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Citizenship education and the Ajegbo report: re-imagining a cosmopolitan nation

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Following the 2005 London bombings, there is widespread public debate about diversity, integration, and multiculturalism in Britain, including the role of education in promoting national identity and citizenship. In response to official concerns about terrorism, a review panel was invited to consider how ethnic, religious and cultural diversity might be addressed in the school curriculum for England, specifically through the teaching of modern British social and cultural history and citizenship. The resultant Ajegbo report proposes a new strand on 'identity and diversity: living together in the UK', be added to the citizenship education framework. While the report gives impetus to teaching about diversity, it does not strengthen the curriculum framework proposed in the Crick report. It fails to adopt a critical perspective on race or multiculturalism or adequately engage with young people's lived experiences of citizenship within a globalised world. I analyse how the review panel conceptualises identity, democracy and diversity. I then consider its assumptions about racism, human rights, and citizenship education, concluding with reflections on how citizenship education might be developed in the task of re-imagining the nation and meeting the needs of emergent cosmopolitan citizens.

Keywords: identities; multiculturalism; human rights; racism; cosmopolitanism; globalisation

Introduction

Following the London bombings on 7 July 2005, a number of senior UK government ministers made speeches on diversity, integration and multiculturalism in Britain. Although education was a stated priority of the Blair government from the 1997 election, it was only after the terrorist attacks that senior government figures began to stress the importance of education in uniting the nation. In January 2006, some 18 months before he became Prime Minister, Gordon Brown gave a widely reported speech on Britishness, 'British values' and patriotism (Brown 2006) emphasising the importance of teaching British history. Later that year the Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke for the first time about education, British values and the importance of multiculturalism (Blair 2006).

In 2006 the government ordered a review which set out to examine ways in which ethnic, religious and cultural diversity might be addressed within the school curriculum for England, specifically through the teaching of modern British social and cultural history and citizenship. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) invited Sir Keith Ajegbo, a former school principal, to lead the Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review Panel. The DfES also commissioned a research study, consisting of a literature review and case study research (Maylor et al. 2007) to support the Ajegbo Panel. The literature review which Maylor and her colleagues undertook was ambitious given the timescale, covering diversity, ethnicity, identity, citizenship, history and other curriculum areas.

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This article examines the report of the Ajegbo Panel (DfES 2007a), which was commissioned at a time of heightened public debate about citizenship, national identity, the integration of minorities and multiculturalism. This ongoing debate has been unfolding since the summer of 2001, following British National Party (BNP) activity and the subsequent participation of White and South Asian youths in disturbances and riots in a number of northern towns. The government-commissioned Cantle report into the experiences of those living in these towns suggested that 'segregated communities' were living 'parallel lives' (9) and that schooling, as well as housing arrangements fostered separation (Home Office 2001). The attacks of 11 September 2001 in the US and more particularly the London terrorist attacks on 7 July 2005 increased the intensity of debates about diversity and belonging and have given them an international dimension. In commissioning the Ajegbo report, the government made a direct link between the need to counter terrorist activity and to strengthen national identity and British values through the curriculum. The official press release was entitled 'Johnson [then Secretary of State for Education] says pupils need to learn our history to understand British values in citizenship classes'. It states: 'The report was commissioned after concern about growing extremism and division in society after the London terrorist bombings' (DfES 2007b).

I examine the language of the Ajegbo report, reflecting on the ways in which it addresses and/or avoids questions of identity, democracy and diversity. These concepts are all taking on changing meanings in the context of a developing national and international policy discourse on security and terror. I also reflect on the assumptions of the Ajegbo report about racism, human rights, citizenship, and the role of citizenship education and history education in the shaping of identities within a society characterised by diversity. I consider whether the Ajegbo proposal relating to a new strand in the citizenship education framework on 'identity and diversity: living together in the UK', strengthens the citizenship education framework formally adopted following the Crick report (QCA 1998).

Although there have been no independently funded large scale research studies of citizenship learning and teaching in schools since citizenship was introduced into the national curriculum for England in 2002, the Ajegbo Panel was in a position to benefit from a broad range of research, scholarship and curriculum development in this field and in the field of race, ethnicity and education. The research presented to the Ajegbo Panel by Maylor and her colleagues (2007) drew on existing literature reviews on citizenship and democracy in schools, notably on a review of the literature on education for democratic citizenship (EDC) conducted on behalf of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (Osler and Starkey 2006) and on another review undertaken as part of the DfES longitudinal study on the implementation of citizenship education in schools (Kerr and Cleaver 2004). Importantly, both the BERA Review and the work of Maylor's team (2007) extend beyond England to include research from other parts of the UK and internationally. I examine the extent to which the Ajegbo report draws on and interprets this body of knowledge.

