A Civic Rebalancing of Multiculturalism? An analysis of geography, history and citizenship education curricula and policies in England

Abstract

This article draws on history, geography and citizenship education curricula and six semi-structured interviews with policymakers – three with officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, two from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and one from the Office for Standards in Education. It argues that the governmental approach of a 'civic rebalancing' of multiculturalism is reflected in education. The study also shows how history, geography and citizenship curricula reflect current policy discourses, emphasising community cohesion whilst sustaining the British legacy of multiculturalism and underplaying the notion of Europe. The article contributes to a larger debate on the ways in which curricula and policymakers balance cultural diversity and community cohesion, and considers democracy in the school as a potentially cohesive factor. It departs from standard two-way comparisons of national versus European or national versus multicultural agendas in addressing how national, European and migration-related agendas are intertwined.

Introduction

Nations in Europe differ considerably in their responses toward European integration and migration-related diversity. This is reflected for instance in the time duration with which immigrants can apply for and receive permanent residence and citizenship status. Currently, Switzerland (12 years), Greece (10 years) and Austria (10 years) are among the most difficult countries to obtain citizenship whereas Ireland (5 years), the Netherlands (5 years) and France (5 years) have relatively fewer barriers. In England, the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act of 2009 requires a residential status of eight years before being eligible for naturalization. It also introduced a voluntary community service for migrants which can reduce the length of the naturalization process by up to two years. European societies can broadly be grouped into at least four categories reflecting their legacies and current approaches to diversity and European integration. Firstly, 'old migration societies' like Germany who have traditionally developed a more monocultural but Europhile vision. Secondly, 'old migration societies' like Britain who have historically been more multicultural and Eurosceptic. Thirdly, 'new migration societies' such as Greece who have embarked on a more monocultural but Europhile road and lastly, 'new migration societies' such as Ireland with an arguably more multicultural outlook but some scepticism toward EU institutions. This has important implications for education policy. In this article, I consider how national identity and citizenship, Europe and migration-related diversity are intertwined at macro-political level and what implications there are for future curriculum development.

Notions of citizenship, Europe and multiculturalism have had a difficult relationship in England. The politics of Europe have been undercut by the special relationship England holds with the United States, its geographical detachment from continental Europe, and its post-war role in the Commonwealth (e.g. Geddes, 1999; Woodard, 1998). Consequently, the

European dimension has received little attention and, unlike multicultural education, has not specifically appeared 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). 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 and social justice) to the New Right (i.e. excellence, self-reliance and 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 (2007–2010) adopted a more inclusive approach of what I call 'multicultural Britishness', promoting community cohesion, Britishness and diversity particularly through citizenship education.

Unlike New Labour, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, which took office in May 2010, advocates a radical devolution of power to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals including the right for communities to bid to take over local state-run services, greater powers to parents and students to choose a school, and the ability to veto 'excessive' council tax increases. Moreover, 'to ensure cohesion and protect our public services, we need to introduce a cap on immigration and reduce the number of non-EU immigrants' (Cabinet Office, 2010: 21). As part of these reinforced notions of control and discipline, the new government established a National Security Council and appointed a National Security Adviser. All schools are likely to have even greater freedom over the curriculum leaving considerable scope to mediate not only national curriculum guidelines but also the viewpoints of education officials discussed in this article.

Following the London bombings in July 2005, then Education Secretary Alan Johnson commissioned a review of how English schools teach citizenship and diversity. Sir Keith Ajegbo's report found there was still not enough emphasis on British identity and history in the curriculum (Department for Education and Skills, 2007). In addition to political literacy, community involvement as well as social and moral responsibility (QCA, 2000), the report argues that a new 'citizenship strand' should be developed, entitled 'Identities and Diversity: Living Together in the UK'. This would bring together critical thinking about ethnicity, religion and 'race'; an explicit link to political issues and values; and the use of contemporary history in teachers' pedagogy to illuminate thinking about contemporary issues relating to citizenship. Since September 2007, schools have been under a new duty to promote community cohesion which is reflected in the latest curricular reform. Firstly, according to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 'the curriculum for all maintained schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Secondly, 'schools have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups' (DCSF, 2007). Fieldwork for this study coincided with the publication of the Ajegbo report and the finalisation of the new secondary curriculum.

