenship issues	Theme days, part of 'Registration'	Cross-curricular, part of PSHE
Multicultural issues	Turkish mother-tongue teaching	Exams in community languages
European issues		
Languages	French, Spanish	French, German
Geography and history	One unit in Year Eight	One unit in Years Seven and Eight
School approach	Celebrating diversity	Multicultural Britishness

We recognise that the social, cultural and linguistic diversity in our community is an important resource and an aspect of our ethos we seek to promote and celebrate. We give our students opportunities to take responsibility and develop citizenship within the school community and beyond. [...] An important part of our work is giving our young people the knowledge and personal strength to be good citizens in a multicultural world which is fast changing. [...] Everything we do is geared to our two central aims: to raise standards and expectations, and to develop the school campus as a distinctive pioneering learning environment for students and the community – in short to make it a magnet for the community. (School prospectus)

Whilst mediating national identity through the politics of cultural pluralism, the European agenda seemed to be a relatively low priority at Millroad. Although the Modern Foreign Languages Department displayed a number of posters with the different languages the school teaches (i.e. French, German, Turkish, Spanish) and posters regarding the eastern enlargement of the European Union, the following excerpt from an interview with Mr Green, the Head of History, clearly shows that the multicultural agenda is the dominant one in Millroad School and favoured over the concept of a European educational dimension:

DF: Like geography, history should include a European dimension. What do you make of that?

Mr Green: I think history should include a world dimension. I mean, there's been a debate in history, with the development of the National Curriculum, about the extent to which it should be British history. When the National Curriculum was first introduced [in 1988], there was an attempt to introduce a greater element of Britishness. This was resisted by history teachers. However, it's still the case that the National Curriculum has a much stronger bias in terms of British history. I don't think there are a great deal of opportunities for a specifically European dimension. Does that bother me? Not so much that there aren't opportunities for a European dimension because I'm interested in African history, for example, we look at African civilisation. I'd be interested at developing a unit based around Islamic civilisations, I'd be fascinated to be able to do something around Turkish history. I think that the history that we do in the school should relate to the students we have and their cultural backgrounds.

Despite the schools' pro-multicultural policy and teaching units that were developed to address the needs of minority ethnic students, there were violent gang fights and Turkish students were mocked for their ethnicity and nationality. This resulted in a strong sense of ethnic solidarity amongst the sample of Turkish students. When I observed some of the lessons, I noticed that students sat along ethnic lines in almost all classrooms, with some tables of only African-Caribbean students and other tables with only Turkish Kurdish students. And while white interviewees mostly had mixed friendship groups, the Turkish students had few cross-ethnic friendships and formed an ethnic solidarity group. This was demonstrated in my discussions with mainland Turkish (Halil, Baris) and Turkish Cypriot (Sarila) students:

DF: Could you tell me a little bit about your friends?

Baris: They're all Turkish.

Halil: They come from where I come from.

Baris: Same place we come from. Only she's [Sarila] got black friends.

Sarila: I've got mixed friends. I've got lots of different friends really.

Halil: Kosovo [laughs]

Sarila: It depends like there's different things of friends, there's like close friends most of my close friends are either Turkish or Cypriot.

Baris: Can I ask you about your black friends?

Sarila: I have lots of different friends [Halil: They come from different backgrounds] I don't know, but like the closest ones are Turkish Cypriot.

Baris: Why's you friends with black people though?

Sarila: Because I have mixed race cousins and I was –

Baris: Cos black people, I hate them.

Baris' racist remarks exemplify the peer group conflict in Millroad School between the Turkish community and the African Caribbean students. When asked for the reasons of these ethnic tensions, many Turkish interviewees referred to cultural and religious differences. For example, some argued that English people and black people had no respect for others. Ethnic solidarity amongst the sample of Turkish students, particularly mainland Turkish Muslims, was based upon common Muslim religion, language, culture and physical appearance. This group solidarity was used by Turkish students (and male students in particular) in their fight against African-Caribbean peers over which group controls the school territory. Since the Turkish students were disadvantaged both socio-economically and ethnically, this exercise of control within the boundaries of Millroad School was probably their only chance to create a sense of superiority. Using violence thus enabled them to reverse the hierarchy of race.