I conclude with some reflections on the type of citizenship education needed if we are to re-imagine the nation as cosmopolitan and equip young people to participate in an increasingly globalised world. I draw on theoretical scholarship on education for cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler and Vincent 2002; Osler and Starkey 2003, 2005) and empirical data in which we have analysed the perspectives of young people, teachers and policy-makers on issues of citizenship and belonging and on identity, diversity and school leadership (Osler 2006; Osler and Morrison 2000, 2002; Osler and Starkey 2001, 2003, 2005).

From Crick to Ajegbo: citizenship and structural inequalities

The Crick report (QCA 1998), which provided a rationale and a framework for the development of citizenship education in England, proposed a framework for citizenship learning consisting of

three inter-related strands: social and moral responsibility towards those in authority and each other; community involvement, including service to the community; and political literacy or the knowledge, skills and values to be effective in public life. The Ajegbo report adds a fourth strand to the framework, entitled 'identity and diversity; living together in the UK', suggesting that:

> This strand will bring together three conceptual components:
>
> - Critical thinking about ethnicity, religion and 'race'
> - An explicit link to political issues and values
> - The use of contemporary history in teachers' pedagogy to illuminate thinking about contemporary issues related to citizenship. (DfES 2007a, 97)

It proposes that learning will include contextualised understanding of the UK as a multinational state; immigration; the Commonwealth and the legacy of empire; the European Union; and the extension of the franchise. I focus in this section on whether, in proposing this new strand, the Ajegbo report adds anything to the conceptual framework proposed by the working group led by Crick.

The Crick report was subject to a number of criticisms for the ways in which it addressed questions of race, equality and difference. I argue that any programme of citizenship education needs to enable young people to identify and understand the barriers to citizenship and equip them with the skills to challenge and overcome those barriers. Identifying racism as one of the key forces which undermine democracy in Europe, I noted how the Crick report makes no mention of racism when it makes the case the education for citizenship in the light of perceived threats to democracy. I argue that tolerance is an important but inadequate response within a society characterised by diversity and deep inequalities. Tolerance needs to be balanced by legal guarantees of equality of rights and the absence of discrimination, not just at an interpersonal level but also within the structures of government, in communities, in the workplace, and in key services such as housing, health and education (Osler 2000). In other words, we need to address structural inequality and institutional racism. The Crick report to some degree reflects, rather than challenges, the institutionalised racism of British society: it characterises minorities as having a deficit; it uses patronising language and stereotypes in its depiction of these groups; and it compounds these problems by failing to address racism and other structural disadvantages which act as a key barrier to full and equal citizenship.[1] Nevertheless, the Crick framework, with its focus on political literacy, has the potential to contribute to an anti-racist project:

> The concept of racism is absent from the Crick report … [but] with its emphasis on political literacy, the report does provide a key tool by which citizenship education programmes might be transformed to enable young people to confront and challenge racism. (Osler and Starkey 2000, 15)

Figueroa, reviewing the statutory guidelines for citizenship education in secondary schools, has noted how, although there is minimal reference to antiracism and 'no sharp focus on the meaning of citizenship in a plural Britain' (2004, 1018), 'citizenship education offers much potential for antiracist education' (see also Figueroa 2000, 2003).

Olssen (2004) notes that while the Crick report overlooks racism, to address it would not compromise the theoretical coherence of the Crick model. He suggests the Crick framework is strengthened if we add the insights of the Parekh report (CFMEB 2000). In a parallel discussion (2005) I suggest that the Crick report can be complemented by both the Parekh report and by *Democracy and diversity: principles and concepts for educating citizens in a global age* (Banks et al. 2005), which was the work of an international panel of scholars. The Banks report provides a model which is inclusive and which sees diversity as a strength but which also looks beyond the boundaries of the nation state, acknowledges the forces of globalisation, and addresses tensions between unity and diversity at all levels, not just at the local

level (establishing community cohesion) or the national level (re-imagining the nation as cosmopolitan) but at the global level. At all these levels the Banks report recognises issues of power and considers structural inequalities.

Bernard Crick has defended his report against criticisms that it fails to address racism, arguing that explicitly antiracist approaches are likely to be 'inflammatory – just what the racist white lads will look forward to in a classroom discussion' (Crick 2000, 134). Crick wishes to promote free and equal citizenship, yet it is not clear how this will be achieved if we are unable to name racism in the classroom, to engage directly with it as a barrier to equal citizenship, examine ways in which it serves to deny citizenship and citizenship rights, and identify strategies for overcoming it.