In recent years, political and educational debates around multiculturalism shifted from phenotype to religion. The London bombings in July 2005 led to increased questioning not only of the concept of multiculturalism, but of Muslim loyalties in particular, often on the assumption that Muslims are not willing to integrate into society or adopt its political values. The bombings in London, and earlier street riots in Oldham and Bradford in 2001, have propelled British Muslims to the centre of public discourse, while also impacting representations and stereotypes of Muslim students. Muslim boys have been singled out as

educational 'problems' who form part of an 'underclass', and Muslim boys suffer the highest rates of racism in school (Archer, 2003: 36). The rise of anti-Muslim prejudice also led the then Department for Education and Skills to publish guidance for schools and, two years later, the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (2003: 5), the largest trade union for teachers, published the document 'Islamophobia: advice for schools and colleges' (updated following the London bombings) recommending that 'schools and colleges should identify practical ways in which they intend to counter Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice and racism' including 'the use of assemblies; citizenship lessons; tutorial time; parental meetings and home-school agreements; and counselling and advice facilities for students and staff'. This new emphasis on religion has led to a desire for more faith-based schools. Reasons behind this include a belief that greater accommodation of difference will help address lower achievement among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, and more Islamic values embedded within school subjects that are otherwise couched within an ethnocentric Christian-European tradition (e.g. Douglass & Shaikh 2004).

As a result, there has been considerable debate as to whether and how both multicultural and European values and attitudes can be developed in students through citizenship, geography and history. Audrey Osler, for instance, suggests that 'citizenship education is seen across Europe as playing a central role in strengthening democracy and in challenging racism as an antidemocratic force' (1999: 13). Osler characterizes an appropriate citizenship education as one which develops 'an inclusive rather than an exclusive understanding of national identity and citizenship' and 'promote[s] an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship [that is] not dependent on ethnic affiliation or identification but recognis[es] and support[s] diversity both within and between societies' (Osler 1994: 40). Osler and Starkey (2003) add that young people demonstrate fluid identities, embracing local, national, European and global values. Schissler and Soysal (2005)

as well as Philippou (2007) found that history and geography curricula recast the nation in European and multicultural terms because of a broadening of human rights discourses, decolonization, social movements of the 1970s and subsequent Europeanization and globalization processes. Davies (1997) calls for an effective education for European citizenship through history. Salmons (2003: 139) argued that teaching about the Holocaust in history 'can sensitise young people to examples of injustice, persecution, racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred in the world today'. Holocaust education might thus inspire young people to advocate a society that values multiculturalism, combats racism and sees strength in diversity (see also Brown & Davies, 1998; Davies, 2000; Cowan & Maitles, 2007). However, 'students from cultural and ethnic backgrounds that have long histories of prejudice and discrimination need their own pain to be acknowledged before they examine the experience of victims of Nazi persecution' (Salmons, 2003: 147). The balance between teaching historical aspects and preaching moral values in Holocaust education is discussed further by Russell (2006). She found that more than half of her history teacher interviewees did not teach the Holocaust solely as history, but focused on social and moral values.

In this debate over multicultural education and integration models, England poses a very interesting case in that it seems to be the only European country that has not abandoned multiculturalism as a public policy tool despite having recently introduced a civic integration test and ceremonies in an attempt to revive community cohesion based on an inclusive understanding of Britishness. Meer and Modood (2009) term this a 'civic rebalancing' of British multiculturalism rather than a wholesale 'retreat' (see Joppke, 2004) or 'backlash' (see Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). In Britain, this debate was largely triggered by the Cantle Report following civil unrest and 'rioting' between ethnic majority and Asian Muslim youth in several northern English towns in 2001. The report intertwined notions of community cohesion, citizenship and national identity, and has generally brought discourses

of community cohesion and assimilatory aspects of 'integration' to the fore. At the same time, the political discourse of the second and third Blair government shifted from Europe to a global dimension, following announcement of referenda on the Euro and the European constitution, which were both suspended in June 2005. 2005 not only saw the G8 Gleneagles summit on Africa, but also the publication of a guidance paper, 'Developing the Global Dimension in the School Curriculum' by the then Department for Education and Skills (2005). This sets the scene for our understanding of policy discourses and curricula.

Methodology

This article draws on interviews with six education officials and contextualises these interview findings through a critical analysis of geography, history, and citizenship education curricula in England. It deals with a number of broader issues on the ways in which school curricula and policymakers balance cultural diversity and community cohesion and intertwine multiple educational agendas. Two different bodies of literature have emerged between those focusing more on national and European dimensions (e.g. Ryba, 2000; Hinderliter Ortloff, 2005) and others stressing multicultural and global educational dimensions (e.g. Wilhelm, 1998; Graves, 2002). Although there is some general literature on the European dimension that deals with issues of intra-European diversity (e.g. Sultana, 1995; Delanty, 1995), there has been little if any explicit attempt at synthesising the various dimensions.

