Chapter 2
Centralization, Devolution and Diversity: Changing Educational Policy and Practice in English Schools

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Introduction

This chapter examines provision for the education of minority ethnic groups within England. It discusses the effects of regional practices since the 1960s which led to different forms of provision in the south of England, where serious attempts at interculturalism, particularly in inner London, provided a model for schools to follow, compared to the increasingly ethnically segregated schools which developed in the north of England. It draws attention to the English system of ethnic monitoring of achievement, which identifies educational outcomes for the largest minority ethnic groups nationally, regionally and by school, and the impact of this on policy and practice. It then considers the way in which England's ethnic mix is changing as a result of European Union expansion and continuing globalization, and the effects of this on education policy and school practice. Finally, it outlines the current policy shift away from comprehensive forms of education for all, towards 'diversity' and 'choice' in the types of schooling available to students, including an increasing emphasis on 'specialist' and religious foundation schools, and the implications of this move for intercultural education and inter-ethnic understanding.

Diversity in English Schools

Recent evidence collected by the UK government Department for Education and Skills (DFES, 2006) shows that as many as 21% of primary students and 17% of secondary students in state schools in England come from minority ethnic group backgrounds, and analysis of the trends over time suggest that this proportion is steadily increasing. England is truly a multi-ethnic society, a fact explicitly recognized in current national curriculum and teacher training documentation.

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G. Wan (ed.), *The Education of Diverse Student Populations: A Global Perspective.*

Of course, England has always been multicultural, developing its language through intermingling after successive waves of colonization by Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans, and developing its written language and spelling system with the help of Dutch printers; its cities more recently the home of strong communities of people of Jewish, Huguenot and other backgrounds, including notable exiles from other parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. However, ethnic diversity was not something generally recognized within the school system by any special provision until the 1960s, with the growth of 'visible' immigration into England from the 'New Commonwealth', most particularly the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, calling for measures to alleviate a racist backlash in some areas, and in the best local authorities, tying educational provision for minority ethnic groups to the development of strategies to tackle racism among the 'majority' communities in schools.

The instrument developed by the UK government at that time was enshrined in Section 11 of the Local Government Act, 1966. This offered special funding from the Home Office to local authorities to enable them, as they thought fit, to meet the 'extra' resources perceived to be necessary to meet the perceived needs of new arrivals from the New Commonwealth. This allocation of funding to the decentralized education system followed a racist backlash within certain regions of high immigration, where local residents (and voters) were complaining that new arrivals were drawing resources away from the local community. Section 11 was designed, therefore, to defuse ethnic tensions, and to be used only to meet the needs of New Commonwealth immigrants (i.e. visible minorities), not for others, leading to some anomalies. For example, Section 11 funding could be used for language teaching for Hong Kong Chinese but not for mainland Chinese; for Turkish or Greek Cypriots, but not for those from the Turkish or Greek mainland. For some years, local authorities ignored this restriction, using the funding for ESL and community language teaching for any of their major minority language groups, until, to limit spending, Section 11 restrictions were tightened in the 1990s to exclude its use for minority language teaching and for non-New Commonwealth groups. At that point, its use was limited only to provision which would ease integration into English, English culture and the existing English school system.

For many years, educational provision for diversity in England was seen by local authorities mainly in terms of special provision for English as a second language, especially for students of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian origin; alongside attempts to widen the curriculum to reflect the culture of students of Caribbean and South Asian origin, focused on addressing the recognized educational underachievement of these groups as well as in an attempt by some local authorities to develop an 'anti-racist' at best, or 'multicultural' at least, curriculum for all students, to improve inter-ethnic understanding. While multicultural and anti-racist initiatives tended to be limited, but not exclusively, to areas of high minority ethnic group populations, by the 1980s there was no local education authority in England, even the most rural, which was not making some provision for supporting the language and learning needs of bilingual pupils (Bourne, 1987). While this was strongly focused on English as a Second Language provision, in the 1970s and

1980s when small amounts of extra government funding was available, a number of authorities also attempted to make provision for mother tongue curriculum support and mother tongue language classes for the major minority language groups in their areas (Bourne, 1987).