The Ajegbo report, published some nine years later, has helped set a climate which might encourage schools to take forward questions of diversity and identity in a pragmatic way. The Ajegbo Panel was asked to review ethnic, religious and racial diversity across the curriculum. It addresses issues of learning to live together in a diverse society and places these issues at the centre of educational debates. Importantly, it refers to the legal framework of the *Race Relations [Amendment] Act 2000* (RRAA) which requires schools as public bodies to promote race equality. It also sets its deliberations in the context of the duty which all maintained schools have from September 2007, under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, to promote community cohesion. This legal contextualisation gives it strength.

The Ajegbo report notes that many schools have not complied with the RRAA, and that only two thirds have taken the initial step of developing a policy (DfES 2007, 34). It rightly identifies this as a leadership issue (see Osler 2006) and recognises the importance of checks and balances at school and local authority level. Only one of 24 recommendations in the Ajegbo report is (partially) directed at Ofsted, but this addresses new legal requirements not the RRAA.[2] Ajegbo recommends 'that the DfES and Ofsted should ensure that schools and inspectors have a clear understanding of the new duty on schools to promote community cohesion, of its implications for schools' provision, and *of schools accountability through inspection*' (DfES 2007, 10, my emphasis). It fails, however, to consider why, when schools are accountable through inspection, that some five years after the implementation of the RRAA these processes of inspection and accountability are not producing higher rates of compliance. My own research into Ofsted and race equality (Osler and Morrison 2000, 2002) would suggest that there may be much more that Ofsted can do to promote compliance with the RRAA, and that this is not only a leadership issue for schools but also an issue for Ofsted.[3]

Crick had already acknowledged diversity. Ajegbo complements Crick by renewing this focus and in reminding schools of their legal duties. Scholars are broadly agreed that Crick offered a framework for critical thinking about race and racism through the concept of political literacy, despite Crick's reluctance to name racism.

Crick draws on a civic republican model which emphasises the duty of the citizen to participate in public affairs; to respect the rights and freedoms of the nation state and its democratic values; observe its laws and fulfil the duties and obligations of citizenship. One difficulty in applying this model to citizenship learning in the context of a largely authoritarian school system is that the civic virtue of respecting the rights and freedoms of the nation-state can be distorted so as to imply that all forms of dissent are problematic. One example of a potential distorted interpretation of 'social and moral responsibility towards those in authority' might be that young people are encouraged to accept uncritically or unreflectively government policies or policing tactics at a time of a national crisis or apparent threat.

Dissent may arise, for example, out of commitment to the society and out of solidarity with fellow citizens whose rights are under threat. It can be expressed with the intention of upholding the democratic values of the nation state. To take an unpopular stand can demand civic courage.

Criticisms of established and institutionalised practices may stem from a desire to restore shared democratic principles. Such criticisms may reflect a commitment to the nation-state and reflect social and moral responsibility, rather than disloyalty.

A further difficulty with the model of citizenship proposed in the Crick report is the implication that since legal safeguards are in place, full and equal citizenship for all is realised. The model allows little if any space for the stories of those who continue to experience barriers in fully realising their citizenship rights.

As I have sought to demonstrate, the Ajegbo report does not change the conceptual framework proposed by Crick. Neither report directly addresses society's structural inequalities and barriers to citizenship. A critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of legal safeguards as a way of securing race equality would have strengthened the Ajegbo Review. A new strand to the curriculum 'identity and diversity: living together in the UK' has the potential to address young people's needs and concerns, but only if it is matched by a pedagogy and analysis which focuses on justice and which allows young people to develop skills for critical thinking and political change. It is to this issue I now turn.

Critical thinking on race and multiculturalism

Despite the assertion in the Ajegbo report that schools need to adopt critical thinking on ethnicity, religion and race (DfES 2007a, 97), the report itself does not achieve this. As discussed above, what is missing from the report is an explanation of why significant numbers of schools are half-hearted or worse in their compliance with race relations legislation. There is no proper acknowledgement of the structural disadvantage which students from particular ethnic groups encounter, expressed, for example, in differential examination outcomes and exclusion rates (Osler and Hill 1999; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Tikly et al. 2006). Unfortunately the problem of racism is deeply embedded in our education system and is not confined to students or to structural issues. Both teachers and student teachers from visible minorities may experience abuse as well as career disadvantage (Osler 1997; Basit et al. 2006, 2007).

Although the report acknowledges that many predominantly White schools do not recognise racism as their concern (Gaine 1987, 1995, 2005) there is a lack of critical analysis on this issue. Significantly, those who drafted the Ajegbo report look back to a somewhat romantic form of multiculturalism prevalent in Britain during the 1970s and early 1980s which overlooked structural inequality and instead emphasised a study of the other and 'celebration' of different identities. This is the model they largely endorse.