For the broader study, I began by reviewing the relevant literature on national identity and civic education, Europe and European education, and multiculturalism and multicultural education in Greece, Germany and England. My choice of countries was based on three main criteria. Firstly, these countries have placed different macro-political emphases on their European and multicultural agendas (for a more detailed discussion, see Author). Secondly,

these three countries rely on different models on how to address diversity in education. Germany and Greece prefer the term 'intercultural education' whereas the English model is one of 'multicultural education'. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006), multiculturalism describes the culturally diverse nature of societies. It not only refers to elements of ethnic or national culture, but also includes linguistic, religious and socio-economic diversity. In contrast, interculturalism refers to evolving interactions between cultural groups. Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures whereas intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in culturally diverse societies through the creation of respect for and dialogue between different cultural groups. Thirdly, there were also personal motivations for choosing these countries including that the author is a German native, studied in England and worked in Greece for two years. This ensured a sense of familiarity and a more in-depth understanding of each socio-cultural context which, in turn, facilitated the interpretation of findings in each country.

I collected and analysed the relevant Greek, German and English history, geography and citizenship education curricula, and decided to apply two main criteria to the curricular analysis in an attempt to minimise problems of equivalence in the broader study: (a) age and (b) compulsory schooling. This approach ensured a curriculum analysis of five years of compulsory schooling with students aged between ten and fifteen (for a comparative curriculum analysis across the three countries, see Author). The curriculum documents were subsequently triangulated with insights obtained from semi-structured individual interviews with policymakers conducted in people's workplaces in Athens, Stuttgart, London and Brussels. A total of 30 policy interviews were conducted including thirteen in Greece, seven in Germany, six in England and four in Brussels within the Directorate-General for Education and

Culture. The six institutions where the discussions were held were compatible in terms of their responsibilities and focus on European and intercultural issues relevant for this project. They included the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England; the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the Institute of Education of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany; and the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Pedagogical Institute.

In this article, I focus on the English case. To analyse the curricula and policy discourses, I developed a conceptual framework linking European and multicultural dimensions. Firstly, *inclusive national* approaches which include a range of migration-related topics combined with a national dimension. Secondly, *inclusive European* approaches which include a range of migration-related topics combined with a more European dimension. Thirdly, *exclusive Eurocentric* approaches which consist of a strong European ethos and little if any acknowledgement of migration-related diversity. Fourthly, *exclusive nationalistic* approaches which consist of a strong national ethos and little if any acknowledgement of diversity. The quantitative part of the analysis referred to the presence of European, cultural diversity and national topics in the curriculum. To this end, I carried out a content analysis to find out which units across the five age groups referred to Europe, diversity and the nation-state. The qualitative part focused on the discourses employed in the curriculum such as more inclusive and exclusive constructions of Europe and the nation-state. In England, interviews were conducted with two officers from the International Unit and the Curriculum Division within the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, renamed Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency in late 2009); three officials from the Joint International Unit and 14-19 Reform Group within the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); and one specialist advisor from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The aim was to learn more about the ways in which policy officers conceptualised the educational

challenges of responding to migration-related diversity and European integration. The identities of all respondents remained anonymous and were protected from outsiders by using pseudonyms.

Whilst this type of research yields insights into the ways in which curricula reflect macro-political debates about national identity, Europe and migration-related diversity, it is beyond the scope of this study to consider in greater detail the implementation of formal curricula in classrooms. Unlike other European countries, schools in England have considerable scope in devising their own syllabi and schemes of work, based on the national framework and guidelines and I had access to the schemes of work in several Inner London schools through a previous project which has informed some of my discussions in this article.

Reinforcing Multicultural Britishness in English Curricula

Unlike other European countries, a separate body of literature has developed around global citizenship education in England (e.g. Osler & Vincent, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2003; Graves, 2002; Marshall, 2007). The 'importance statements' for each subject, issued by the then QCA provide a signpost for schools when embedding a global dimension across the curriculum. For example, in the reformed citizenship education curriculum, students learn about their rights and responsibilities, democracy and justice as well as identities and cultural diversity in the UK. In geography, students learn about the complex and dynamically changing world, how places and landscapes are formed, how people and environment interact, and how a diverse range of economies and societies are interconnected. 'Geography inspires pupils to become global citizens by exploring their own place in the world, their values and responsibilities to other people, to the environment and to the sustainability of the planet' (QCA, 2010). Similarly, in history, students are asked to develop their own identity through

an understanding of history at personal, local, national and global levels. Unlike for instance in Germany and Greece, these chains of identities hardly include the supranational European level as the curriculum guidelines do not explicitly mention the development of a European identity and citizenship alongside other dimensions. Arguably, this is a result of the fact that the concept of Britishness mediated through multicultural values remained primary in English discourses.