Different Regional Practices, North and South

However, there was a difference in emphasis between parts of the south and north of England that has had lasting effects on practice and community relations. In the South, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) developed policy and practice which has had a strong and lasting impact on schools. ILEA, with radical left wing leaders attempted a wide-ranging transformation of its schools through policy formation, teacher education and materials development through the 1970s and into the 1980s until its dissolution by the Thatcher government in the early1990s. ILEA set up an active and influential multi-ethnic school inspectorate, with two divisions, one focusing on the development of multi-cultural (later shifting more to inter-cultural) and anti-racist curriculum and pedagogy for a diverse student population, aimed at impacting on all schools; the second division focusing on developing language policy and provision. ILEA's commitment to diversity was shown in its undertaking of the first language census in England in 1978. The ILEA language policy, developed in 1981, had three strands: ESL provision, based in mainstream schools and mainly in-class support in mainstream classrooms; support, where numbers made that feasible, for 'mother tongue' and 'heritage language' classes and in-class support for learning; and, importantly, the development of language awareness for a multilingual society through activities meant for *all* children, not just those who were themselves bilingual or in multilingual schools.

A number of curriculum development resource centers were set up across London, showcasing materials and running courses for teachers, often with teams of advisers going into schools to work alongside teachers in transforming the curriculum and developing new forms of pedagogy for diversity. As schools grew more aware of multicultural approaches, policy and practice moved more towards approaches which emphasized the flexible and changing nature of cultures in contact, involving students themselves more directly in analyzing and reporting on intercultural development both among youth and mainstream cultures and its impact on their lives. Most controversial of the initiatives was the work on anti-racist education, directly impacting as it did on teachers' own evaluations of their actions, beliefs and values, as well as confronting social norms in different local communities. Efforts were also made to increase the proportions of teachers from relevant ethnic minority communities in London, admittedly starting from a very low base. By 2006, although the national average of ethnic minority teachers was just 10.5%, 40% of these were in Inner London and 27% in Outer London (DFES, 2006).

In contrast, with some notable exceptions, in the Midlands and North of England, provision tended to be made in such a way (in effect if not always in

intent) as to avoid impact on the majority White, monolingual population. Educational provision for minority group learners was perceived essentially in terms of ESL provision for minority language groups. There was relatively little work carried out in developing intercultural and anti-racist forms of curriculum and delivery in comparison to the work in the ILEA, and where this was undertaken, it tended to be focused on the needs of students of Caribbean origin. ESL Language Centers were set up to receive the children of new arrivals from South Asia, and to instruct them in English until they were deemed ready to take their place in unchanged schools. In some areas, students could enter and remain in separate language centers or language 'streams' within schools for a number of years, even until school leaving age.

In 1985, following complaints, The Commission for Racial Equality in England found one such authority, Calderdale, guilty of racial discrimination by the provision it was making, even though most children only attended its Language Centre for around 1 year. It noted, for example, that students and their parents were given no choice of school, unlike other students, but were placed in the Language Center by means of tests and interviews which no other students had to undergo. Students had to travel distances by bus to these Centers, when there were other, more local, schools nearby. Furthermore, the Center focused on ESL, and had little in the way of specialist teachers or specialist equipment, thus denying students access to the full curriculum enjoyed by other students.

The effect of the Calderdale Report on local authorities across England was dramatic. Existing Language Centers were phased out rapidly in subsequent years. However, unlike ILEA, by relying on language centers to meet the needs of new arrivals, many schools had not been prepared over time to respond to diversity by re-evaluating their pedagogic practice and curriculum. Some local authorities, like Bradford, with large minority populations, responded by redesignating their Language Centers as primary schools and, as the Centers had been located in areas of high minority group density, thus avoiding any impact on the mainly White schools in the neighboring areas, so maintaining ethnic separation, some would say with disastrous results in terms of community segregation and lack of inter-ethnic understanding in the present millennium. The northwest conurbations remain the most obviously segregated communities in Britain today, a source of ethnic tension supporting the growth of neo-fascist political 'national' parties on the one hand, and religious fundamentalism on the other.