However, the African-Caribbean students on the whole did not concede challenging the self-acclaimed authority of the group of Turkish students inside Millroad. The most common form of discrimination was verbal abuse. For example, African-Caribbean students drew on the double meaning of the word 'turkey' to mock and ridicule the Turkish interviewees:

- DF: Have you experienced any form of prejudice or discrimination?
 Yildiran: Well yeah, they did actually. They said I'm a 'F ... ing Turk', which hurts me, it's in a way, like, 'you're a Turk, you're not with us, you're just odd', you know?
 Muhammad: Some people sometimes take the piss by like saying, you know the Turkey, they say like 'I'm going to go and buy a turkey and cook it'.
 Yildiran: Oh yeah –
 Muhammad: – and they're taking the piss like that.
 Yildiran: Yeah, at Christmas. They –
 Muhammad: they go, they go, we're going to buy a Turkey –
 Yildiran: They pee you off! They go 'I wanna go and get a turkey and eat it'.
 Muhammad: And I then I get really pissed.
 Yildiran: And this in Turkey, it's actually what you eat at Christmas.
 Muhammad: And that's what most of them, like, when it is Christmas, they go we're going to get a turkey and eat it tonight, and that really pisses me off sometimes but I have to take it.

The use of the word *turkey* has several different connotations here;⁴ firstly, it refers to an ugly, large, hybrid bird grown for its white and brown meat; secondly, it refers to notions of festivity and Christianity, as a turkey is usually eaten at Thanksgiving in the United States and during Christmas in England – predominantly Christian societies. The size of the bird has a symbolic or even hierarchical meaning, as Yildiran said that 'they [e.g. white, Christian] wanna go and get a turkey [e.g. non-white, Muslim]'. Thirdly, a turkey can also be a stupid or silly person, which further puts the Turkish students in an inferior position. The fact that the country is named after the bird thus makes it particularly difficult for these students who tried to defend their nationality and ethnicity by cussing members of other ethnicities.

While the discussion has so far focused upon the two main antagonists at Millroad, African-Caribbean students (30%) and Turkish students (26%), it was also interesting to see how the minority ethnic white students (19%) lived in and responded to the hostile climate at Millroad. Some white students felt unsafe and uncomfortable in the school and in London because of the divisions between the African-Caribbean and Turkish communities. They were torn between engaging in the verbal abuse and racism of the two main antagonists, and acknowledging the marginalisation and stereotyping of African Caribbean and Turkish students:

- John: I don't feel very comfortable at all.
 Bill: I think we ain't got enough rights because all these foreign people come into our country, they're getting all the rights and we aren't getting the rights, so they get all the shops and everything, what do we get? They got all our money, they get all the cars, all we get is a house based in a little thugged-out area. If they really cared about England then they

- would put us in a place where all nice people are and then put a place where all the thugs are.
- Dave: Well that's just causing segregation.
- Bill: Well, it's not really. I was watching Crimewatch the other day, yeah? And they said all these immigrant people coming over through tunnels and all sorts yeah? And then police take them to the immigration, and immigration just say 'yeah you can stay here'. So, if they keep saying 'Tony Blair's done whatever about our ... we don't want immigrants over here', why don't you just kick them back to their country? Take them back to their country.
- John: I do feel sorry for some of them though, cos some of them are being tortured or something terrible has happened to them and then people just stereotype them.