A senior officer in the International Unit at QCA linked the emergence of a global (or international) educational dimension, in addition to national and multicultural values, to the particular migration history of the United Kingdom:

MR. LEWIS: I think the firm consensus is because we are a multicultural, multi-faith, multiracial society, then a European dimension for us has to be couched within an international dimension, otherwise we run the mistake of thinking either on a national level or a cultural level or a local level in our schools for example. And, if we weren't celebrating or recognizing or teaching about the different faiths that are practiced in the UK and the different cultural backgrounds, if we were just concentrating on the European dimension that would actually be quite racist in our context. So, I think that it will continue to be the case that the international dimension in the UK is very strong and it would be a mistake to say that the European dimension is all that matters internationally and that the global dimension can take second place, because of the makeup of our population apart from anything else.

This notion of a European dimension being couched into a global dimension was also well expressed by the citizenship advisor, Ms. Carter, who argued that 'global involves all sorts of European elements'. For her, it involves any type of country, whatever state of their economy or culture or democracy. This does not mean, however, that Europe was not seen as being

important. Specific examples provided by Mr. Davies in the Joint International Unit at DCSF included primarily school links between English schools and schools in other European members states and bilateral teacher exchange arrangements rather than an expansion of Europe at curriculum level in terms of teaching units in schools. Mr. Davies also referred to European-level activities in terms of benchmarking and peer review via the Open Method of Coordination and recognition of educational qualification structures. As a result of this emphasis on individual-level rather than curriculum-level European agendas, according to Mr. Lewis at QCA, 'the emphasis on Europe is likely to remain small (…) but what I would like to see is kind of that balance between the international and the European dimension'.

In contrast, Mr. Lee, a senior citizenship advisor at DCSF, thought that the European dimension should be more visible in the new secondary curriculum:

> MR. LEE: I think there are still too many people who probably think we're not really Europe still, and that's going to be a barrel that will take a time to ride down. (...) The European community is still really important. At the end of the day, schools will decide where their priorities lie, but there are some really good resources that are being developed. The local office of the European Commission has produced a very good pack for schools that includes DVDs and downloadable resources as well as the paper stuff. I think one of the problems that we know is that teachers think that the whole area of Europe is too dry, so it often comes back to teachers' own lack of awareness and confidence as well as competence in this. At the end of the day, it comes down to what schools actually deliver and yes most of us are concerned with the insufficient time given to European issues.

Similarly, Ms. Johnson, who was part of the 14-19 Reform Group that dealt with increasing educational attainment, developing and delivering diplomas as a new form of learning and

monitored infrastructure and training the teaching workforce, thought that the European dimension is very important and could be made more explicit in the curriculum. A more pro-European tone was generally noticeable among those advising QCA or DCSF who were not directly involved in curriculum design. A particularly critical stance was adopted by Mr. Holmes, an inspector and advisor within Ofsted:

> MR. HOLMES: If I said which aspects of the curriculum were not given due weight in these early years, the knowledge of the European Union and its works would be one of them. Teachers are very uncomfortable with this; they don't know how to teach it and make it interesting. So, there is a job to be done there amongst curriculum developers. I have seen some very good work in the schools on the role of the European Union in Britain within that, but it's rare and mostly I would say hardly touched upon. So, they go from the strong work on local, some work on the national dimension and then to the global. The European tends to be omitted, so there is much that needs to be done there to make it both interesting to pupils and relevant to their lives.

Currently, the European dimension seems to be furthest developed in history, but it is worth noting that these are mostly topics around the two world wars (e.g. World War One, Germany 1918-1945, Hitler and the Holocaust). There is hardly a post-war European topic, or even subunit, in the history curriculum or reference to the historical development of the EU. Instead, the curriculum celebrates British history (e.g. from Henry to Elizabeth, the English Civil War, Britain 1500-1750, Britain 1750-1900) and links national developments to England's emerging role as head of the Commonwealth (e.g. South Africa, slavery). The secondary curriculum guidelines emphasise that students should understand 'the major events, changes and developments in British, European and world history covering at least the medieval, early modern, industrial and twentieth-century periods' and the explanatory

notes went further stating that students need 'an understanding of the changing nature of conflict over time and attempts to resolve conflict and develop cooperation, including through international institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union'.