Provision for Linguistic Minorities in England

Despite a number of schools that were homogeneous in intake, there were no bilingual schools instituted by national or local government in England, unlike the Hispanic schools in the USA. All maintained schools remain English medium. Nevertheless, through the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of local authorities developed mother tongue support in primary classrooms and heritage language

teaching as an option in secondary schools, using Section 11 funding. Once this source of extra funding was withdrawn from all but ESL provision (see below), however, these initiatives flagged and stopped in most regions as schools were reluctant to make provision from their own limited budgets.

Since the 1990s, many schools have adopted the range of strategies for supporting bilingual learners within the mainstream classroom. One strategy which had a national impact was developed in the pack of teacher training materials on Partnership Teaching (Bourne and McPake, 1991). These materials responded to the reality of classroom practice by querying strategies of co-operative teaching by mainstream and specialist teachers, with concomitant issues of status inequalities between mainstream subject specialists and 'support' teachers. In the place of co-operative (sometimes called collaborative) teaching, Partnership Teaching recommended a time limited cycle of teachers working together to identify areas of underachievement, research successful strategies developed in other classrooms and schools, experiment with new strategies, evaluate their outcomes, and, if successful, disseminate the work to other teachers within the schools or even across schools. Partnerships might involve language specialists and mainstream subject teachers, but could also include subject teachers working together on improving practice in their language diverse classrooms, or even whole departments. Partnerships might involve teachers working together collaboratively within the classroom, but could also include teachers working together only outside the classroom, developing more suitable curricula materials, assessment activities, for example. The focus was on whole school development in order to respond to a changed and changing student intake, where language diversity is increasingly the norm.

Ethnic Monitoring of Achievement

With the introduction of a National Curriculum in England in the late 1980s, major changes took place in mainstream education policy and practice, which have impacted on education for diversity. There has in effect been a change from a competence to a performance orientated curriculum (Bernstein, 1996). Previously, curricula and expectations of achievements were a matter for individual schools, supported by strong decentralized local authorities. While this gave schools flexibility to respond to students' needs as they perceived them, in many cases it would appear that schools held unreasonably low expectations of students, and especially those from minority ethnic groups. Since the introduction of a national curriculum, access to a full broad and balanced curriculum has come to be seen as an entitlement for all students, with a determined focus on raising the attainment levels of underachieving students in schools. This has been monitored by national testing of literacy and numeracy at the ages of 7, 11, 14, and by school certificate examinations at age 16 and 18.

Since 2000, monitoring of school attainment has been extended to the monitoring of school achievement in relation to their ethnic group composition. One strong

recommendation of the study into successful multi-ethnic schools (Blair and Bourne, 1998), now implemented nationally, was that student attainment in national tests should be monitored by ethnicity as well as by gender and poverty (measured by uptake of free school meals). It was recognized that this is controversial, but it enables policy makers to identify schools which are more and less successful with different groups, and to explore the reasons why this should be so. It also enables them to counter the arguments of those schools that have low expectations of their students, by showing them the outcomes of schools with very similar student intakes that are doing much better. The focus is on showing that schools can and do make a difference.

Although the ethnic categories used in ethnic monitoring remain crude, they give an indication of trends and patterns in achievement at national, regional and school levels, allowing for the identification of underachievement, and a starting point for investigation of how best to address and turn around such trends. First monitoring results in 2003 showed that overall, students of Chinese and Indian origin were achieving above the national average. In contrast, students of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin were achieving below the national average. However, this trend was not true in some regions and in some schools, encouraging further investigation of reasons and strategies. Continued monitoring showed that all the underachieving groups had gradually improved their level of performance by 2005, suggesting that schools were taking pains to address their performance.