Writing about the 1980s the Ajegbo report asserts:

> At that time there was a significant debate between those who promoted multicultural education, using the study of different cultures and ways of life to promote 'positive images' and those promoting anti-racist education. The latter were keen to provide the politically correct explanation of why colonialism and imperialism have resulted in a world in which racism, class inequalities and sexual oppression are ubiquitous round the world. … Perhaps because of the National Curriculum – or of a changing political climate – the debate between the multiculturalists and the anti-racists went into abeyance. (DfES 2007, 26)

The language of the report, referring to political correctness when discussing global inequalities, has the effect of trivialising the barriers to full citizenship and some of the gross injustices and human rights abuses in the world, issues about which many young people feel passionately (see Osler and Starkey 2003, 2005).

Not all scholars in the 1980s and 1990s (in Britain and internationally) agreed there was an inevitable conflict between anti-racist and multicultural education; some sought a synthesis between the two (see Leicester 1986, 1989), with Figueroa arguing that both were necessary in

Britain since 'Britain is both culturally diverse and racist … while nevertheless … containing important antiracist forces' (1991, 50). The claim that debates about multiculturalism and antiracism went into abeyance is also to ignore ongoing research and scholarship in the field, including work on critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy (for example, McLaren 1994; Sleeter and McLaren 1995; Apple 2001; Giroux 2005) and ongoing work on critical race theory (Ladson-Billings 2004). It also overlooks both research and policy development in the field of intercultural education (for example Coulby 2006; Luciak 2006), some of it critical, in Europe. In this sense, the Ajegbo Review is a missed opportunity to engage with research and inform policy.

It is worth reflecting briefly on different meanings and uses of the terms multicultural and multiculturalism. The term multicultural is currently used in a number of ways. First, it can be understood as a descriptive term relating to the cultural diversity of a society or organisation. Teachers we interviewed as part of the INTERACT European Commission-funded project tended to use the term multicultural to describe the diverse ethnic make-up of a school's student population (Osler and Starkey n.d.) rather than refer to multiculturalism as a policy approach. Multiculturalism in this second sense refers to policies and organisational and institutional arrangements. This is how the term tends to be used by sociologists. In schools, the adjective multicultural is most commonly associated with the curriculum, which might be multicultural whether or not the school population is diverse. Multiculturalism can and should be applied to a whole population, not just to minority cultural communities (Parekh 2000). Other aspects of school organisation and planning such as timetabling; the calendar and holidays; staffing policies; or partnerships with parents and the community might be developed taking into consideration the diverse cultures, religious and ethnic backgrounds of the school population. At the level of the nation state multicultural institutional practices might include legal arrangements.

Different models of multiculturalism can be followed, so in this sense there are many multiculturalisms. I have referred above to a romantic form of multiculturalism in education prevalent in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s which simply sought to celebrate difference. This model of multiculturalism ignores structural inequalities and commonly limits its horizons to within the boundaries of the nation state. Liberal multiculturalism has tended to confine itself within the boundaries of the nation and to neglect the wider global picture. Multiculturalism has also been used to describe political movements and struggles when marginalised groups have demanded maintenance and recognition of their cultures in the face of assimilationist demands. Such political movements, including movements which challenge assimilationist education systems, tend to have a critical and antiracist agenda. Finally, multiculturalism is used by political philosophers to theorise societal responses to diversity (see, for example, Kymlicka 1995).

Reflecting on a wide range of factors including processes of globalisation, migration, a crisis in British identity, and recognition of difference, Stuart Hall argues that we need to consider 'not in a drifting, unthinking way, but in a reflexive, serious and sustained way, how institutions in Britain need to change as a consequence of cultural diversity' (Hall 2000, 51). In other words, we can either continue to develop piecemeal multicultural policies or systemically apply ourselves to what multicultural citizenship might look like. With its backward glance to the tentative multicultural initiatives in education in the 1980s, and its neglect of the wider international picture, the Ajegbo Panel misses the opportunity to make a significant contribution to current debates on citizenship and citizenship education in a global age.

Critical race theory (CRT), which begins with the notion that racism is an everyday reality, may, as Ladson-Billings (1998) suggests, provide us with deeper insights into the processes of citizenship education. As schooling purports to prepare citizens, she suggests that critical race theory may provide us with understandings of how citizenship and race might interact, so informing our thinking about citizenship education. I am not suggesting that the authors of the Ajegbo report should have taken on the task of applying CRT to the education of young citizens

in England but that the Ajegbo report makes mistaken and ill-informed claims about the state of research and scholarship relating to multiculturalism and racial justice.

