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I should perhaps begin by stating that – contrary to the conclusions of an article from the *Polish Sociological Review* which a colleague in Warsaw emailed to me last wk – Multiculturalism in Britain is not dead... and Muslims have not killed it. It is – in fact - very alive and well. What I want to tell you, however, is that Britain is undoubtedly witnessing some re-positioning of previously established responses to migration related diversity – specifically a move toward ‘civic’ conceptions of integration perhaps best illustrated through the language of citizenship education. What I’m going to say today is that this re-positioning has not proceeded through - or indeed resulted in – abandoning a recognition and support of minority ‘differences’ – and that this is particularly evident within educational discourse and policy. But – due to events such as the London Bombings and the general fall out from the ‘war on terror’ – what has been challenged is the once dominant view that British multiculturalism as an incremental movement that would in time accommodate increasing levels of diversity. Now I think that the debates that arise from the accommodation of Muslims in education demonstrate these political issues quite well, and to explain what I mean by this we first need to take a historical detour. I say this because although Muslims are in the spotlight today, multiculturalism in Britain has emerged without Muslims being central to it – which means that they are not ‘pioneers’ of multiculturalism but are late comers to it.

So I’m going to begin with a brief discussion of migration related diversity to Britain, the British model of multiculturalism, what kinds of educational provision this has given rise to, and what the current debates are.

During an era of post-war reconstruction, Britain recruited skilled and unskilled labour from its former colonies and dependent territories. This was made easier by the introduction of the 1948 British Nationality Act. This Act granted former colonial subjects free movement to and from Britain through the creation of a new citizenship category: CUKC. Interestingly, throughout this period – and up until the mid-90’s, Britain remained a country of net *emigration* and this has only changed relatively recently, and has been accelerated by EU Enlargement.

So how does this translate into available figures on Britain’s ethnic minorities in general, and Muslims in particular? Well, we have quite detailed information on this because ethnicity and religion are recorded on the national census, and from this we can extrapolate the size of Britain’s Muslim communities as well.

Within this, the greatest proportion of Britain’s ethnic minority pupils are of course concentrated in England and the background data on the ethnic composition of these pupils - in the English state sector - shows that at the primary level, the largest ethnic minority group is Pakistani who accounts for 3.3% of all pupils, followed by White Other pupils (2.6%) and Black African pupils (2.5%). At secondary school level the largest ethnic minority group is also Pakistani (2.5%), followed by Indian (2.4%) and White Other (2.3%).

The variation by school districts means that the school aged ethnic minority population ranges from something like 1.5 percent of East Riding of Yorkshire to 84% of Hackney in London. Unsurprisingly, London has a very high proportion of Britain’s ethnic minority schools pupils with 44 percent of all our ethnic minority pupils in attendance at a school in London.

If we look at the religious profiles of these groups, which is relevant to the later discussion of religious schools, we find that Muslim children are disproportionately present throughout the education system. Comprising nearly 6% (588,000) of the school population from the entire Muslim population of around 3%, there’s a striking contrast between the number of Muslim children and the number of Jewish children of school age (50,000)—who represent only 0.4% of the school population (if we combine primary and secondary figures).

Also, and between May 2004 and August 2006 nearly 27,000 Polish, Slovakian and Czech children of school seeking school enrolment arrived with registered workers. Obviously, government data on these very recent migrants is not yet as sophisticated as data on the more established groups.

Now we could say that Britain's historical response to this migration related diversity has taken the form of a multiculturalism that's comprised of layers. Layers of policies & discourses at both the local and national level, rather than being based upon a single Canadian or Australian style charter or Act. But of course precedents or examples set at the national level have been adopted at the local level and vice-versa...

And historically, British-Multiculturalism has been most shaped by a national & local level Racial Equality agenda which has tried to remove barriers to participation in key arenas of British society... by promoting equal access as an example of equality of opportunity.

NOW this has proceeded through encouraging employers & public bodies to demonstrate that 'racial differences' are not an obstacle to participation.

And it was thought that this could be achieved by imposing a statutory duty to promote good 'race-relations' through such things as diversity awareness training and the monitoring of ethnic minority applications for job interviews OR job promotions etc to try to make sure that ethnic minorities are not paying an ethnic penalty and thus being denied equality of access.

So that's the proactive side, and it's supported by a reactive dimension of legal redress for *direct & indirect* discrimination.... which are also meant to act as a deterrent. In encouraging a climate of equal access / non-discrimination in institutional settings, however, it tended to operate on an Atlantic-centric idea of 'difference' as colour-difference.

So how has this been articulated in Education? Lets take an example that has historically been more salient other European countries more than in Britain.

