**Arabic Language Heritage Schools: the educational potential of celebrating identity and diversity**

***Abstract***

In this chapter we consider the nature and role of Arabic heritage / supplementary schools in the UK in relation to debates over security. We do this by establishing an overview of the current political context in the UK and beyond in where there is concern about a possible drift towards the proliferation of / recruitment to terrorist groups. There are significant official efforts being made to reduce that perceived threat. There are, within the UK, thousands of part time community based schools that promote and maintain the heritage language and culture of students. We describe and discuss that educational context and, drawing from a range of work with language heritage schools, explore issues in relation to personal identity and social identity and outline conclusions and recommendations which will help achieve a more sophisticated educational response to cultural difference.

***Introduction and context: current concerns over security relevant to education and schooling in England***

Concerns for the education and integration of migrants, combined with the effects on a host society have long been of interest to scholars. The characterization of ‘acceptable’ social and personal identities and norm-related considerations of migrants’ backgrounds often have implications for the host nations’ perceptions of potential threats. Established social stereotypes may influence not only how a host nation views migrants, but also impact on those migrants’ self-portrayal and understanding of their role in their new society. Inflated tensions can lead to what Bonino (2016a) refers to as ‘security syndrome’. The increasing global interconnections brought about by technology are relevant to how identity is constructed not only within, but also across countries. Lives are no longer (if they ever were) tied to a singular place or identity which can be construed as a threat to a nation as a singular entity (Georgiou, 2003) and in this complex scenario a feeling of uneasiness may result for both the host nation and the minority. Globalisation has brought feelings of insecurity to individuals, prompting them to seek reassurance in a collective cultural environment that may reduce this sentiment (Kinnvall, 2004). Debates about citizenship in its various forms and the education related to it are conducted vigorously. Increasingly, these social and cultural phenomena inform ~~debates~~ perspectives on how both dominant and ‘minority’ groups construct a nation and the role of ethnicities within it (Abell, Condor, & Stevenson, 2006; Skey, 2010). The perceptions about these identities and the reactions to them are significant across generations, thus making vitally important to find ways for children and adolescents to feel included in society, no matter what their background (Francis, Archer, & Mau, 2009; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Noble, 2005, 2007; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010).

In this chapter, we argue that Arabic heritage schools may serve multifaceted roles in British society, including identity formation, cultural stability, political and moral education and that these things are important in the determination to raise well-adjusted members of society. These schools are part time, community based educational institutions that support culture and language. They meet outside of times normally occupied by mainstream schools, may request a small fee and make use of a mix of trained and inexperienced teachers. They occupy community sites. ~~In addition,~~ These schools provide an opportunity for the sort of intergroup contact which has been shown to reduce prejudices and strengthen social cohesion and trust in institutions (Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Francis et al., 2009; Macaluso, 2016; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Heritage language schools exist in many parts of the world including for example Canada (Duff and Li 2009) and the USA (Musha Doerra and Lee (2009). We show how these supplementary schools define their role in England and how they use the teaching of the standard language variation to provide an inclusive environment (Blackledge et al., 2008) and we show how these schools relate to developments in citizenship education. Of course, we do not claim that these schools are always free from problems. They certainly seem to suffer from suspicions associated with a heightened atmosphere of security and no education group is ever free from the challenge of how to promote learning. A community group that is not always fully trained may be expected to face a range of challenges. We aim to show the complexities surrounding issues of multicultural identities in today’s society, using the example of complementary education as a site for exploration.

Community-led education provides safe spaces for identify formation, allowing children to bond to both the heritage and host society, while avoiding moral disengagement in young people (Aly, Taylor, & Karnovsky, 2014; Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2006). Complementary schools allow attendees a “respite” from their minority status (Francis et al., 2009). Of course, discourses produced within and beyond these schools are not straightforward and highlights various current issues in today’s society, emphasizing not only concerns about cultural identity and heritage education, but also stereotypical perceptions of minorities as shown in associated political and media reports.

Perceptions on security sourrounding migrants of Arabic heritage

Prior to an explanation of the specific nature of heritage schools it is necessary to make some contextual remarks which illuminate the nature of the society in which they are operating and helpful to establishing the ways in which those schools, their students and teachers are perceived. We provide this background not as an indication of our concern that radicalization and terror are connected with heritrage schools, but rather that ill-informed expectations and unfair assumptions about those schools are likely to be generated in a wider society in which panic and distrust exist.

Perception of migrants with an Arabic background has become synonymous with a certain type of reporting in the media that has fuelled host nations’ imagination of threats and violence associated with the culture, fostering a representation of divide between East and West as opposed to a dialogue (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Saeed, 2007). While misrepresentation of Arabs and Muslims has existed for much more than a century, media and reporting, both positive and negative, have evolved over the past few decades, and positioning has accelerated over time (Alsultany, 2012). There have been a series of violent outrages including 9/11 and the numerous subsequent attacks that followed over the last two decades across the globe (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Alsultany, 2012; Poynting & Noble, 2004). There has been widespread asylum-seeker phobia (Kushner, 2003). In the recent Syrian refugee crisis a whole people became a perceived threat to Europe (Zunes, 2017). Within the UK the effect of views about cultural pluralism have been significant in relation to the Brexit vote (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2016; Evolvi, 2019; Swami, Barron, Weis, & Furnham, 2018). These events together with the white supremist attack on Muslims in a place of worshop in New Zealand (Besley & Peters, 2019) have meant that the notion of Arabic identity has become increasingly difficult to navigate and validate by the diaspora – even more so considering the rise of what has been coined homegrown terrorism (Ghosh et al., 2013; Herrington, 2015). This includes forms of non-violent radicalisations in which individuals support, but do not actively participate (Richards, 2011).