It seems that an imperfect understanding of recent scholarship on whiteness[4] and its implications for education policies and practices in Britain (Pearce 2003; Gillborn 2005) leads the Ajegbo panel to suggest that what is required is to add White identities to the list of those which should be celebrated. It notes how 'Many indigenous white pupils have negative perceptions of their own identity' citing the case of a White primary school student (Year 3) who after hearing how other students in her class came from Congo, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago and Poland, said that she 'came from nowhere' (2007a, 30). The example cited is, in fact, from a case study school in the East Midlands visited by the researchers commissioned to support the Ajegbo Panel. In the full example (Maylor et al. 2007, 96) we learn that it is the teacher who has structured the lesson in a way that leads the girl to make the comment, rather than the child necessarily having a negative perception of her own identity.[5]

Other examples cited by Maylor and her colleagues suggest that many children (from both White and visible minority backgrounds) from a range of schools are able to express complex, layered and multiple identities, but it is teachers who are less confident about discussing these aspects of their students' backgrounds. Research in the UK and in the US suggests that some young people, regardless of the orientation of the official school curriculum or the expertise of their teachers, are confident in imagining and expressing multiple allegiances and belongings and that their understandings of citizenship and identities are neither fixed nor rigid, nor necessarily or naturally at the level of the nation state (Osler and Starkey 2003; Mitchell and Parker 2008).

When the Ajegbo report was published the BNP filed a news report 'The girl who came from nowhere' based on the Ajegbo interpretation. The story is reproduced in different forms on a number of other far right web sites. The BNP uses the story to attack multiculturalism in education. It concludes:

> A review of citizenship lessons in schools by Sir Keith Ajegbo, a Home Office adviser [sic], concludes that white children are suffering 'labelling and discrimination' that is severely compromising their idea of being British.
>
> Multiculturalism has failed a generation of school children because the concept is fundamentally flawed. Forcing disparate communities to live side by side where mutual contempt and disdain is forever just below the surface just doesn't work. It didn't work in former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union and it isn't working in Britain's inner cities. (BNP 2007)

While any statement or report on race and ethnicity in education might be taken out of context by a far right organisation to attack initiatives which support racial justice and to argue that White children are suffering as a result of multicultural policies, in this case the Ajegbo panel appear to have handed the BNP the ammunition by claiming:

> White pupils in areas where the ethnic composition of their neighbourhood is very mixed, or made up predominantly of different ethnic groups, often suffer labelling and discrimination, giving them a different take on how we live together. (DfES 2007, 31)

The Ajegbo Panel need to explain what they mean by 'labelling and discrimination' and what they mean when they suggest that White pupils are particularly vulnerable to such labelling and discrimination. Why is this disadvantage especially noteworthy in ethnically diverse as opposed to predominantly White disadvantaged neighbourhoods? Failure to discuss the impact of racism on White communities and individuals as well as on visible minorities and a lack of any analysis which contextualises changing White identities and relates them to other societal factors such as social deprivation, poverty, employment opportunities and housing quality make the above claim problematic.

Acknowledgement of the concerns of White communities in this way, but lack of acknowledgement of concerns expressed by minority communities, including concerns about racism, leads to an unspoken suggestion that 'other cultures' cause the problem in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. If this argument is made then there is pressure for minorities to change and adapt, but no similar expectation placed on White communities. In the Crick report it was asserted that minority communities need to change their public behaviour: 'minorities must learn to respect the laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority' (QCA 1998, 17–18). No parallel expectation of change was required from majorities. Instead, majorities were required to 'respect, understand and tolerate minorities' (ibid.). There was no recognition that minorities often, as part of their everyday experience, are required to exercise tolerance. In Ajegbo we appear to go a step backwards. The above quotation (DfES 2007, 31) seems to relieve White pupils of their obligation of tolerance and view their 'different take' as natural and unproblematic.

These statements leave the Ajegbo report open to misinterpretation. The problem is compounded by a lack of transparency in identifying the evidence base of the review. Although Maylor and her colleagues explain their methods and the processes of data collection (2007, 64–68), the Ajegbo report does not make it explicit when it is drawing on Maylor's work.[6]

Gillborn has criticised the citizenship education project in England, arguing that in a climate in which institutional racism prevails and where official policies disadvantage Black students, 'far from promoting anti-racism, in practice citizenship education operates as a form of placebo'; citizenship education is 'implicated in a series of policy developments that threaten to worsen an already critical situation' (2006, 85). My fear is that the Ajegbo report and the addition of a fourth strand on 'identity and diversity: living together in the UK' will prove to be a new placebo. If schools are invited to promote a depoliticised multicultural approach which does not encourage political literacy or critical analysis of democracy and diversity there is a real danger that this will leave unchallenged (and possibly disguise) the considerable inequalities within schools, while at the same time allowing individual institutions to assert they are fulfilling their statutory duty to promote community cohesion.