Arguably, one of the dilemmas of the recently completed secondary curriculum review was that the review was primarily about freeing up curriculum space. Generally, this did not aid the imbalance Mr. Holmes and other interviewees noticed with regard to national, European and multicultural values. But, as Ms. Johnson from the 14-19 Reform Group rightly pointed out, there are several instances in the curriculum where '[Europe] is more embedded in quite a lot of learning'. Indeed, the national curriculum guidelines state that, in history, students explore the history of their community, Britain, Europe and the world. They develop an understanding of the diverse experiences and the range of ideas, beliefs and attitudes of people in the past and how these have shaped the world. Similarly, in citizenship, students learn about 'the UK's relations with the European Union and the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the world as a global community' (QCA, 2010). According to the revised key stage 3 (age 11-14) and key stage 4 (age 14-16) programmes of study, European values can be incorporated when exploring topical issues, including migration, human rights, the environment, diversity and identities.

It is quite clear that national and multicultural values remain dominant in England, complemented more recently by a new global dimension. For example, 'Identities and Diversity: Living Together in the UK' is now one of three key concepts of the revised citizenship programme (the others being 'democracy and justice' and 'rights and responsibilities'). Commenting on the rationale for including diversity and identity as a key concept in the curriculum, Ms Carter said:

MS. CARTER: I think it's to do with the politicization of education and the fact that certain major world events have led people to worry about extremism and terrorism and

all those things. (…) I don't think Keith Ajegbo would have been asked to do his review if 9/11 hadn't happened. I don't think it would have been in anybody's mind to be honest. The fact that's been done because of that is probably insignificant in a way; it's something that I think we should be doing anyway so I am pleased about it. But, I guess it means that attention on Europe and other things, kind of get sidelined a little bit. And there is certainly a lot of concern from the government, ministers and people that I interact with other faith issues really, and the Muslim question, as they call it. It does divert you sometimes and it does have an impact and I think it is good for us policy makers to be reminded that there are other important elements happening as well.

Nowhere in the curriculum is the 'civic rebalancing' of multiculturalism (Meer & Modood, 2009) expressed more explicitly than in citizenship with community cohesion becoming the policy buzzword enshrined in the new secondary curriculum. According to Mr. Lee, citizenship advisor at DCSF, cohesion and diversity, multiculturalism and integration 'are mutually supportive' concepts. Mr. Holmes at Ofsted agrees with this viewpoint acknowledging, however, that 'some groups saw community cohesion actually as eroding their identity and they wanted to celebrate the diversity side and so this is somehow opposed to that. (...) There is I think a value in establishing a common ground'.

Besides reforming the citizenship curriculum and including a formal element of community cohesion education, another potentially cohesive, yet often underdeveloped, factor in schools is student participation in democratic processes. Maitles and Deuchar (2006), for instance, highlight three school initiatives to take forward the citizenship agenda in the light of children's rights: pupil councils, discussing controversial social and political issues in the classroom such as the Iraq war, and developing more participatory and democratic practices in the classroom. They argue it is important to grant students autonomy and convince them that their right to have a say is genuinely respected. One way of 'living

democracy' is through pupil councils which 'have long been recognized as an effective vehicle for enabling the expression of thoughtful and active citizenship' (ibid.: 251, see also MacIntyre and Pedder, 2005). The most common type of skills acquired in the pupil council includes discussion, teamwork skills and taking responsibility. However, research suggests that staff often pay lip-service to students' suggestions which may be related to the continued existence of largely undemocratic authoritarian schools (see Osler and Starkey, 2002). Although young people are somewhat alienated from formal politics, they are active and interested in environmental issues, animal welfare issues, the developing world to mention but a few. Research underscores that autocratic learning styles are much less popular than working in teams of their own choice, learning from visiting speakers and independent resource-based learning. Moreover, participatory learning styles have a largely positive impact on students' citizenship values, also improving their motivation and interest (e.g. Maitles and Gilchrist, 2006). This raises important questions beyond curriculum reform to also revisit teacher practices in classrooms, and to see community cohesion not only as a top-down policy agenda but as a democratic and lived reality in contemporary classrooms.