The notion of terror has changed over the decades. Radicalisation and terrorism thus has far reaching consequences for society including and going beyond the loss of life (Ghosh et al., 2013). Migrants of Arabic heritage have been cast into not only an outsider role, but also are seen as suspects, a threat to national security, and following the 2019 New Zealand attack, a designated victim role.

Arguably, intergroup understanding is imperative for a functioning multicultural society (Georgiou, 2003). Education may help overcome elements of cultural discontinuation that children need to navigate between a heritage culture and a host society (Ogbu, 1982). Representation, positive and negative, is frequently oversimplifying complex connections, resulting in new forms of racism and misunderstandings (Alsultany, 2012). Migrant education may further emphasise differences between understandings of the legal notion that is citizenship and the basic human right to have a sense of belonging found in community (Anyanwu, 2018; Davies et al., 2014; Georgiou, 2003). Yet at the same time, supplementary education in a culture other than the dominant group may be viewed as a threat to integration of the migrant population. In the case of Muslims in Britain, Ashcroft and Bevir (2016) report prominent figures’ views on minority cultures in limited terms. “British multiculturalism allows minorities to prioritize their private commitments above their civic loyalties, thereby causing ghettoization and a breakdown in social cohesion” (p. 355). While youths have been identified as being susceptible to radicalisation, there has been little communication with vulnerable communities (Ghosh et al., 2013). Aiding children to develop an evolved sense of their identity may well be what is needed to help build a bridge between notions of security and the perceived threat that is the otherness of a foreign culture.

Views on education: policies and media

National and international media have shaped how ‘others’ are portrayed and the perceptions one group has of another. Media representation of teachers and education has been reported to influence decisions on policymaking and a nation’s view of the success of their educational system – practitioners are seen as upholders of the moral and social order (Alhamdan et al., 2014). Representation, even when based on research, is not always accurate and can further skew public opinion (Hammersley, 2003; Saeed, 2007). Young people’s engagement with the media further influences what meaning they attach to their cultural background and the heritage language attached to it (Hornberger, 2005). The media further can aggravate perceptions of stereotypes and may falsify views held by the majority of the community (Ghosh et al., 2013). As such, the media both process and negotiate what is portrayed as political reality (Alsultany, 2012).

While education and its representation is based on a country’s socio-economic and politico- historical situation (Alhamdan et al., 2014; Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 1999; Georgiou, 2003), global terror threats often evoke a legislative anti-terror response that may as a result dictate what is deemed admissible in an educational setting. In the United Kingdom, the counterterrorism strategy PREVENT has been accruing criticism for casting British Muslims into a designated outsider role (Aly et al., 2014; Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011; Ghosh et al., 2013; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Richards, 2011; Shirazi, 2017). It further demonstrates the power a nation wields in deciding what or who needs to be protected or feared (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Croft, 2012; Rumelili, 2015). This attitude leads to an often narrow interpretation of radicalisation (Macaluso, 2016) and a situation which is further influenced by the transnational reach of modern media outlets and the establishment of a global, rather than national narrative (Anyanwu, 2018; Georgiou, 2003). The effect on education of minority groups has been reported in various cultural contexts (see e.g. James, 2012; Matthews, 2002; Noble, 2005). Muslims have been especially stigmatised in the current global climate of distrust (Bonino, 2015; Choudhury, 2007).

Education, both mainstream and supplementary has far reaching effects on a society at last and acts “as a social practice occurring at the intersection of social structure and social agency” (Parker, 2011, p. 413). Macaluso (2016) describes schools as “a social laboratory in which to develop critical thinking and even encourage positive conflict among students” (p. 3). They aid children in their social and moral development in an informal environment (Aly et al., 2014; Pels & De Ruyter, 2012). Complementary schools, much like mainstream education are not only a social context, but also exist in a political space in which ideologies are resisted, challenged, or maintained (Creese et al., 2006). The British Council quotes Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford “Any terrorist I have ever met through my academic work had a highly over simplified view of the world, (…). Education robs you of that simplification and certitude. Education is the best possible antidote to radicalisation.” (British Council, 2015). We believe it important to consider education both in its general position regarding community and whole school experience and also in relation to the ways in which specifics relevant to ideas and issues of citizenship are taught and learned. We indicate immediately below issues generally about heritage schools as well as their contribution through language to identity and later in the chapter to debates more explicitly related to citizenship education.

Language, as taught in complementary schools can provide children with an arsenal of tools to navigate their role and place in society, building human capital (Blackledge et al., 2008; Macaluso, 2016). Concerns regarding radicalisation have led to education practices prone to marginalising specific ethnic groups, and diminishing social group cohesion (Macaluso, 2016). However, research suggests that immersion in heritage and cultural traditions aids in anchoring young people (Woodward, Rohmaniyah, Amin, & Coleman, 2010). Multilinguistic abilities are constructed as a valuable aspect in students’ identities and allowing them actively to develop agency in what role they want a family language to play in their life – even more so since the term “heritage language” is seldom treated with neutrality. Instead, it invokes not only issues of local identity, but also concerns for national contexts and meaning (Hornberger, 2005). Choosing to maintain a heritage language is associated with a purpose for the community, that, if not understood or communicated correctly may cause the majority ethnicity falsely to interpret the goals and desires of complementary schools and continue to paint them and the ethnic groups attached to them into an outsider role. However, considering the power of language to foster inclusion as well as exclusion, political and power-related notions need to be considered in any discussion about complementary language education as a contributor to society (Francis et al., 2009). Conversations on culture and the connected heritage language bring forth discussions on ideologies, national identities and belongings (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). Languages are inherited; and for families raising children in a country that does not utilise their mother tongue questions are posed on how to define the concept of a native language (Rampton, 1990). A mother tongue might not be the primary language a child communicates in, resulting in issues surrounding both personal and social identity.