DFES statistics are collected by ethnic group on student success in passing at least 5 academic subjects in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (commonly called the GCSE, the first school leaving examination usually taken at age 16). In 2006, the results for those achieving a grade of between A* and C were as follows:

Chinese – 85%
White British – 78%
Black African – 73%
Black Caribbean – 65%
Pakistani – 67%
Bangladeshi – 66%
Pupils overall – 77%

However, greater subtleties of performance can be achieved by breaking down the results by indicators of poverty and by gender. For example, when gender is taken into account, it reveals that boys from the White British and Black Caribbean groups are disproportionately underachieving: only half of White British boys and only one third of Black Caribbean origin boys achieving the expected levels. When poverty indicators are also taken into account (using the indicator of eligibility for free school lunches) the percentages drop to 24% of Black Caribbean boys, and just 21% of White British boys.

This data, also presented to schools at school by school level, provides a starting point for policy makers and school leadership teams to identify strategies and target resources to combat underachievement. It also suggests that policy makers and schools need to look much wider than they have historically done simply at

language support in order to meet the needs of minority ethnic students, as Blair and Bourne (1998) suggested, above. Controlling for other factors, such as social deprivation, prior attainment and gender, ethnic monitoring also reveals that although these minority group students make less progress compared to their White peers in primary schools, they go on to make greater progress than their peers in secondary school, suggesting, like the findings of Collier and Thomas, that students who have to learn in a second language can and do 'catch up' given high expectations and the right support from schools. For while less students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) achieved the expected standards than non-EAL learners in the first years of primary school (78% compared to 86%), by age 16 they appear to have caught up with their peers with 40.3% obtaining five GCSEs (the General Certificate of Secondary Education, usually taken at age 16) at the upper Grades A*–C including English, compared to 42.8%, and with the gap narrowing to just 0.2% when looking at results for five A*–C grades in any subjects (that is, removing English from the equation) (DFES, 2006).

Raising the Attainment of Minority Students

Blair and Bourne (1998) set up a number of focus groups for minority ethnic group parents and children from the largest minority language groups, to gather their own perspectives of what sort of provision might be helpful in addressing underachievement. What was interesting and even unexpected was how seldom parents and students from minority language groups mentioned language issues as barriers to their learning. The issues they addressed were overwhelmingly the same as those identified by parents and students of Black Caribbean origin – those of low expectations by teachers, and the placement by schools of minority group learners in low ability streams and groups, resulting in low achievement and lack of educational qualifications. As an example, parents told us:

'The expectation is low. Because they are different cultures or they are from third world countries, they are expected to be down the ladder somewhere.'

'Usually when I go to Parents' Evenings and that, they are always saying, 'Oh yes, he has done so well and done this and that'. But the work I see, I know he can do better than that, yet he is not being pushed further, half the time he is just left to get on with it.' (Blair and Bourne, 1998)

So parents from minority language groups quite clearly thought there was more to tackling underachievement than merely addressing language issues, and that schools needed to look very carefully at structures and processes within the school system itself if they were to address underachievement.

There were a number of key findings identified and disseminated by the Blair and Bourne (1998) project. The main findings can be summarized as follows: In successful schools, leadership is crucial. A strong and determined lead on equal opportunities was given by the head teacher, who gave clear vision and direction to staff.

Successful schools were ‘listening schools’. Successful schools established an ethos of respect in which adults spent time listening to students and tried to see things from students’ point of view, and tried to adapt school practices in the light of these. Successful schools had clear procedures for responding to bullying and harassment, whether of individuals or towards groups. They recognized that no child can learn when frightened or worried. They also worked hard on strategies to avoid and prevent exclusions of students from school. For example, the report describes a young man who was introduced to the researchers as someone who had got in with ‘the wrong crowd’, but who had managed to turn himself around and was now achieving well. He explained that one day his head teacher had called him into her office and told him ‘I’ve seen a spark in you and I am not going to let that die.’ He said, ‘Now she is on my case the whole time, asking to see my homework, wanting to know what I have been doing. But I don’t mind. I can see that she cares.’ Often it appeared that it was the small things said and done, little things that showed that teachers cared, that seemed to make the biggest difference to students themselves in keeping them on track. These things are small, but take time, and a particular type of school ethos.