The identity construction processes were deeply affected by the ethnic experience. Many mainland Turkish respondents deployed concepts of *birth* and *pride* to identify with their ethnic background, arguing that 'I feel I belong to Turkey, but, because of the economy of Turkey, it forces us to come to England' and 'your background's there [in Turkey] and all your grandparents, and, grandmas have been living there, so you have to follow'. In contrast, the sample of Turkish Cypriot students, in addition to their ethnic identity, drew upon the concept of *residence* to partially also identify with the national British citizenship level. For example, Harika and Jihan seemed to have developed hybrid identities although the following discussion shows that they, too, privilege their Turkishness:

- DF: So you would say you feel you belong to both Turkey and England?
- Harika: Yeah.
- Tulip: No, I don't think so.
- Jihan: But still isn't it, cos you were born here, yeah, and you been living here, yeah, and you go over to like Turkey and Cyprus once in your life, yeah, you don't know nothing.
- Tulip: But if you're someone and your parents are Turkish, that's what you are.
- Nagihan: No, I'm Turkish but –
- Jihan: I didn't say you're not, but –
- Harika: But you shouldn't say 'oh, I've got nothing to do with England'.
- Tulip: No, like my stepparents are English that's it, you can't say you're English or half-English.
- Jihan: Or you can say – you were born there, innit?
- Harika: No but when someone asks you you're not going to say 'I'm English', it's just that you're going to be able when something happens, when there's a war, when there's a football match, and let's say England's playing against Brazil or something then you would have to support England but when England's playing against Turkey you can support Turkey cos that's your race.

Some white students in this study also privileged national(istic) identities and saw themselves as English rather than British, a term they associated with concepts of blood and birth. For example, the following group of white youth differentiated between the generic term 'British' and more particular constructs such as 'English' or 'Scottish':

- Dave: English is more like ... specific.
- Bill: Yeah, Britain's just like I mean ... for example, you could come over to this country, be here for a certain amount of years and you'd 'become' British. But English like, you have to be born here, raised here [Ken murmurs agreement], be like one of us. So British is just a crap word really.
- Ken: British is like the official name for it, and English is like what the actual people are like.
- John: It's like, if you're from Scotland, people don't say 'Oh, I'm British', they'll say 'I'm Scottish' [murmurs of agreement] cos most people when they hear 'Oh, I'm from the United Kingdom', they think 'England', that's pretty much what most people think, they don't think 'ah, he could be from Wales, I dunno', they just think England straight away. Whereas if you say 'I'm Scottish', they don't know it's in the United Kingdom, like if you're in America or something like that.

However, it is important to differentiate within the sample of white students at Millroad. Not all interviewees celebrated Englishness and 'wanted to go and get a turkey and eat it'. Some first and foremost identified with school, family and friends. In contrast with national dimensions, the concept of Europe as a political identity did not easily fit with young people's national(istic) identities at Millroad. Turkish youth were acutely aware of their 'otherness', emphasising their different religion, different phenotype and limited power. Like the Turkish students, the white students I spoke to positioned themselves outside the notion of Europe by drawing on a modified version of the theme of 'us' (English people) and 'them' (continental Europeans). Being 'the odd one out that drives on the left and has the pound' as well as being 'an island off Europe' made it difficult for young people to identify with.

Political integration and ethno-national identities

Turning now to Darwin School, a predominantly middle-class white school that celebrated similarity rather than cultural and ethnic difference and emphasised national agendas over and above multicultural and European agendas, it seems that Turkish youth could relate better to their white peers. Social class became one of the unifying factors, giving students an advantaged position within the British society. The school prospectus highlighted the notion of political integration and an inclusive British national identity:

The school strives to be a high-performing inclusive community school, fully committed to active citizenship and academic excellence. We value all who learn and work here; promoting a strong sense of community within and beyond the school. [...] Bilingualism is actively encouraged and supported and opportunities offered to be examined in community languages. [...] All students are of equal concern and the school promotes self-discipline and empathy for others, both within the school and the wider community. [...] The teacher cannot be neutral towards those values which underpin liberal democracy. Values such as freedom of speech and discussion, respect for truth and reasoning, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, are the means whereby indoctrination is combated and prevented. (School prospectus)

Both teachers and the curriculum at Darwin seemed to encourage their students to think of themselves as liberal democratic British citizens living in a global multi-ethnic international community, and citizenship education played a pivotal role in this process. Ms Williams, the Deputy Head, felt that the National Curriculum 'should be driving forward the idea of living within a multiracial, multi-ethnic community and working with other people within that community. [Darwin] School does not celebrate difference; we celebrate similarity'.