***The nature of heritage schools in the UK***

In this part of the chapter we wish to describe and discuss more precisely heritage schools and the particular institutions in which we have undertaken research. We indicate how we researched a sample of schools and what we found. By providing these insight into the broad educational landscape in which heritage schools work and indicating our findings from specific sites, we are providing a platform for later stages in this chapter in which we discuss the contributions that are made by these schools.

Heritage (or supplementary or complementary) schools are educational and cultural institutions outside the mainstream schooling system “for immigrant and ethnic minority children” (Li, 2006, p.76). The reference here in this chapter is specifically to those schools that teach language and culture and not those that offer extra tuition. These schools are “part time community based educational institutions offering language and cultural education” (Szczepek Reed, Said, & Davies, 2017; 2019, p67) usually after school or at weekends. They hire venues suitable for teaching such as schools or community centres, where tables and chairs as well as boards are easily available. The schools are usually run by “parents and dedicated community members” (Gaiser & Hughes, 2015, p. 6) and receive funding mainly from fees that parents pay (Mirza & Reay, 2000). They do not receive financial support from the Department of Education or other official educational bodies; the exception is that specific schools sometimes obtain support from embassies of their home countries, religious organisations (like the Greek Orthodox Church or Temples), or various cultural charitable foundations, however support from such sources is rare. The vast majority of the schools fundraise or increase fees for parents to keep up with rising rent costs of the buildings or schools they hire for their heritage related teaching activities. The teachers who teach in these schools are often volunteers and are usually not paid to teach. Increasingly schools are trying to offer small rewards either through offering teacher related training (which the school pays for) or a waiver for the teachers own children’s fees. There have been instances where schools have been forced to close because of rising costs.

One of the main motivations for parents and community groups in the UK to set up out-of-school organisations to teach community or minority languages, i.e., those languages not supported in school or through the media (Hogan-Brun & O'Rouke, 2018; Jaffe, 2007), was Michael Swann’s 1985 report (DES, 1985 ). The Swann Report, as it came to be known, was commissioned by the Department of Education and Science to understand why (and how) ethnic minority pupils underperformed at school (compared to their white counterparts) and it was the third of three reports ordered by the then Labour government. Though the report did not advocate for bilingual education it did acknowledge that pupils speak minority languages aside from English and hence called for a positive outlook on “our linguistic and culturally diverse society”. In its conclusion, however, the report highlighted that the onus of teaching community languages was on the communities themselves as this was not the responsibility of mainstream education. Among the many criticisms of this report was that whilst it recognised the importance of bilingualism and in fact promoted an “inclusive multiculturalism” it did not support it nor the young bilingual children and instead heavily emphasised the learning of English (National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching, 2010). Although the report was and continues to be criticised for not promoting the teaching of minority languages, it did indeed push forward the idea and encourage debate on celebrating multilingualism and ridding education of racism at the time (Modood & May, 2001).

For many diasporic families and newly arrived or established multilingual transnational families, the learning of the minority (or home) languages is important (de la Piedra & Romo, 2003; Fishman, 1991; Said, 2015; Said & AlGhamdi, 2018 ) for linguistic, cultural and religious purposes. Given then that these schools are not supported in an official capacity, the parents then take the responsibility to find or set them up. Heritage schools create a space in which the “collective learning of language, culture and history” takes place (Lytra, 2017) and may at times be the only means parents have to help their children learn a heritage language. Some families travel long distances to find such schools for their children and endeavour to provide a cultural experience for their children at least once a week (He, 2004 ; Hogan-Brun & O'Rouke, 2018; Jaffe, 2007). As institutions, they create a space in which children can practise their multilingualism and explore the depths of their parents’ languages and cultures (Creese et al., 2008; A Creese & Martin, 2006; Lytra, 2017). Children do not feel isolated or different but are encouraged to embrace their multilingualism more fully. These schools play a central role in the children’s formation of positive social, cultural and religious identities (see below for further discussion on this topic).

Heritage schools challenge the monolingual ideology that is present in society, the media and the education system (Creese et al, 2008) by reaffirming that there is a sizeable number of the UK population that speaks more than one language. In the Census (ONS, 2011), 4.3 million people reported that they spoke another language alongside English (7.7% of the population). They use teaching materials from their home countries, which was and still is the case for some Arabic, Russian, Polish, Turkish, and Chinese schools. For example, the schools in our project explained that they make their own teaching materials or order textbooks from France, because the content of the curricula is modernised and designed for children in Western Europe (head teacher interview from Szczepek Reed et al., 2017). Schools are able to make decisions, find the funds, order the appropriate books and teach the children in the way they think will be most effective. Although they are not registered in the same manner as mainstream schools, many of these schools endeavour to deliver high quality and effective teaching to their students. Reading many of the vision statements of these schools (on their school websites) there is a clear intention to teach Arabic (or other languages) well and to equip the children with the ability to read and speak proficiently.