Successful schools established high expectations of both teachers and students, and had clear systems in place for tracking and monitoring the progress of students, and for targeting support to those found to be underachieving. One primary school had large charts up in the staff room, identifying individuals and groups of students who appeared to be underachieving, and tracking their progress, to ensure that their performance improved over the short and medium term. Targeted support was put into classrooms where underachievement was identified. Where students appeared to be underachieving in one particular subject area, this was the focus of investigation and successful subject departments and teachers were encouraged to share their practice with others.

Successful schools created careful links with the local communities. Schools made efforts to recruit a school staff representative of the community they served, in some cases supporting the training of teachers from specific groups. These teachers helped the school engender trust with parents, and helped to sort out misunderstandings. In one school which had developed strong links with the local mosque, a group of young boys had begun pushing school boundaries by requesting to wear prayer hats in class as well as at prayer times in the designated prayer rooms, a practice the school thought had potential to create unnecessary divisions. The head teacher called on the local imam, who came up to the school and spoke to the boys, reminding them of their duty to show respect to their teachers, and to follow school rules, appreciating the efforts that the school had already made to respond to their needs for space to worship.

Effective schools were sensitive to the identities of students, and made efforts to include in the curriculum appropriate reference to their histories, languages, religions and cultures. They provided a rich curriculum, combining arts and excursions with a strong focus on literacy and language development.

Secondary schools offered a broad range of modern languages in the curriculum, including languages spoken in the local community. The most effective secondary

schools had well-trained language support teachers who worked alongside subject teachers in mainstream classrooms, using partnership teaching strategies (see Bourne and McPake, 1991) to develop greater awareness of the language demands of subject lessons, and to encourage a range of teaching strategies which would be supportive to all learners, such as co-operative group work, structured writing frames, visual support materials, etc.

Primary schools in particular were strongly aware of the role and importance of language in learning for all children. Most effective schools employed bilingual teachers and classroom assistants to support learning in the classrooms. The most effective had clear, shared and understood policies for using bilingual strategies in the mainstream classroom (as the mere presence of bilingual staff is no guarantee that other languages will in fact be used to support learning, or indeed, used at all). Children's first languages were given status in the classroom and used in collaborative group learning.

At the same time, successful schools did in some circumstances, and where appropriate, make special provision for classes in English language and literacy to meet particular needs identified within the school. Where possible, such classes were held outside the regular school day so that students did not miss subject lessons. In some cases, new arrivals to England and refugee students received short induction courses varying in length from 1 to 6 weeks, before joining mainstream classes. The main feature of any such special provision was that it was time-limited, and had clear objectives, understood and agreed with students and their parents.

Specific Projects to Address Underachievement

Ethnic monitoring has enabled projects focused on addressing underachievement to analyze their results by ethnicity, to ensure that they are addressing the needs of a diverse student population.

One major project has been that of the government funded 'Excellence in Cities' project, launched in 1999 and focusing on underachievement in disadvantaged urban areas, involving about one third of state maintained secondary schools in England. Ethnic monitoring revealed that over 60% of ethnic minority students attended school in Excellence in Cities areas. The project provided targeted support to and encouraged collaboration between schools to address underachievement. In the final evaluation, the impact of the project on ethnic minority underachievement was unclear (Kendal et al., 2005), however, the evaluators were able to report that over the period of the project, more students from ethnic minority groups were identified as entrants for the national Gifted and Talented support program, apparently as school's strategies for identifying such students were widened and teacher understanding and expectations of students were increased.