In 2002, a British Muslim high school pupil was prohibited from attending her school while she wore a *jilbab* (a full length gown). Although the pupil maintained that this garb was proscribed by her religion as she understood it, her school considered it be a contravention of its uniform policy, and feared that other pupils too would be subject to undue pressure to adopt 'stricter' forms of Islamic dress if it allowed this pupil to wear hers. On first sight, there appear to be striking similarities between this and other salient cases that have arisen over the issue of *laïcité*. On closer inspection, however, the contrast becomes sufficiently great to discourage any simple parallels. For instance, the British school in question had already accommodated uniform changes that incorporated the wearing of, amongst others, trousers instead of skirts, *shalwar kameez* (a tunic and baggy trousers), and headscarves displaying school colours. Just as importantly, however, the school maintained that these accommodations had been made in consultation with the wishes of local parents and communities.

When a resolution to this case was eventually achieved, four years later through judicial means in House of Lords (Britain's highest court of appeal), Lord Bingham ruled *in favour of the school* but stressed that "this case concerns a particular pupil and a particular school in a particular place at a particular time. [...] The House is not, and could not be, invited to rule on whether Islamic dress, or any feature of Islamic dress, should or should not be permitted in the schools of this country". The clear emphasis was, then, on local level pragmatism instead of national level enforcement. Indeed, the *Jilbab* case was settled nearly a quarter of a century after another watershed House of Lords ruling *against* a private school which refused enrolment to an orthodox Sikh boy (who wore long hair under a turban) unless the boy removed his turban and cut his hair. The ensuing acceptance that Sikh pupils had the right to wear turbans, because they informed an important part of Sikh identities, consolidated the impulse for schools to seek negotiated accommodations of minority differences with a view to incorporating them within the schooling environments. Each case thus suggests that religion has been an important part of the ways in which migration related diversity has given rise to educational challenges in Britain.

It is perhaps surprising then to note how the most prominent approaches have historically had very little to say about religion minorities in education. Indeed, it would be fair to say that up until recently: educators, policy-makers and broader communities have sometimes favoured diverging, indeed

competing, strategies. Two of the most prominent approaches might be cast together as anti-racist and multicultural education.

Now, to a large extent, we borrowed our approach to anti-racist education from the US, where it was assumed that because racial biases existed amongst all students, teachers and institutional practices, racism was a key factor shaping the educational experience of migration related minorities, and so not only a problem for ethnic minorities to address alone, but something that should be confronted and challenged during early socialisation.

Throughout the 1980s this view was supported by evidence that children with African-Caribbean backgrounds were disproportionately disadvantaged by our education system, and that this disadvantage could be redressed by promoting a positive image of 'black' people through such means as the teaching of 'black' history, promotion of 'black' role models, recognition of continuing racism in society, and a greater awareness and sensitivity amongst educators of racial issues.

So you have a focus here both upon agency and structure, in specifically wanting to change attitudes and behaviours... BUT while such initiatives stirred national debates – and backlashes – their adoption in policy was more piecemeal and more likely, with a few important exceptions, of being limited to the Inner London Education Authority.

One of the earliest adoptions of multicultural education, meanwhile, could be found in a new Agreed Syllabus – introduced in Birmingham in 1975 – and which required that pupils learn about and learn from the world faiths found in their city. Other innovations included the provision of *halal* meat in schools and the willingness to make uniform amendments.

Elsewhere, the guidelines issued by Bradford city council espoused the view that while all children were entitled to equality of treatment, the authorities should also provide educational services that respected the strength and variety of different cultural values so far as it was compatible with individual needs.

Just as with anti-racism, however, multicultural educational provision was also piecemeal. Both nevertheless amounted to diffuse conceptions of educational reform...

Much of what we know as both anti-racist and multicultural education comes from activity at the local education authority level. This is because LEAs are responsible for education within the jurisdiction of county councils and metropolitan boroughs, which includes responsibility for most state schools...

As such, because of these and other powers, including section 11 of the Local Government Act which in 1966 gave local authorities additional funds to support the presence ethnic minorities requiring language and other access assistance, in many multi-ethnic urban areas LEAs have thus been able to encourage anti-racist and multicultural initiatives in the face of some vociferous opposition.

This changed when conservative government made radical changes to the autonomy of state schools through the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988. This Act required every school to adhere to a school curriculum that was centrally defined and compulsorily prescribed, as well enforcing the mandatory testing of pupils at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 years (alongside the publication of school league tables as a measure of school performance and success).

One way of addressing these dynamics is evidenced through a recent policy shift toward citizenship education.