Despite this inclusive approach, or perhaps because of it, Darwin School made little effort to integrate students on the basis of common European membership. The Deputy Head not only acknowledged that the notion of Europe 'is an area we don't address explicitly in citizenship', but she also admitted that Darwin School has done little teaching about Europe:

DF: How important do you think a European dimension is in the curriculum here at [Darwin]?

Ms Williams: It's not. We haven't done it. We don't do it. I think we address it inexplicitly, through some of our curriculum, but we certainly haven't taken it on board, I think, in terms of citizenship, there are bits that we do very well, there are bits we have yet to develop and one of the areas we have to develop is the whole idea of Europe, and the whole idea of looking at the European community, looking at the European parliament, we don't teach that to our students. Now the citizenship curriculum has only been developed this year and we need to talk about to include that within it. One of the things I'm quite keen to do is, obviously, we've got the election coming up on the 10th June [2004] and I'm quite keen we actually do something within the school around that. I'm going to be using external events to try and kick-start that within school. We don't do that explicitly and I think we should. [...] We're going to have

a referendum within this country about the issues, and I think that our students need to be able to engage with that information to be able to understand what the issues are.

As a result of the school's emphasis on similarity and Britishness, the concept of ethnicity seemed to play only a subordinate role in relations between youth. Instead of the divisive peer cultures we saw at Millroad, mixed student friendship groups at Darwin were suggestive of the higher level of integration. Arguably, the limited number of Turkish Darwinians (2%) may have prevented the students achieving the level of ethnic solidarity we saw at Millroad (26% Turkish). Some Darwinians I interviewed admitted that they met some Turkish friends outside school in a local youth club. Despite the mixed nature of Turkish students' friendship groups, some (particularly the boys) argued that they had more Turkish than other friends because 'you can relate to your own country much more and with other people you've got to build up the bond between you, but with someone in your own country, the bond's already there'. Nevertheless, even Osman and Mehmet who made this comment had African-Caribbean and white friends. This seems to suggest that the cross-ethnic friendships and the higher level of societal integration are a result not just of the ethnic composition of Darwin School, but also of the school's approach of including students into the school community as well as the socio-economically advantaged situation of students compared with Millroad students.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the white students argued about the possibility for minority ethnic people to fit into society whilst keeping some of their culture and traditions:

- DF: To what extent should minority ethnic people give up part of their customs and traditions to fit in?
- Charles: I don't think people should really have to give up what they've lived like to fit in.
- Olivia: It may not be to fit in, they might, say yeah, in schools or may get bullied or something for what they're dressing like.
- Charles: Oh, right, yeah I see what you mean, but that's still fitting in.
- Adam: I think you can fit in at the same time as keeping some of your traditions.
- Charles: Yeah, because most people keep their traditions at home, like the food they eat, the clothes they wear –
- Charlotte: Yeah, [indistinct] at home I think.
- Charles: – the language they speak. Things like that.
- Adam: It shouldn't be definitely what you should do, it should be what you want to do.
- Charles: Well, yeah, what you want to do.
- Adam: It's hard enough to come to a new country, so if you're up for it you should do it.

Both white and Turkish Darwinians showed a higher level of social integration compared with their peers at Millroad, which allowed them to develop ethno-national identities. Turkish student interviewees, particularly second-generation Turkish Cypriots but also first-generation mainland Turks, identified with both Britain and their country of origin. The following passage taken from a discussion with Safak exemplifies that the Turkish Cypriot identity played at least an equal part in the conceptualisation of students' identities:

- DF: What role would you say does your Turkish Cypriot background play in your life today?
- Safak: Well, it plays a big part cos that's my origin, but I don't think of it as a big part where everything I do is revolved around that. I think cos, you know, I don't live there and I don't know people – I do know some people but they're not like the people I know here, that I like, all my friends are here, and my close family's here, so obviously I care more about them than I do distant family who I only see once a year. But it plays a big part as to who I am, because of the way, cos that's just who I am, cos I am Turkish-Cypriot, but I don't make my whole life go around that. I kind of just, I just try to stay in between and care about both things just as much, like, just as equally, but obviously that's harder cos I do a lot of things here, like watch British TV, that makes me learn more about England and London, than I do about Turkish, because, well, I watch Turkish TV less.