A second initiative launched by the English Department for Education and Skills (DFES) in 2003 focused on addressing underachievement among students of African-Caribbean family origin. 'Aiming High' set out to work with school leaders

to develop a whole school approach to addressing the needs of African-Caribbean students. It offered the 30 participating schools in the pilot project a grant of an extra £10,000 annually, together with consultancy support and staff training. In its evaluation, the DFES found that parents of African-Caribbean origin 'overwhelmingly' saw unfair and inconsistent behavior management policies as the largest barrier to learner achievement. The project therefore targeted both academic and pastoral strategies, for example, challenging exclusion practices, teacher training and the provision of mentoring for students. In doing so, the project found the involvement of school leaders crucial in challenging staff reluctant to focus on one ethnic minority group in particular, preferring to take a 'color-blind' approach, not understanding how this disadvantaged certain students.

A third initiative set up by government was the 'English as an Additional Language' pilot project begun in 2004, targeted at raising the achievement of bilingual learners in primary schools. It focused on school-based teacher training, working with three schools in each of 12 local authority regions to develop models of good practice. A pilot consultant was funded in each authority, to work with school leaders to first undertake a school audit of needs. In an independent evaluation (White et al., 2006), staff reported a better understanding of how EAL pedagogy related to effective mainstream teaching and how strategies could be integrated into regular classroom practice to the benefit of all, although as yet there were no measurable improvements in attainment test results – expected by 2007. Strategies introduced included planned flexible groups for speaking and listening activities, the introduction of 'talk partners' in minority languages to support curriculum learning, and more use of speaking and listening activities as a prelude to writing. The evaluators noted that the least important feature appeared to be that of materials development, with greater benefits derived from effective consultancy involvement and, once again, the strong commitment of senior leadership in schools.

EU Expansion and Globalization Lead to England's Ethnic Mix Changes

Whilst in some areas of England there are still large and established minority ethnic community groups, the ethnic composition of England is rapidly and radically changing in the new millennium, with European integration and globalization. Instead of three or four major minority groups, often concentrated in specific locations, the picture is much more diverse. The Office for National Statistics (2005) comments on continuing immigration from the 'Old' and 'New' Commonwealth countries, but with increasing numbers from previously less represented countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Hong Kong. There are also increased numbers from Arabic speaking countries, also from conflict zones such as Somalia and Afghanistan, and increased immigration from Latin America. Long established European communities such as those from Italy, Turkey, Greece and Cyprus are being joined by larger numbers from across Europe, including rapidly increasing

immigration from the European accession countries, in particular from Poland. For example, in a mid-sized city in the south of England, Southampton, one school previously with over 90% of its student intake of South Asian origin, from mainly Sikh religious backgrounds, now has a large and growing new Polish student intake, many arriving with high standards of education but with little English, for whose arrival the school was unprepared. Polish shops are opening in the area, Polish meals joining the South Asian meals on offer at local take aways. The speed of change reflects that of the 1960s, when South Asian immigration caught schools by surprise and there was increased evidence of xenophobia in the press and on the streets.

Whilst these new immigrants may be disproportionately settled in areas of high deprivation, alongside many of the older, established minority ethnic groups, this is not always the case. Ethnic diversity is increasingly the norm across England. Greater ethnic diversity is accompanied by greater social diversity, the new immigrants bringing a wide range of educational and social histories, some well educated and highly skilled, others with little formal education, some urban and others from rural backgrounds, some traumatized by war or social conflict.

Religion is also a major feature in the increased societal diversity. While 42% of children classified as 'White' and 37% of those from mixed heritage backgrounds claim to have no religion at all, the majority of those classified as of Black Caribbean or Black African origin claim to be Christian, while the majority of those classified of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin claim to be Muslim, and roughly equal proportions of those from Indian backgrounds claim to be Hindu, Sikh or Muslim by religion. As the DFES (2006) study concludes, religion is more likely to be important to those students, and their parents, from minority ethnic group backgrounds than for 'White British' or 'Mixed heritage' groups.

These changes have considerable implications for the way in which the education system responds to diversity. Apart from the emergence of religion as a high profile issue, and while language issues and language provision become less obviously intertwined with issues of 'race' and racism, the cultural and political histories of new EU citizens have barely entered teachers' awareness for curriculum adjustments to be made.