Returning to the formal curriculum in more detail, with the exception of history, there is a balance between national and multicultural topics in both geography and citizenship. These are examples of, what I would call, an *inclusive national* curricular approach, retrieving a common bond between the national majority and minority ethnic communities through the promotion of multicultural Britishness. In citizenship, for example, students examine the diverse composition of British society by looking at national statistics, the work of the Commission for Racial Equality (replaced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2007) and the MacPherson report. In Year 9 (ages 13 to 14), one can find units on 'promoting interracial tolerance' where students learn about Holocaust Day and the life of Martin Luther King. In Year 10 (ages 14 to 15), some schools in London for instance

provide units on 'taking part', which discuss ethno-religious festivals such as Eid and Ramadan. In contrast to the prevalence of multicultural and national topics in both geography and citizenship (e.g. local democracy, the UK, governments and voting, local settlement), there was only one European teaching unit in both subjects respectively.

Although some interviewees, such as Mr. Holmes at Ofsted or Mr. Lee at DCSF, strongly support the idea of community cohesion, at the same time they do not think that the multicultural project has gone too far and that policymakers and curriculum developers should abandon it. Mr. Lee observed that Britain has learnt from experience with diverse communities, and that minority ethnic groups are not homogeneous groups but internally diverse. 'There was pluralism even within those communities', he argued, and 'when they claim to be speaking for everyone when it's perhaps that they are speaking on behalf of their own group within the larger minority group'. Ms. Johnson at DCSF commented:

> MS. JOHNSON: I don't think I particularly see any evidence that multiculturalism has gone too far and I think there are still minority groups, who if you asked they said they felt at times quite marginalized (…). I think I recognize the benefits of integrationist approaches and I think I know a little bit more about how it works in France or in the Netherlands, but certainly in France everyone is a French citizen and there is no distinction. We know from recent events in France, over the last year or so, that what it does is mask differences. (…) I think that personally the totally integrationist route doesn't work for me. I know that some people think that multiculturalism has gone too far and that we have perhaps pursuit difference and diversity to the point where we have kind of lost commonality and there is that risk but at the same time I don't think it's helpful for them just to pretend that difference doesn't exist.

Despite valuing diversity and advocating a sense of 'multicultural Britishness', Ms. Johnson highlighted that there should be some shared values around language for instance that enable diverse societies to function. Mr. Lewis in the International Unit at QCA equally rejected the idea that the multicultural project should be replaced by a more integrationist approach. He argues that 'it's the only way for people. If your culture, your background and your identity isn't part of something that you can bring into school, then culturally you are excluded from the mainstream'. Quite the contrary, he argued that multiculturalism should be stronger in the public domain. Although Mr. Lewis acknowledges a 'civic turn' toward integration based on a push for citizenship tests, he considers multiculturalism still a rather successful policy tool:

> MR. LEWIS: We do have this push and the citizenship tests have increased, but at the same time people who believe in multiculturalism, believe basically (…) that if you take something as complicated as London, which is not as poor as Delhi, but it is a very complicated place, you ask yourself how does London work and if you think you are asking yourself the question "who runs London" you are partly asking the right question. But, you are partly asking the wrong question and I think multiculturalism is linked to this idea of emergence, you know, things don't happen because someone on the top is making them happen, they happen because a myriad of stuff a little bit like ants. Maybe we don't really understand how ants work, but using our belief of how we think ants work, it's actually very complicated, the queen ant isn't telling all the other ants what to do. She is down at the bottom bearing all the eggs and stuff, but the colony works in its diversity and I think that multiculturalism is that. We don't have to have a single rule that makes it work which is what integration is, but we can make it work in its diversity.

Despite this privileging of what I call 'multicultural Britishness', all six interviewees agreed that more could be done to balance national, migration-related, European and international

(global) topics in the curriculum. They also concurred that the dimension that is most underdeveloped is Europe. However, it was only on my prompting that most would talk about what I perceived as an imbalance based on the discussions and curricular analysis. Ms. Carter in the curriculum division at QCA made a very interesting point in saying that this balance is variable across schools and that the principal can make a great deal of difference. 'One of our schools, which I'm hoping to do a case study, the head teacher is absolutely visionary about creating an international school he's got a very multi-ethnic school and really believes the global dimension holds the whole school together'. Mr. Holmes, at Ofsted, was far more critical than QCA about the perceived curriculum contents:

> MR. HOLMES: We don't think that the balance is right yet and partly it is because the overall content of citizenship courses is not yet fully out. Typically schools will touch upon these issues but there isn't a progressive sustained program. So, we have inspected and reported on education for sustainable development separately. And some schools are not yet very clear about how they should be teaching and how they should be behaving in order to educate their children in sustainability for the future. In terms of the balance, because as I said the work on participation tends to be local, my own review suggests that the local dimension is the stronger of them and the national less so and the international less so again and this is where some of the schools which have good cross-curricula work are doing better, because their geography departments have really understood their role vis-à-vis citizenship. Those children are better equipped than those where schools have put into citizenship program that is been taught by non-specialists for example.