According to the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE, 2018), there are to date about 3,000-5,000 heritage/complementary schools in the UK. Such numbers reflect the need and demand for such schools to exist and although not all these schools teach language (some teach Maths, English and Science to support mainstream school performance see Evans & Gillan-Thomas, 2015) the vast majority do. The NRCSE supports these schools by training teachers in various aspects such as safeguarding, teaching skills, effective lesson planning and teaching resources as well as management skills. Schools pay for and send their teachers to be certified at the NRCSE and there is a recognition among many of these schools that training teachers is important for student learning. There is also a move towards attempting to register as many of these schools as possible on a national register so that they can be supported. Aside from supporting schools to become more professional and more standardised, the NRCSE also supports schools to award their students’ excellent performances in their heritage language. The organisation often leads or attends award evenings where students are given certificates for their outstanding efforts and such achievements are also talked about in the children’s mainstream school assemblies and classrooms. In this way, students are able to take the learning of their minority language outside the world of their heritage school and celebrate their achievements with their monolingual friends and teachers. The learning of heritage languages offers students a sense of cultural belonging and an understanding of their parents’ heritage (Lytra, 2017) and it also builds the students confidence (Creese & Martin, 2006; Szczepekc Reed et al., 2017).

This section has presented an overview of the nature of heritage schools in general and Arabic heritage schools in particular, explaining their history, formation and how they currently function in the UK. The importance of such schools to minority language speaking families in the UK was also addressed with details what role the schools play in the lives of the children. The next sections focuses on personal and then social identity. We do not offer to give a full account of the very many ideas and issues about identity (e.g., see Hall and du Gay 1996). We do not suggest that heritage schools can in themselves overcome all the challenges of those perspectives on identity that may limit public engagement (Sennett 2003). But we are suggesting, perhaps especially in the context of insights from postcolonial studies (see Werbner and Modood 2015), that heritage schools have a positive contribution to make to a society which is experiencing heightened security tensions. ~~present the findings of our heritage schools project and offer commentary on social identity, engagement in society and put forward an argument for multiple citizenships in a diverse democracy.~~

***Heritage Schools and Personal Identity***

The overarching fear concerning Arabic heritage schools remains the idea that these are environments conducive to facilitating the radicalisation of youth. The UK government has fostered a sense of us versus them, creating a cultural clash and pushing each ‘side’ to act independently and in conflict with one another. In fact, in many instances it is actually the ostracization of these school communities that fosters their potential as sites of radicalisation and the further marginalization of these individuals (Macaluso, 2016). However, there is an argument that it is in fact those who do not have a sense of identity who may be more susceptible to such persuasion.

Take, for example, the case of Morten Storm, who describes himself as “someone who did not have an identity, who did not have a higher purpose in life” (Bonino, 2016b). He matured in an environment with a troubled home and family life, and is an exemplar of how this struggle, combined with a history of criminal activity, other personal weaknesses, and a broader lack of personal identity may lead to the feared radicalisation. Storm attributed his lack of sense of self to his decision to become highly involved with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula after his conversion to Islam.

The very real and continued threat of terrorism requires community cooperation “overcoming distrust while generating trust” (Bonino, 2016a, p. 228). Instead of feeding a potential cultural divide, it should be explored how these schools can actual act as a facilitator for the very personal identity that may allow for a sense of belonging that guards against extremes of thought or action. Complementary schools cannot be thought of as solely social or religious entities, and should be evaluated with attention paid to their position in the political sphere, as a venue where belief systems may be articulated, contested, or altered (Creese et al., 2006).

According to philosopher John Locke (1689), in relation to personal identity, "self depends on consciousness, not on substance. Self is that conscious thinking thing". This suggests the requirement of a level of awareness to the construction of personal identity. Personal identity is a multifaceted concept, "often regarded as too idiosyncratic for proper social psychological analysis" (Hitlin, 2003, p. 118). It is difficult to describe chiefly because of its almost inextricable link with the broader social identity, yet it is key to understanding how we engage with the world.

Personal identity, by definition, focuses on the autonomy, beliefs, convictions, and values of the individual, as opposed to those of that individual’s wider community. It has been articulated as “a sense of self built up over time as the person embarks on and pursues projects or goals that are not thought of as those of a community, but as the property of the person" (Hewitt, 1997, p. 93). It is defined differently for each individual; traits that are significant for one person may hold no meaningful position for another based on their personal feelings, interactions, and background.

Cultural identity should not exist in isolation, but instead it should exist visibly to allow free choice of identity, “the identity is not a set, concrete entity, on the contrary, it is very flexible and it can change according to its environment, context, and expectations from the counterpart” (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1116). Embracing these flexible notions of personal identity allows individuals to fight against the increasingly prevalent ‘culture of exclusion’, which serves to foster environments of racism.

A key element of personal identity is the feeling the individuals hold of it being unique to them, and not a necessary aspect of their wider communities. As such, personal identity is contingent and changeable, contrasting with the more enduring concepts of ethnic or national identity. It can be assumed that personal identity includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects, including elements of self-concept, “the stage where the self realizes its existence and distinction from the society” (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1116), and self-esteem, and it has been asserted that self always precedes and produces identity (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

Intimately involved in the formation of personal identity are values (Hitlin, 2003), which “are subject to change, transformation, reform, and even revolution” (Cinoğlu & Arıkan 2012, p. 1128). Values may and will alter according to the individual and the society within which they act, meaning those who move within multiple environments will influence the values held by each. This fluid movement between worlds can lead to the values held in regard by the compulsory education system or secular world influencing those held with esteem in the heritage schools as the young learners move between them, and vice versa.

Cinoğlu and Arıkan (2012) refer to the importance of a sense of agency and known structure in the development of identity, and without this concept of being able to influence the environment one may instead work toward propagating an alternative, directly violating a sense of fundamental British values such as democracy, individual liberty, and or tolerance. Burke (2001) discusses coordinator roles, suggesting that those that hold these active and responsible positions develop a greater attachment to the organization or community within which they work, creating a cycle of engagement, belonging, and increased engagement and belonging. In this, the importance of understanding one’s social identity or identities becomes clear to understanding one’s personal identity; “personal identity shapes-but also is shaped by-our other identities and behaviors” (Hitlin, 2003, p. 122).