Yet there is often a vast difference between policy discourse and policy outcomes. Policy includes the processes of interpretation and adaptation of official discourse by education professionals. This encourages me to be cautiously optimistic. It is likely that some schools will play lip service to the new strand; some teachers will invite their students to engage in a study of the 'other'; and many teachers will teach about diversity without inviting students to analyse structural inequalities or consider what they can do to bring about change. Yet my hope is that other teachers (with appropriate support and training) may find a space and official justification for developing a pedagogy of liberation, transformation and social justice.

Ajegbo and leadership

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Ajegbo Review is the ways in which it is able to draw on Keith Ajegbo's considerable experience as a school principal. This is signalled in his foreword (DfES 2007, 4–5) in which he addresses teachers and school leaders, acknowledging the pressures which schools face, but also stressing the importance of questions of race and diversity for schools, young people and society and the opportunities which imminent curriculum changes provide. Those who only manage to read this message, the key findings and the specific recommendations to schools will hopefully be convinced that teaching for democracy, diversity and inclusive citizenship is a government priority. These few pages may also encourage them to make the links between education for democracy and diversity, the *Every Child Matters* agenda and compliance with the requirements of the RRAA and with the requirements of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* concerning community cohesion.

Ajegbo highlights these links through the report's recommendations, notably recommendation one: 'that all schools should have mechanisms in place to ensure that the pupil voice is heard *and acted upon*' (DfES 2007, 9, my emphasis). It is worth noting that Hudson, who conducted action research in Ajegbo's Deptford Green school on the implementation of citizenship, concluded that one of the key factors enabling success was the 'relatively democratic and open management style', noting how important it was to have a school principal who is willing to take risks (2005, 131; also 2006). Freire (2004) argues that change is inevitable and can be understood only in relationship to risk. Educators need to be willing to take risks, not spontaneously, but informed by a study of history, politics and culture. This advice seems to be particularly apposite for educators responsible for leading schools and engaging young people as citizens.

One of the most important of the Ajegbo review panel's recommendations is that 'Within all leadership training, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) should ensure that training in diversity and citizenship is an essential component … [and] the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) should include understanding of education for diversity in relation to the curriculum, school ethos, pupil voice and the community' (DfES 2007, 38). If the NCSL is to be effective in developing relevant training for school leaders, it will not only have to draw on the expertise of Keith Ajegbo and other experienced and successful school principals, but also to reconsider the model on which leadership training is based.

As I have previously argued (Osler 2006), the current model assumes a leadership which is White (and largely male) and a client group (i.e. students and parents) who are from other diverse backgrounds. The developing leadership discourse addressing diversity appears to draw heavily on the work of school leadership experts who have worked in international (post-colonial) contexts, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, but not on the experiences of school principals in Britain committed to racial justice, including those from visible minority communities. These experts adopt a cross-cultural paradigm which emphasises cultural differences. The model of cross-cultural analysis proposed by school leadership researchers seeking to explore societal and institutional cultures (Dimmock and Walker 2002) does not address equalities and inequalities. The danger of this approach is that it assumes schools are neutral places where leaders are required to 'manage diversity' or 'cope with diversity'. Where inequalities are recognised these may then be explained in terms of cultural (mis)understandings.

While Ajegbo (DfES 2007, 6) asserts that 'pupil voice is not given enough consideration' in education for diversity and that 'all schools should have in place mechanisms to ensure that the pupil voice is heard and acted upon' (ibid., 9), I would further argue that under the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC), which the UK has ratified, children are recognised as citizens who have the right to be consulted about decisions which affect them (Article 12) and whose experiences and interests should be at the heart of education planning. This requires not only a fundamental shift in our understanding of childhood but also a considerable cultural change in many of our schools. It also demands a re-thinking of dominant models of school leadership. The current framework is likely to generate research outcomes (and training materials) in which intercultural understanding rather than equity is the key concern. Difference is likely to be emphasised at the expense of equity.

Our research (Osler and Morrison 2000, 2002), carried out with school principals in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report (Macpherson 1999) suggests that school leaders had begun to recognise institutional racism in education and were anxious to do something to address it. Unfortunately, they were not always aware of how they, personally, might make a difference through leadership. While some recognised the need to monitor student performance by ethnicity and gender, others still felt it was enough to focus on *individual* students, but to ignore patterns of inequality, in order to make a difference. For example, a school principal told us: 'Our equal opportunities approach is very much to know what the needs of every

individual child are, what every individual child should be achieving and to be tracking that'. She confided that 'some of our staff do have a racist approach'. Her solution was to offer individual support to students rather than to address the training needs, or even consider disciplinary action, for these teachers (Osler and Morrison 2000, 133). NCSL and other training organisations need to revise their research agendas and practices, bringing them more closely in line with current minimum legal standards and with school leaders' own growing awareness of their role as 'change agents' (Fullan 1993) responsible for addressing inequalities of outcome experienced by students from specific ethnic groups. Those responsible for school leadership training need to consider the implications of Ajegbo's proposals on citizenship and diversity in context of current structural inequalities.