'Diversity as the Norm'

The strategy adopted in England for changing mainstream schools to make them more hospitable to bilingual children has been a focus on structural change – through centralized statutory requirements, training and monitoring. Changes have been made in teacher training, assessment procedures and national curriculum requirements, as well as efforts continuing in developing language aware forms of classroom practice for all teachers through the government funded and led 'National Literacy Strategy', impacting on all maintained schools. The National Primary and Secondary Strategies, national initiatives for in-service teacher training, which

impact on every school and teacher, have advisers on supporting bilingual students attached to them, and are producing additional training materials for each subject area, freely available online on the internet, as well as the focus of training courses.

Such understandings are now also included in the training of government school inspectors, and school inspection schedules include questions on the schools' approaches to supporting language minority students, and report publicly on schools' success in raising the levels of achievement of students from minority backgrounds.

Just as the national curriculum 'mainstreamed' diversity, requiring all students to receive the same broad and balanced curriculum, so new centralized 'Standards' for the pre-service training of teachers required all new teachers to be prepared to work with multi-ethnic and multilingual classes. All new teachers are now required to receive training on strategies for supporting English as an additional language learners in the mainstream, and on effective and fair planning, teaching and assessment of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, national targets have been set for increasing the proportion of minority ethnic group teachers into teacher training, with local targets set for each teacher training institution, with financial sanctions taken if they fail to meet them.

'Diversity', 'Choice' and Devolution

However, at the same time, there has been a separate, and perhaps contradictory, strand of government policy on 'diversity'. In this development 'diversity' does not refer to ethnicity, but relates to differences between schools, not people. The aim of the policy is to increase the variety of type of school available to parents to 'choose' for their children (Whitty et al., 1998). Since the New Labor government took power in 1997, a range of different initiatives have been developed, all with the stated aim of raising attainment – 'specialist' schools, increased numbers of religious 'faith' schools, 'city academies', many receiving enhanced funding, and, most significantly, having the possibility to select their students on different criteria. Prior to the 1997 Labor government, the most widespread government maintained secondary school was the 'comprehensive' school, open to everyone in the surrounding community. A few already existing selective 'grammar schools' remained in a small number of local authorities, 'creaming off' those students aged 11years who chose to sit an entry examination from joining their peers in the surrounding comprehensive schools, but these were few in number.

As centralization of curriculum and assessment increased under the Labor government, on the one hand, greater autonomy of selection was passed to the schools, by-passing local authorities. Demand exceeds the number of places available at highly successful schools. With pressure on schools also to show themselves successful in published school assessment league tables, there is pressure on head teachers to select their students, although explicit selection by 'ability' alone is still not permissible outside of the few remaining 'grammar schools'. Within this constraint, the choice of specific selection criteria is left to individual schools. Many

highly popular schools use a defined 'catchment area' as a means of limiting the number of eligible students, drawing on the streets closest to the school. It is well known that house prices increase in the vicinity of successful schools, lessening access for the less financially secure. The effect is less of parental choice in respect of school placements, but of school choice of student.

One effect of all this is that less successful schools find themselves taking up those students whose parents have been unable to negotiate their way into the more popular schools, or who are unaware of the disparities in the education on offer, or too concerned with the pressures on their own lives to be able to consider their children's schooling. In one area of London I am personally aware of, this 'choice' led to the splitting up of a cohesive multi-ethnic class of children across a wide number of schools, with one child, a refugee from a war-torn area of Africa, who had been previously excluded from another primary school, but had settled down and made good progress, now being allocated to an unpopular school across London, having failed to get into a local school with his peers. Traveling to his new school meant traveling alone on the underground system, involving two changes of trains, to an unknown and potentially hostile area by a small 11-year-old boy with limited English and a history of behavioral problems. Such was one effect of a devolved system of 'choice'.