While most people will have a ‘master’ identity (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012), to which they ascribe the bulk of their sense of personal self, many people, and particularly those in a community so often the subject of outside ire such as the Arabic-speaking community today, will have multiple identities, calling on either according to their physical, mental, emotional, and linguistic environment. These multiple identities allow for finding a sense of place or belonging in different worlds, without which individuals may be more inclined to seek out or become receptive to the more ‘extreme’ thinking that leads to radicalisation. A life lived in isolation, as one may expect for those of minority backgrounds in majority cultures, without the ability to rotate through alternative personal identities, may also lead to a sense of disconnection from wider processes or structures.

There have been issues noted in the tendency for society to view identity as an ascribed status, rather than one an individual may choose to acquire (Kinnvall, 2004). This is particularly problematic in our current period where identity is more of a choice than ever before. With specific reference to heritage schools in the fostering of personal identity, “when educational practices reinforce language hierarchies and subordinate students’ existing identities and language practices, schools can become sites of institutional denigration of the learner’s sense of self” (Leeman, Rabin, & Roman-Mendoza, 2011, p. 482). Such practice leads to a sense of disempowerment in the learners, and reduces their chances for educational and wider societal success. If these individual identity aspects are not embraced one’s sense of self will be threatened. Parents have sought to challenge the negative representations of their culture group by voicing alternative discourse where culture is linked to the development of sense of self (Lytra, 2012).

Returning to the role of agency in personal identity development and application, it has been reported that students in heritage schools and communities often have difficulty knowing how to apply or operationalize the valuable skills gained through these multiple identities (such as language, cultural understanding, etc.), preventing them from holding meaningful roles in working for social change that may enhance the position of these schools. Such a sense of agency must be fostered among these young people to enable them to create meaningful connections between their heritage communities and their wider community. Complementary schools can provide language teaching that also fosters related critical thinking, communication, or interpersonal skills, among others, that may help to provide learners with structures and confidence to be able to become active in their wider society, building a greater sense of belonging (Macaluso, 2016).

There has been evidence found supporting the idea of increased potential for academic success among individuals who retain their heritage language, suggesting a greater likelihood for successful engagement in British culture. Learners at heritage schools retain a sense of being newcomers, regardless of how long they have been in the UK (Szczepek Reed, Said, Davies, & Bengsch, 2019). These institutions have been seen as a venue that allows them a “respite” from their minority status (Francis et al., 2009; Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2006), and holding a strong cultural identity as has been identified as a key tool in coping with racism (Zhou & Li, 2003).

A sense of duty is found within learners in heritage schools—they feel it is their responsibility to learn their heritage language and culture, and to not do so would leave them somehow deficient (Francis, Archer, & Mau, 2009). This deficiency may lead to the previously mentioned inclination to revert to extremes; without a sense of personal purpose or belonging they may be more susceptible to elements of radicalisation.

Throughout the process of the formation of self-identity there is often an unavoidable focus on otherisation, through which those aspects or traits that the individual deems as being different from their own, and subsequently dangerous or unwanted, are projected onto that other (Kinnvall, 2004). To avoid the internal creation of such extremes it is important for the individual to encounter those they are othering, maintaining their familiarity with them to lessen their demonization of their traits of difference.

There is an undeniable connection between functional and effective complementary schools and strong community cohesion, fostering a commitment to robust communities of diversity (Szczepek Reed, Said, Davies, & Bengsch, 2019). Heritage schools provide a venue for learning respect for others and for self, as well as a sense of civic responsibility (Zhou & Li, 2003). An important aspect of these heritage schools is the way in which they engage with the community, whether that be the wider community of their physical space or the actual members, with high levels of involvement among family, teachers, other volunteers and so on, of the school (Lytra, 2012). Such engagement with well-intentioned senior or adult others supports the identity formation of young people and narratives of belonging, demonstrating needed connection to an overarching mission and showing values and value-creation in action (Creese, et al., 2006). This community involvement serves to transform the “homogeneity that seems to characterise much of the teaching and learning in complementary schools” (Lytra, 2012, p. 99) and provides a space from which the individual can reflect on the development of their personal identity.

Holding a strong sense of personal identity is a foundational aspect necessary to the fostering and internalizing of what are referred to as Fundamental British Values. “The self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences; in forging their self-identities, no matter how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications” (Giddens, 1991, p. 2). This means, an individual both uses and influences their wider community in their process of identity formation (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012), and acceptance and engagement with the various environments in which they work is vital to maintaining a harmonious society.

***Heritage Schools and Social Identity***

For Arabic communities, the learning and language maintenance of Arabic as a heritage language typically occurs as part of family life, but it is also supported within the wider community through complementary language schools. According to Li (2006, p.80) ‘complementary schools are an important social context for developing identities for the immigrant and ethnic minority children attending them.’ Additional social elements that have been identified as being at the heart of complementary schooling are identity and cultural legitimacy (see, for example, Papavlou & Pavlou 2001; Martin et al. 2004; Creese *et al*. 2006; and Kenner & Ruby 2013, among others). Creese (2009) describes complementary schools in the UK as ‘safe spaces’ (p. 268) for children to ‘connect the languages of the home and community’, providing ‘an alternative discourse to the *minority language as a problem* orientation apparent in much of the current UK political discourse’ (p. 272, emphasis in the original).