Although Mr. Holmes referred primarily to citizenship education, his subject specialisation, he also thought that more could be done to intertwine local, national and international (including European and global) issues in geography. Similarly, Ms. Johnson from the 14-19

Reform Group at DCSF thought that 'there should be a mix of all those elements' but at the same time she acknowledged that schools might continue to put together these agendas in different ways based on their population and catchment area. Despite school-based variation, however, there 'need[s] to be some core element that is part of general education of any young people that gives them that openness and understanding of the wider world from their own country and Europe and beyond' (for more on school-based variations, see Author). Mr. Lee, the Government's citizenship advisor at DCSF, also highlighted that 'it's about the relationship that all these dimensions have with each other in actually helping children to understand the society we are living in and to participate as European and as global citizens'.

In the above quote, Mr. Holmes referred to different school approaches to citizenship in England more broadly (Kerr et al., 2004). 'Minimalist schools' still seemed to be at a planning stage, given that in this cluster there was a dearth of strategies for using extra-curricular activities as a vehicle for its delivery or recognizing achievement in citizenship education. 'Focused schools' had schemes in place to recognize achievement but the need remained to develop opportunities for active citizenship in the school and wider communities. 'Implicit schools' were not yet focusing explicitly on citizenship in the curriculum but they provided opportunities for active citizenship. 'Progressing schools' had made the most progress with regard to implementing citizenship education in the curriculum as well as in the school and wider communities. These last schools had an ethos that was mostly participatory and supportive of the aims of citizenship education, offered and used extra-curricular activities for citizenship education, and drew on varied delivery methods. In 2004, the 84 surveyed schools fell into each of the categories about equally, with 25 per cent in each category (see Kerr et al., 2004). In 2006, the proportion of progressing and implicit schools was unchanged whereas the proportion of minimalist schools decreased and the proportion of focused schools increased (see Ireland et al., 2006). As with the balance of national,

European and migration-related topics, English schools also continue to adopt different approaches to deliver a subject like citizenship, content-wise and methodologically.

One area identified by several interviewees as being important for both community cohesion and developing a European dimension was languages. Mr. Lewis in the International Unit at QCA, who speaks four languages besides English (German, French, Italian and Finnish), argued emphatically that 'all the evidence shows that if you know another language in terms of your job, you will probably do better, because it gives you a different mode of thinking (...) but we are way behind'. He was also highly sceptical about modern foreign language learning no longer being compulsory in England beyond the age of 14 since September 2004. It has to be noted though that, at the same time, it became a non-mandatory subject (i.e. an entitlement) at key stage 2 (age 7-11). A mandatory foreign language at key stage 2 was then reinforced in the 'Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum' by Sir Jim Rose (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009) and will become a requirement of the National Curriculum from 2011. England is not just unique in Europe for subsuming the European dimension under the umbrella of a global dimension but also for specifying that the mandatory modern foreign language can be either 'a working language of the European Union' such as French, German, Spanish *or* 'any major spoken world language' such as Mandarin, Japanese, Urdu or Arabic. Ms. Carter thought that:

MS. CARTER: The emphasis on French, German and Spanish – this sort of tradition of modern foreign languages as opposed to home languages and other languages – has been problematic in schools and they have started to recognize that. We now have a lot more qualifications available in Urdu and Hindi and other languages so the kids can actually get some recognition for what they are already able and competent in. I think the whole issue of what is and isn't statutory beyond key stage three is a difficult one. I personally don't think the key stage four curriculum will last that much longer, so don't expect

many subjects if any subjects to be made statutory in key stage four. That's my personal opinion. I can't see how we can continue operating with the four or five subjects being statutory, that we have diplomas and other things coming in at 14 to 19. I just don't see how it is a sensible way forward really.