Human rights and shared values

Interestingly, the Ajegbo report acknowledges the debate on Britishness and so-called British values which have preoccupied the thinking of senior politicians and the media in the wake of the 2005 London bombings, but avoids participating in this debate, noting the advice of Bhikhu Parekh that: 'we can refer to British shared values only in so far as we can say that the UK has decided to commit to these values and in this sense take ownership of them' (quoted in DfES 2007a, 91).

Unfortunately the Ajegbo Panel does not appear to have fully understood this point, as the report reflects a degree of confusion about human rights. The UK has made a commitment to human rights, expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR) and in subsequent ratification of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC) and the European Convention on Human Rights 1950 (ECHR), which was incorporated into UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Yet the Ajegbo Panel, in discussing the Qualification an Curriculum Authority's citizenship scheme of work unit on human rights, criticises the statement that by the end of the unit most pupils will 'know that the Human Rights Act is underpinned by common values' saying that: 'it does not explore whether these are universal common values or whether these are common values for the UK' (DfES 2007, 94). Clearly, if we accept Parekh's claim, they are both. The UK has ratified the ECHR and the HRA incorporates the provisions of the ECHR into domestic law. Anyone in the UK (whether or not they are a citizen) can seek redress under the HRA and the ECHR if they believe their rights have been infringed. The values underpinning the ECHR are not just common values to which the UK has committed but also common European values to which all member states of the Council of Europe have committed. But they are more than this. The European Convention gives legal force to many of the provisions of the UDHR and the preamble affirms the universal common values of the international community expressed in the UDHR. Instead of giving a lead on universal common values the Ajegbo report expresses an ambivalent position.

Parekh (2000) argues that in a multicultural society and in a global community characterised by diversity we can begin to identify those values upon which we can achieve consensus, with the values themselves becoming part of a widely accepted political currency, acquiring new adherents. The ongoing dialogic process permits a deepening consensus. He acknowledges (2000, 133) that the UDHR was born out of a 'cross-cultural dialogue' and that consequently it has 'a genuinely universal feel' which explains why people across the globe are able to identify with and appeal to it.

Parekh notes, however, that while the international community has achieved a consensus on human rights, certain cultures and nations give emphasis to particular rights and contextualise them somewhat differently. Even when we draw on different religious or secular belief systems

we are usually able to achieve a consensus on how to go forward together in a community, or nation, characterised by diversity. As Appiah (2006, 71) suggests: 'We can live together without agreeing on what the values are that make it good to live together; we can agree about what to do in most cases, without agreeing about why it is right'.

Human rights offer a broad set of universal principles which set the framework for a dialogue (Osler and Starkey 1996, 2005). Some may use human rights as a basis for their values, while others may explain their values in terms of religious belief. Others may simply draw on a sense of shared humanity. In some countries many individuals may turn to the constitution as a source of shared values. But within the broad human rights framework to which nations and non-governmental organisations have subscribed and achieved consensus, a dialogue is possible. These principles can be applied within the community of the school and in the wider community of the nation, which Parekh (2000, 194) characterises as a potential 'community of communities' (see also CFMCB 2000).

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship: developing a new agenda

The Ajegbo report makes an important contribution in placing education for democracy and diversity on the agenda. Although it neatly side-steps academic and public debates about Britishness and common values (Blair 2006; Brown 2006; CFMEB 2000; Gilroy 1987 and 2006; Hall 2000; Parekh 2000; Phillips 2005; Straw; 2006 and 2007), there is an urgent need for further engagement to explore ways in which education, and specifically citizenship education, can provide a genuine space for a dialogue which allows individuals and communities with different experiences, values and perspectives to engage with each other, so opening up our institutions, organisational arrangements and public policies to a multicultural critique.

Without such a dialogue we are in danger of defining Britain as a multicultural society which imposes a monocultural citizenship on its members. Unless we open ourselves up to this dialogue and to change we may find we stumble into a formal pluralism (Hall 2000) in which we do, in fact, end up living separate parallel lives. The UK has made an explicit commitment to international human rights principles, and these principles, as we have argued (Osler and Starkey 1996, 2005) provide us with a framework in which this dialogue can take place.