Additional concrete examples of the community impact of complementary schools include maintaining good relationships with the organisations from which buildings are rented (often mainstream schools), but also advice and support for families who have recently arrived (Otcu, 2010). Zhou and Li (2003) show that heritage schools ‘foster a sense of civic duty in immigrants, who are often criticized for their lack of civic participation’ (p. 69).

These authors’ previous work (e.g. Szczepek Reed et al. 2017) shows that Arabic heritage schools are committed to a form of ‘consensual diversity’ (Szczepek Reed et al. in progress). Arabic language learning, and multilingualism more generally are important vehicles to achieve a strong identity in the context of a diverse Arab society, as well as that of a diverse British society. Teachers in Arabic complementary schools report that the teaching of the Arabic language and the attention given to heritage culture by the school mean that the students are ready to live, participate and work in a diverse British context. The key to this, they suggest, is for schools and their stakeholders to commit to developing a dedicated approach for young people of Arab heritage who are living in and contributing to the UK. This commitment to diversity and interculturalism is expressed through strong recognition of an Arab British identity. Teachers see strengthening students’ awareness and competency in their Arab heritage language and culture as one of the main mechanisms by which a successful Arab British identity can be enacted. From a school perspective, the teaching of Arabic is perceived as closely linked to educational responsibilities focused on values and identity formation. Multilingualism is highly valued for its potential to foster intercultural competence and belonging in students, as well as language and cultural competence. Seen in broader sociological terms, heritage schools are distinct community entities and as such are of considerable significance at a time when tensions within and between communities are on the increase. Tajfel and Turner’s (1986) concern with the relevance of membership of social groups, as well as Allport’s (1954) contact theory are only some of the important theoretical frameworks concerning the conditions that may help reduce prejudice (see also Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). Community heritage schools create an opportunity to develop a distinctive identity in specifically defined cultural contexts. The connection between heritage education and diversity is possibly as significant as that between heritage education and language teaching. In other words, pedagogy may be important as well as curriculum.

***Conclusion: the need for educational initiatives and more research***

Heritage schools are an important part of educational provision in England. In this conclusion we summarize what we have presented above and make suggestions for how positive contributions may be made by heritage schools to educating about and for inclusive identities and diversity.

We have drawn attention above to the challenging context in which heritage schools operate. State schools have been provided with significant increased autonomy since 2010 but the degree to which other schools have flexibility is in practice significantly constrained. Instead of heritage schools being welcomed as the models for this increased independence there are instead increased levels of suspicion. While the rhetoric of the government is about promoting community action there has been a narrowing of the public space within which communities may flourish. We are witnessing an increased governmental assertion of the significance of the nation (especially – but not only – in relation to European identity) in the context of a divided citizenry. When this occurs at the same time as increasing inequality this can only make the celebration of diversity more difficult. Many of these challenges may only be faced by a concerted effort from across society. A wide range of stakeholders – government, business, health services and many others – can contribute to an alleviation of these problems. Here we restrict ourselves to building on the comments made above about personal and cultural identities by considering citizenship identity. We are interested here in discussing the sort of educational framework (in theory and practice) that could maximize the possibility of celebrating identity and diversity. Although in what follows we draw from developments in citizenship education that have emerged from national curriculum contexts, we see this material as very relevant to heritage schools. It is not only heritage schools that are not subject to the national curriculum. Following the determination to expand the Academy programme which allows schools a particular form of autonomy, free from the local education authority, most schools in the UK (including within England) are no longer subject to the national curriculum. We are discussing national curriculum developments here not because of their regulatory force relevant to heritage schools but because of the potential for positive educational development in whatever the formal status of the school. A professional form of citizenship education is much needed in all schools and that includes heritage schools. In addition, debates about citizenship education focus explicitly on the issues that we have discussed above – personal and social identity (see Huddleston 2007).

In order to make our arguments for the positive potential of heritage schools we need to be alert to the challenges that face almost any attempt to develop good work. There are no hard and fast lines between the ‘personal’ and the ‘political’, the ‘public’ and the ‘private’. In addition, as part of this need for a nuanced approach, we accept that the history of education for inclusive diversity demonstrates there are significant challenges. Up to the 1960s in the UK an assimilationist approach was officially adopted into which the dominant narrative was simply to be accepted. The 1970s version of multiculturalism was often tied to a rather superficial consideration of the supposed exotic nature of the other. The at times confrontational anti-racism of the 1980s and rather more subtle intercultural education from the 1990s still has not led to significant improvement in our establishment of a professional, democratically inclusive form of education. We recognise that we need to proceed with awareness of the critiques that have been made of citizenship in general and of the seminal statement – the Crick Report (QCA/DfEE 1998) – which led to the establishment of the national curriculum for citizenship. Some felt that Crick’s report – to put it mildly – had not provided an inclusive commitment to a diverse society. Some pointed to quotations from the Crick report to argue that negative assumptions were being made about certain groups:

Minorities must learn to respect the laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority – not merely because it is useful to do so, but because the process helps foster common citizenship (QCA/DfEE, 1998: pp:17-18).

Wilkins (2005) argued, for example, that:

The Crick Report is rooted in a de-politicised multiculturalist perspective that locates racism in the personal domain, a phenomenon of individual ignorance and prejudice, and suggests that through teaching about other cultures, the white majority will come to understand (and so respect and tolerate)minorities…Within this conceptualisation, the classroom is essentially a neutral arena in which tolerance can be fostered by understanding, and equality of opportunity can be achieved through the personal enlightenment that ensues.