Safak tried to balance her various identities by attempting to stay 'in-between' and care about both societies. She tried hard to keep herself equally well informed about the two countries by watching television but she had to realise just how difficult it is 'to care about both things'. Also, Safak directly referred to notions of *proximity* and *distance*, arguing that she cares more about her close friends and family in England than about distant family members in the Turkish part of Cyprus whom she only sees once a year. This new hybridised Turkish British identity, which we only tentatively saw among few Turkish Cypriots at Millroad School, was also clearly expressed by the first-generation mainland Turks at Darwin School, although they still saw their ethnic background to be more important to them than Britain:

- DF: Where do you feel you belong to?
 Toker: I think I'm part of Turkey, still. I think I'm part of Britain too, cos I've got a British passport.
 DF: Can you explain that a bit more?
 Toker: I say Turkey cos I was born there and I lived there for 7 years, so, that's why I think Turkey. Half of my life was there. Dunno, about Britain, cos I've got, cos I think I dunno!
 DF: What are the differences between Turkey and Britain?
 Toker: The difference is England's more rich, and Turkey's poor, but I think Turkey is a much better place to live in.
 DF: Why?
 Toker: Erm, dunno, people are more friendly and I like the places, erm, cities.

The white 15-year-olds also had multidimensional identities revolving around familiar communities such as family, school and friends as well as London and England. As William put it, 'I think more locally but as we get older, wider things [e.g. Europe, world] will become more important as they affect us more'. The white students additionally provided a very useful explanation as to how these familiar or close identities are interlinked and why they are all partly relevant in the construction of youth identities. The following excerpt shows that these spheres are all integrated within the other and not competing:

- Adam: School's kind of a duty that a child has to fulfil, erm, I was born in London, which happens to be in England [they laugh], therefore I'm a citizen of London and England, and my school, which is in London, so therefore they're all kind of inter-linked.
 Charlotte: If you don't, If you weren't in London, you wouldn't be able to go to [name of the school], if you weren't in Britain you wouldn't be able to live in London, because you can't because London's in Britain.
 DF: So would you say all these things are equally important?
 All: Yeah.
 Charles: Cos you're a community inside a community inside a community.

However, these chains of multiple identities did not include supranational levels; rarely did the students I interviewed argue that Britain is part of the European Union. Many Turkish students had difficulties to engage in European political discourses. Similarly, in their discussions about Europe and the European Union, white interviewees struggled to talk about the European Union:

- DF: What sorts of things do you know about Europe and the European Union?
 Anne: Not much!
 Victoria: It's really difficult, –
 Anne: I don't know anything.
 Victoria: – totally out of my depth.
 Elizabeth: It's quite confusing cos it changes so much, that people –
 Anne: The Euro.
 Sophie: There's places part of it [indistinct].
 Elizabeth: Oh, isn't there a referendum or coming up for something or other?

Victoria: A what? What's that?

Elizabeth: I dunno. I just heard it, walking through my house and the news was on somewhere, this whole thing about –

Victoria: What's a referendum?

Elizabeth: I don't know.

Arguably, the limited coverage of European issues in the British mass media as well as the ignorance of British educationalists and schools to promote a European dimension in the National Curriculum (Tulasiewicz 1993) are all responsible for this partial and confused political view of students. In contrast, both Turkish and white students I talked to frequently drew upon national political discourses when talking about England's role in Europe:

Mehmet: Britain should be in the EU but I don't think they should change the currencies, cos that would affect Britain dramatically because the British pound is, you know, really valuable and if this happened, yeah, the economy of Britain's going to drop, so it's not going to be good for us.

[...]

Mustafa: Yeah, I think they're more distant cos, erm, like firstly they wanted to keep the pound here. Everyone wants to keep the pound. But if we did actually take like, the Euro, our economy would be stronger, and it would help other countries as well because it would make our economy work because we'll have a stronger force, because the whole of Europe is our working force.