Interestingly, while not opposed to the idea of foreign language learning in primary and secondary schools, Ms. Carter challenges the idea of a mandatory key stage 4 curriculum framework in England in favour of more choice and the introduction of diploma-level qualifications as part of the 14-19 strategy. The new Diploma qualification offers 14-19 year-olds practical, hands-on experience as well as classroom learning and is currently available in ten subject areas (business administration and finance, construction and the built environment, creative and media, engineering, environmental and land-based studies, hair and beauty studies, hospitality, information technology, manufacturing and product design as well as society, health and development). The aim is to encourage young people to stay in education longer while learning key skills for the labour market. Although the EU lists mother tongue and foreign language learning as two key competences for the labour market (see Council of the European Union, 2006), this is not reflected in England. There is also little, if any, guidance how these new subject areas intertwine national, European and multicultural values and reinforce the idea of 'multicultural Britishness' in ways in which citizenship and other traditional national curriculum subjects currently do.

Conclusions

I have argued in this article that contemporary curricula in England reflect the idea of 'multicultural Britishness', which is the prevailing political approach in England. This approach combines the promotion of community cohesion with cultural diversity. 'Identities and

Diversity: Living Together in the UK', one of three concepts of the revised citizenship curriculum, is synonymous in this respect. Rather than dismissing multiculturalism, the evidence in this study points toward what Meer and Modood (2009) called a 'civic rebalancing' of multiculturalism which was widely welcomed by my interviewees. More diversified opinions were found as to the balance between national, European and migration-related agendas in the curriculum with those advising QCA and DCSF as well as my Ofsted contact noticing an imbalance that should be addressed. In contrast, those more closely involved in curriculum design at QCA were content with Europe being couched into a global educational dimension owing to Britain's different ethno-cultural make-up and colonial history.

One of the broader concerns arising from this article is how to address the increasing migration-related diversity in Europe. At policy level, there has been an intense debate about how to bond different communities together given the underachievement, high school drop-out rates of many migrant students (see Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2006) and tensions between the national majority and migrant minorities in several countries. There is considerable divergence among nation-states with regard to how Europe, migration-related diversity and other agendas such as global education are addressed. Germany, for instance, uses citizenship education to remind young people that their country is a federally-organized parliamentary democracy whilst promoting what I would call 'multicultural Europeanness' in other subjects, notably geography. The Greek curriculum fuses notions of ethnocentrism and Europeanism in ways not so dissimilar from the promotion of European citizenship in the Irish curriculum whereas, in France, the space afforded to the national remains resilient and the ethno-cultural values determined by the history of the French republic continue to dominate the construction of national identity (see Author). Cohesion can thus be promoted and achieved at local, national and supranational levels, depending partly on a country's legacy. It is arguably less problematic that Europe is

couched into a global framework in English curricula. Instead, what is more important for curriculum developers is to continue promoting inclusive curricula that balance migration-related diversity with social cohesion and thus include citizens of migrant origin into the concept of national identity. England is a case in point in terms of inclusivity even though it has not yet managed to educate its student populace equally sufficient about Europe.

Another concern which relates to the promotion of community cohesion is the area of children's rights and participation in school. Holocaust education is one area of citizenship particularly suited not only to inspire young people to advocate multicultural values and combat racism but there is also longitudinal research evidence indicating the long-term positive effects of Holocaust education on students' values and attitudes (see for instance Cowan and Maitles, 2007). In addition to top-down policy reforms, it is equally important to give students a say in planning and initiative. School councils and discussions of single important social and political topics of interest to students are important means of retrieving cohesion. Treating students as participants in learning rather than recipients of reforms and teaching content not only results in better learning but elevates young people to active citizens who can make a difference. The debates raised in this article also have important implications for both initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

The promotion of 'multicultural Britishness' is also evident in subjects such as foreign languages where England developed a rather unique response by allowing students at key stage 2 and 3 (age 7-14) to learn either 'a working language of the European Union' such as French, German, Spanish *or* 'any major spoken world language' such as Mandarin, Japanese, Urdu or Arabic. While it could be argued that this approach undermines the development of a European political identity (and perhaps strengthens the idea of global citizenship), it could also be argued, as several of my respondents did, that this rather innovative approach takes account of the particular non-European migration background of many ethnic minority

students in England and still implements the EU criteria of promoting communication in the mother tongue and communication in foreign languages (see Council of the European Union, 2006). This underlines that in order to fully understand the complexity of contemporary national curricula, it is important to intertwine all educational dimensions instead of looking separately at national and European or national and migration-related issues alone.

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