We see potential in heritage schools for learning about and for engagement in society based on inclusive and diverse identities. This includes exploring local, national, European and global contexts in which issues of rights and responsibilities, democracy and justice are important and in which there are opportunities for students to understand key ideas, speak on behalf of themselves and others and act in an informed and responsible manner and reflect on the impact of their actions. This is an argument for multiple citizenships in a diverse democracy. In what follows we suggest that four areas require particular attention (status; curricular entitlement; conceptual depth; contextualization) and, in our final remarks, we suggest our focus on perspective and practice means that ways forward can be found.

* Status

One of the most obvious ways in which education about and for identities and diversity may be achieved is for it to be accorded sufficient status. This is so obvious that it almost appears as a circular argument: in order to make progress we need to ensure that it is important. But this point does need to be made in a context in which schools have limited goals. Usually there are very few priorities within a school (mathematics, science and the home language), a very limited way in which achievement is recognised (good grades in academic subjects) and a determination for the whole school to be directed towards this end (with implications for social relationships within the school; lesson structure; timetable provision and so on). When Ofsted (2005, p.3) when referring to state schools, highlighted the need for “School managers [to] understand and support the introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject” something very simple but fundamental was being recommended. The point applies to all schools whatever their status. Once identity and diversity are taken seriously then it affects every aspect of the school and the ways in which teachers and others interact and how professionals develop their careers. If action within the school is complemented by professional development activity then significant progress is likely.

* Curricular entitlement.

Issues about status connect with curricular entitlement. Of course, identity and diversity is not only a matter of formal lessons. As above, much that may be done concerns relationships across the whole school. But a core programme is very useful indeed. In England, the version of the National Curriculum for citizenship education that was in place until 2013 focused explicitly on identities and diversity. Whether or not a school is subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum, we argue there is a need for vitally important matters to be made available to all. Highlighting ~~of~~ specific requirements associated with identities and diversities has not been without controversy (see above). In part, this was about the particular perspective on diversity but it was also about the characterization of diversity. A determination to focus on justice implies ethnicity, age, disability, gender, and other matters are being included. A more limited characterisation of diversity – one that is almost exclusively related to ethnicity – is also possible. In light of terrorist outrages, the strong reaction from politicians and the subsequent commissioning of the Ajegbo report (Department for Education and Skills, 2007), explicit and specific consideration of identities and diversity was implemented in state schools and we see the value of that approach in heritage schools. There had been several terrorist outrages including those in London in 2005. Brown made a high profile speech in which he said:

We have to face uncomfortable facts that while the British response to July 7th was remarkable, they were British citizens, British born apparently integrated into our communities, who were prepared to maim and kill fellow British citizens irrespective of their religion. (BBC 2006)

The way in which the National Curriculum was framed in relation to this development was by insisting that young people should learn as follows:

* Appreciating that identities are complex, can change over time and are informed by different understandings of what it means to be a citizen in the UK;
* Exploring the diverse national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, groups and communities in the UK and the connections between them;
* Considering the interconnections between the UK and the rest of Europe and the wider world;
* Exploring community cohesion and the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

This characterisation of identity and diversity will not be acceptable to all. But it does provide a status that is essential and this could be something that would be of benefit to those in heritage schools.

* Conceptual depth.

The above focus on identity and diversity is only part of the picture that is required for the development of an appropriate and effective curriculum. Identity and diversity in the version of the National Curriculum that existed 2008-2013 is part of a research-based framework in which there were several interlocking elements. There were two additional pairs of concepts as well as identity and diversity. ‘Democracy and justice’:

* Participating actively in different kinds of decision-making and voting in order to influence public life.
* Weighing up what is fair and unfair in different situations, understanding that justice is fundamental to a democratic society and exploring the role of law in maintaining order and resolving conflict.
* Considering how democracy, justice, diversity, toleration, respect and freedom are valued by people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions within a changing democratic society.
* Understanding and exploring the roles of citizens and parliament in holding government and those in power to account.

And ‘rights and responsibilities’

* Exploring different kinds of rights and obligations and how these affect both individuals and communities.
* Understanding that individuals, organisations and governments have responsibilities to ensure that rights are balanced and protected.
* Investigating ways in which rights can compete and conflict, and understanding that hard decisions have to be made to try to balance these.

Crucially, the above were seen as substantive concepts. In other words, they signified (in ways that are close to understanding, fundamental principles, perspectives, context and content) what the subject of citizenship is all about. They were complemented by a further set of concepts that outlined the way in which citizenship should be studied and enacted. Critical thinking and enquiry included:

Pupils should be able to:

* engage with and reflect on different ideas, opinions, beliefs and values when exploring **topical and controversial issues and problems**
* research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues and problems using a range of information and sources
* **analyse and evaluate** sources used, questioning different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias.

Advocacy and representation involves:

Pupils should be able to:

* express and explain their own opinions to others through discussions, formal debates and **voting**
* communicate an argument, taking account of different viewpoints and drawing on what they have learnt through research, action and debate
* justify their argument, giving reasons to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them
* represent the views of others, with which they may or may not agree.

And, finally, pupils need to be able to take informed and responsible action in which pupils should be able to:

* explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
* work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and **take action** on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time and resources appropriately
* analyse the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future
* reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt, what went well, the difficulties encountered and what they would do differently.

The integration of these concepts provides for an extremely valuable framework in which thinking, feeling and acting is given attention. In this way, conceptual depth is dynamically achieved allowing for example proper reflective consideration of the interplay between emotion, cognition and action (Wood, Taylor, Atkins & Johnston 2018). As well as being theoretically coherent, it had the advantage of working in practice. Individual researchers (e.g., Whiteley, 2012), as well as research organisations (Kerr et al 2010) and government inspection agency (Ofsted 2013) all – without ignoring continuing challenges - commended its success. Heritage schools have never been formally subject to the requirements discussed above but there is much positive potential associated with such work.