I have argued that human rights must underpin citizenship education within communities, nations and a global community characterised by diversity (Osler 2008a, b; Osler and Starkey 1996, 2005). In many classrooms not all students will be citizens of the nation-state. While citizenship education needs to address the formal legal contract between citizens and the nation-state it needs to go beyond this to explore young people's lived experiences

Our everyday citizenship is most commonly experienced at the local level. Individuals will have multiple and changing identities and multiple and changing allegiances to local, national and transnational communities. Educators cannot assume that their students will identify first and foremost with the national community or that they will necessarily see this community as their primary focus of allegiance. The various communities with which young people identify are likely to reflect a range of values and beliefs, both religious and secular. As argued above, a human rights framework provides a basis for a dialogue between these communities, at local, national and international levels.

This implies human rights education for both students and teachers. Human rights education remains little understood in England but, as Verhellen (2000, 42) points out, 'Spending an occasional hour or two on the subject of children's rights in schools would clearly fall short of the obligation' which the UK has committed itself through the ratification of the CRC and other legally binding international human rights conventions.

We need to develop a citizenship curriculum which builds upon the growing body of research in the areas of critical multiculturalism, critical pedagogy and human rights education. This means that both teachers and students need to face up to questions of structural inequalities and power. This is a key area where the Ajegbo report represents a missed opportunity.

Finally, the diversity we encounter in Britain is not unique to ourselves. Processes of globalisation and changing patterns of migration are having an impact on societies across the globe. There is a global scale to many of the challenges we face, including the eradication of poverty and climate change. This is another area where the Ajegbo report represents a missed opportunity. It continues to conceptualise citizenship learning (and citizenship experience) within the framework of the nation state. Technological advances, processes of globalisation and, importantly, the lived experiences of many young people suggest that this model needs to be revised. Although the Ajegbo report acknowledges multiple identities, it does not explore or build upon the developing cosmopolitan, shifting and changing identities of many young people.

Some young people are already developing cosmopolitan citizens (Osler and Starkey 2003) whose life choices and political behaviours will have an impact beyond the borders of the nation-state. Nussbaum (1996) has argued that citizenship education should be freed from its established national focus and be reorientated and transformed to embrace the whole world. Processes of globalisation certainly call into critical focus traditional national approaches to citizenship teaching and learning. Education for diversity and citizenship is perhaps best conceptualised as education for cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler and Vincent 2002; Osler and Starkey 2003, 2005), which acknowledges our global inter-connectedness, recognises our multiple and shifting identities and equips young people to contribute and to engage constructively with difference at local, national and international levels, while at the same time acknowledging our shared humanity and human rights. Education for cosmopolitan citizenship, as we have characterised it, is not an alternative to education for national citizenship, or another term for what is commonly referred to global citizenship education. Instead it requires us to re-imagine the nation (Anderson 1991) as cosmopolitan and to recognise local communities and the national community as cosmopolitan. It implies a sense of solidarity with strangers in distant places but it also requires solidarity, a sense of shared humanity and dialogue with those in the local community and the national community whose perspectives may be very different from our own.

Notes

1. Unfortunately, some citizenship educators have apparently not understood this argument, wrongly and repeatedly asserting that I criticise the Crick report itself as an example of racism (Davies 2006; Davies et al. 2007).
2. Of 24 recommendations in the Ajegbo report, eight are directed to schools, around eight appear to be directed largely to the DfES and/or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; two to local authorities and one each to the Teacher Development Agency (TDA), the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and teachers' subject associations. At least three recommendations are not directed to any named body.
3. While Ofsted has taken important steps to address racial justice through guidance and inspection since our research was published, RRAA compliance levels among schools and other public bodies accountable to Ofsted suggest more could be done.
4. Briefly, whiteness studies address the taken-for-granted practices and routines which privilege whiteness in everyday life.
5. The concerns of the child were addressed by the teacher who helped the child to identify her origins in the East Midlands and find the region on a map. According to the observer, the teacher 'appeared less enthusiastic' about origins in England than elsewhere in the world.
6. It is not clear that some (or all?) of the case study material cited in the Ajegbo report comes from Maylor et al. (2007). The Ajegbo team reports case studies of schools (DfES 2007, 114) but does not

attribute any of these to Maylor's team. In their acknowledgements (ibid. 123), the Ajegbo panel simply thanks 'Uvanney, Barbara, Heather, Alistair and Nicola' from London Metropolitan University for providing them 'with excellent background' for their review. Nor are all the citations in the Ajegbo text to be found in the endnotes/ references. The Ajegbo review reports 'face-to-face interviews with over 100 key stakeholders' (Appendix 3) but the list of stakeholders (Appendix 4) contains a number of inaccuracies.

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