The formal introduction of citizenship education into British schools is a recent development that was preceded by a report from the Curriculum and Qualifications Authority chaired by Professor Sir Bernard Crick.

This late introduction of citizenship education in Britain, particularly when compared with North America and some European countries, is an interesting anomaly, and in Crick's words: "we were the last civilised country almost in the world to make citizenship part of the national curriculum. I think we thought we didn't need it being the mother of all parliaments and a model to the world of parliamentary government; I think those ideas lingered on and long past reality (Interview, Crick).

The objectives, meanwhile, are both very ambitious and idealistic...

Faith Schools

The issue that really cuts across the development of antiracism, multiculturalism and citizenship education is the issue of state-funded faith based schooling.

AND its worth noting how anti-racism has often been stridently secularist and implicitly, if not explicitly, ambivalent or opposed to faith-based schooling, and that multicultural education in Britain as often expressly ruled out the faith schooling sought by recent religious minorities (but maintained the status quo as per established groups), meanwhile the Crick report did not engage with the issue of faith schooling because it fell outside its remit.

These discursive oversights are problematic because there are currently over 4,700 state funded Church of England schools; over 2100 Catholic; 35 Jewish and 28 Methodist schools. When these figures are compared to the number of Muslim schools, of which there are only 7, or the single Sikh school, we find that campaigns for faith schooling in the state sector are indicative of "a modern society which is widely perceived as increasingly secular but is paradoxically increasingly multi-faith" (Skinner, 2002: 172).

The first is the desire to create a space for more faith-based principles to be incorporated into an integrated education system, so that the 'whole person' can be educated in an Islamic environment.

Secondly - and through an interpretation of Islam which states that after puberty boys and girls should be separated - there is the concern to develop a 'safe' environment for post-pubescent children, and in this regard the possibility of single sex schooling is very appealing to British-Muslim parents.

On this single issue the Muslim Parents Association (MPA) was formed in Bradford, and subsequently witnessed the creation of a number of independent, single sex secondary schools, which housed separate teaching rooms. The creation of Feversham College in Bradford exemplifies this approach, something that is paralleled in Catholic faith schooling.

Simultaneously, this is not a policy desired for primary schooling, and is also contradicted by some existing secondary Muslim schools that employ mixed teaching classes.

Thirdly, there is an aspiration for establishments that offer specialist training in the Islamic religious sciences - in conjunction with general education - so that young people might be educated to serve their community as potential religious leaders.

This includes the desire to have more British trained theologians and imams who can discuss theological issues with a contemporary resonance to the lived experience of being a Britain-Muslim.

Simultaneously, since the school curriculum inevitably involves some transmission of culture - and in much the same way that they request greater recognition in state-sector schooling - Muslim parents want to see more aspects of Islamic culture embedded within the teaching and ethos of schools.

This then is to contest the exclusive preoccupation of education contextualized within a Christian European tradition, and involves widening the school's curriculum to impart knowledge through the study of Islamic civilisations; literature; languages and arts both past and present.

Finally, there is the concern over the lower educational attainment of Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in particular, and the belief that greater accommodation of cultural difference will help remedy this low achievement.

Religious discrimination; Islamophobia; the lack of Muslim role models in schools; low expectations on the part of teachers; time spent in after-school mosque classes; the lack of recognition of students Muslim identities etc are all deemed to be contributory factors. It is felt - then - that Muslim schools can help counter these experiences and elevate educational outcomes.

Conclusions

Anti-racist and multicultural educational concerns, while sometimes amounting to an internally contested debate, have had a continuing impact on educational policy and discourse. This is most evident in the view that educators should be proactive in ensuring that ethnic minorities are not disadvantaged by ethnic and racial 'difference', and that one way of ensuring this is to promote and recognise the positive benefits of diversity. Moreover, the challenges posed by migration related diversity in education are more frequently discussed in terms national concerns, where in the past they may have been more regionally focused in issues relating to local education authorities. To some extent this was precipitated by the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988) which curbed the operation of anti-racist and multicultural education but also incorporated some of their concerns. This ambiguous relationship between the imposition of a prescribed unity alongside the recognition of difference and diversity continues to be apparent in the recent introduction and mandatory teaching of citizenship education as a core national curriculum requirement.

Running alongside the issues that have arisen within mainstream education, religious minorities are increasingly seeking an expansion of schools with a religious ethos in the state maintained faith sector. On the one hand this marks a continuation of the settlement achieved under the terms of the 1944 Education Act, whilst on the other hand the mobilisations for Muslim schooling in particular is not solely premised upon the issue of parity, but also upon the recognition of Muslim particularity in the pluralizing the type of faith schooling in the voluntary aided sector.