* Contextualisation

Schools always face significant challenges about the extent of their responsibilities. The official requirement for them to contribute to community cohesion is no longer in operation. And very often already overworked teachers will understandably feel challenged by the suggestion that they take on even more. Very often, the necessary amount and nature of professional regulation means that it is very difficult for teachers – even if they had time to do so – to operate beyond the confines of their own classrooms. But schools are communities and can contribute to community life. And there is even more of an opportunity for teachers and others in heritage schools to make the sort of contribution that is helpful to inclusive and diverse identities. By recommending that we are more expansive in our contextualisation of teachers’ roles, we are suggesting a move towards what already exists in many other countries. In continental Europe, for example, many schools already have a wide variety of skills available with community and social workers being a normal part of everyday life. There is not necessarily the need for reduced specialisation if the skill set across the whole body of staff in a school expands. But we could imagine a blurring of the boundaries between teacher and community worker that would be particularly appropriate and - achievable - in heritage schools. The invisible boundary between school and community does not need to become a barrier to the better understanding of identities and diversity and the more proactive engagement with a wide range of community initiatives. There is plenty of support for such a wide ranging and very practical approach that would enhance educational standards. Much of it is not new. Newmann & Wehlage’s (1977) work on the development of skills in citizen action and public affairs has outlined the issues associated with young people’s engagement. More recently, Vromen & Collin (2010), Riegart & Ramsay (2012), and Kahne, Hodkin, & Eidman-Aadahl’s (2016) emphasise the ways in which educational engagement interacts with democratic ambitions.

* Final remarks

On the basis of our presentation of the issues above, we wish to highlight two overarching areas to make clear how action needs to be taken: perspective and practice.

Education as Freire wrote many years ago is never neutral: it is for liberation or domestication. There are very many typologies which outline the perspectives that characterise educational initiatives. One of the best known of those typologies is that provided by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) in which they referred to the personally responsible; participatory; and, justice-oriented. The first is an individualised model in which priority is given to personal ambition, achieving good grades, getting a job and so on. The rather obvious potential disadvantage of a potentially self-centred approach may be balanced by the opportunities for individual expression and the advantages (according to some) of a liberal democratic stance. The participatory may be more collectively oriented in that it has a communitarian orientation and has clearly been the preferred approach of many western governments since at least the beginning of the 21st century. Some suggest it favours those who already hold social capital and is merely part of a wider exercise to reduce welfare and develop a small state economy. The justice-oriented approach focuses more on asking social justice questions and then acting should inequality and discrimination have been identified. It would be unlikely that any one of these perspectives would be developed discretely but we do need to ask what education is for. We see heritage schools in a very positive light with huge potential for making a significant contribution to the better understanding and practice of inclusive diversity. We suggest that reflection on the Westheimer and Kahne model would allow us to discuss what needs to be done (and awareness of the alternatives gives us the clarity needed to respond to challenges to what is being done).

Our second area is about practice. As part of our attempt to avoid simplistic application of ‘techniques’ that would see teachers as operatives, we emphasise the need for reflection on fundamental purposes (as outlined above) and have suggested a professional and academically rigorous approach to education which has been shown by research and inspection evidence to work. But to be more specific we highlight the following. **Optimism**. It is obviously the case that we need to work on and with young people’s strengths (Black et al. 2011; Kral, 2011). The Foundation for Young Australians has, for example, adopted this tone in *Unlimited Potential: A commitment to young Australians* (2013, p. 1), in which it makes clear that ‘Our collective role is to be relentlessly optimistic about the young people of this country and about their capacity and capability to envision and create the nation and world in which they want to live and work’ (cited in Callingham, 2013). **Partnership**: fragmentation and incoherence must be avoided; and so must uniformity and hierarchy. In a tolerant society, there are always ways to embrace an action-oriented intercultural approach. In working across barriers, we should also position young people as key partners. There are good examples of these partnerships (e.g., Callingham, 2013) and although there are challenges the work is full of potential value. **Knowledge:** We have written above about the need for a careful approach to knowledge and so here we simply highlight again that the points that are made increasingly about powerful knowledge (see Young 2007) are worthy of consideration. **Evaluation**: all those involved in promoting identity and diversity in education need to be able to review their own practice. Being reflective is essential and the logical, politically alert, evidence based and qualified nuanced approach is something that has to be worked at. And evaluation is part of an ongoing process: it is not something which only applies at the end of an initiative. We have positioned it here in part as a signal of this point. **Pedagogy**: finally, there must be specific teaching and learning approaches which require investigation. Social media may be one of the keys towards the dynamic relationship between education and engagement. We recognize that there are doubts about its potential. It may be an instrument for anti-democratic politics; it may if adopted unthinkingly simply provide opportunities for chatting and shopping as opposed to engagement with public issues. We need to be realistic in that there is some evidence to suggest that social media are not necessarily well used currently by teachers and learners (Sant & Davies 2014). Social media may provide an example of an ideal type of interaction between teachers and learners as opposed to a simple statement of what is always done well when new technology is in use. Social media may reflect the complex interplay between formal, non-formal and informal learning and as such has potential for informing engagement in public and personal contexts. Recognising the strengths, needs, preferences and actual practices of young people is important for various forms of civic and political participation, including those based on digital and social media (Vromen & Collin, 2010; Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2015). Vromen & Collin (2010) suggest that a shift is required from the structured, individualist method of policymakers to focus on the input of ‘expert citizens’ to one that engages with young people in the spaces they already occupy, in particular the network-based presence of localised, youth-led, online spaces. This positive potential is seen in a wide variety of locations (e.g., Weiss 2014).

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