Mehmet appeared to be arguing from a British viewpoint, saying that 'it's not going to be good for *us*' to adopt the Euro. Mustafa's statement further reveals the transition from a non-British Turkish perspective (e.g. *they* are more distant, *they* wanted to keep the pound here) to a British perspective (e.g. if *we* did, actually, take, like, the Euro, *our* economy would be stronger). This shifting viewpoint reflects the struggle some of these students faced in balancing their identities, and it shows the impact of the English society and way of life on their identities. Their socio-economically advantaged position allowed both first-generation and second-generation Turkish students in the sample to employ national British discourses leading to such diverse comments on the role of England in Europe.

Discussion and conclusions

This article raises important questions about how to create community cohesion in conflictual environments so as to promote both diversity and solidarity. As we saw earlier, ethnic conflicts in the area where Millroad School is located spilled over into the school and resulted in ethnic divisions between the African-Caribbean and Turkish communities who, in turn, formed ethnic solidarity groups and strongly emphasised their national identities. However, the school conflict was not necessarily reduced by mediating national agendas through the politics of cultural diversity. Although the Head tried to promote intercultural awareness and organised special events to bond the conflicting communities together, it appeared to be too ambitious an agenda to try and disseminate 'good practice' from within the school into the local community. One could argue that if policy-makers and politicians developed more effective strategies to tackle the socio-ethnic marginalisation of inner-city working-class communities, then a common identification through social class might become a unifying factor. However, this still begs the question about whether a *pluralistic multiculturalism* (a form of multiculturalism that celebrates ethnic and cultural diversity) has a part to play in this.

The politics of multiculturalism appears to be successful when allied with the concept of social inclusion (which I would call *inclusive multiculturalism*). This allowed white and Turkish students to relate positively to the British society and develop hybrid identities. We saw that Darwin School adopted such an approach of including students into a multi-ethnic concept of

nationhood. This paper suggests that in contexts of conflict (Millroad) youth privileged national or nationalistic identities, whereas in more integrative environments (Darwin) young people developed hybrid ethno-political identities. When schools combine notions of multiculturalism with integration, minority ethnic groups are given the opportunity of relating to the British society and develop multidimensional identities. Koopmans et al. (2005) agree that there is a need to balance diversity and a common bond, and that too much cultural pluralism can lead to parallel societies. The paper also suggests that school dynamics and social class positioning are among the most important factors affecting young people's identity formations within one country, although it was not possible within the limits of this study to determine the relative importance of each factor. It was the middle-class locality where the school dynamics revealed far less tensions between the ethnic groups. Darwinians benefited from their socio-economically advantaged background and the school's promotion of an inclusive national identity. However, as a result of England's lukewarm approach to Europe, the students I interviewed had limited opportunities in relating positively to Europe as a political identity. As a result of their mainly working-class backgrounds and the school's celebration of diversity, 15-year-olds at Millroad had even less access to the opportunities associated with Europe (e.g. travelling), and instead developed nationalistic identities.

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Notes

1. The term 'white' is used here to refer to the native British youth. Turks do not occupy a clear position in the 'white/non-white' divide on which current understanding of minority ethnic communities in Britain is based. In the census, they identify themselves as 'white' even though Turkey is largely perceived in Britain to be a non-white country. It is, however, not the purpose of this article to engage in such a potential controversy.
2. In each school, I distributed a questionnaire to about 100 students. Then, I conducted six focus group interviews of four to five students and, finally, I interviewed a total of 32 students (four white and four Turkish students) as well as the Head, Citizenship Education coordinator, the Head of Geography and the Head of Religious Education.
3. To gain an idea of the socio-economic status of each of the schools and catchment areas, I looked at the percentages of students eligible for free school meals and also asked students in the survey to classify their parents' occupations.
4. Such word plays and their different connotations were also discussed by Cohen (1988), who argued that white working-class youth linguistically constructed black students as *jungle bunnies* from the 1960s onwards, linking racist myths (Blacks come from the jungle) with sexual fantasies (Blacks breed like rabbits) to reinforce a racist misrecognition (Blacks are animals).

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