Thus while the New Labor government on the one hand argued its commitment to equality in education and to raising the attainment of the disadvantaged, its continuation of the previous right wing Conservative government's market policies of diversity and choice in schooling appears to have increased social segregation and inequalities in relation to 'race', class and ethnicity (Tomlinson, 2005). The DFES (2006) reports clear differences in the relative deprivation of different ethnic groups in England, with many more students of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds living in areas of high deprivation, where residents are categorized as 'hard pressed' to live within their means. Thus, social segregation within schooling on socio-economic grounds has implications for ethnic diversity within schools.

In a detailed statistical analysis, Goldstein and Noden (2003) have been able to show that the underlying variation in levels of poverty between schools increased considerably over the period 1994–1999. More recently, Jenkins et al. (2006), in an international study, showed not only that English schools had a high degree of social segregation, but also that social segregation was strongly associated with the prevalence within a country of selective choice of pupils by schools. Thus low segregation schools such as Scotland and the Nordic countries had negligible opportunities for schools to select pupils, while countries which selected such as Austria, Germany and Hungary were found to have highly socially segregated schools. This effect is also to be clearly seen in South Africa, where, following the destruction of the apartheid system, desegregation on racial lines but accompanied by allowing schools to set their own fee levels has resulted in little change in the social composition of schools today from that of apartheid times.

In a study of two schools in England, Gillborn and Youdell (2000) show how insidiously this selection and separation came about in routine practice as the

schools attempted to maximize their performance in the light of published tables of school test results (popularly called 'league tables', mirroring the football league tables of match results), and the effect this social segregation had on ethnic groups in a locality.

Such contradictory reforms do not appear to be limited to England. Apple (2001) outlines similar moves in the USA, and argues that such contradictory reforms emerge from the combination of weak state practices (education as a 'market' and school choice) with strong state practices (centralized statutory curriculum and testing). As Skidelsky (1989) has argued, the concept of the social market contains two important political ideas: freedom and power. He writes: 'A person lacks freedom if he is forced to carry out someone else's plan; he lacks power if he is unable to carry out his own plan.' Freedom and power are clearly different. A person might be free to choose a school, but lack the power (resources, the 'right' address, the information, the tutoring necessary to pass selection tests) to be able to do so. Apple's solution is to call for a 'repositioning' (p. 197) of education which would entail policy makers examining all suggested reforms for their implications from the perspective of those most oppressed.

However, such a strategy relies on an expectation of good will on the part of policy makers, and their willingness to give up the advantages currently offered by the system to their own children for the benefit of the disadvantaged. Some minority communities have decreasing patience in waiting for such a solution, but are attempting to take the education of their own people into their own hands. School choice has opened the doors to the possibility of establishing, with government funding, schools for different 'faiths' in addition to the existing church and Jewish schools long established in England. As I have noted earlier, religious diversity has gained a higher profile in England in recent years. Woods and Woods (2002) note the differentiating public domain this is creating, but suggest the move to diverse 'faith' schools will create a number of different models for what counts as valid learning and of valid learning styles. While such diversity may challenge the hegemony of public education (although the room for curricula diversity of publicly funded schools will be severely limited), the effects of increased numbers of 'faith' schools, and thus of increased social segregation along religious lines, on intercultural understanding and social cohesion in areas already experiencing community tensions have yet to be explored.

This suggests the way in which policies developed for different purposes even within the same department can work against each other. Despite the rhetoric of responding to multi-ethnic and social diversity, community cohesion becomes the victim of the global and globalizing neo-liberal rhetoric of individualism and 'choice'; and provision continues in many subtle and not so subtle ways to promote the interests of those who have the necessary social capital and economic power to make the 'right' choices, those leading to success in the existing social structure.

I want to end this chapter with a story by Reginald Wilson. It goes like this:

> 'I am standing by the shores of a swiftly flowing river. I hear the cry of a drowning man, so I jump into the river, pull him to the shore and apply artificial respiration. Then just as he begins to breathe, another cry for help. So back into the river again, reaching, pulling,

> applying, breathing and then another yell. Again, and again without end goes the sequence. I am so busy, jumping in, pulling them to the shore and applying artificial respiration that I have no time to see what's upstream, pushing them in' (quoted in Smitherman, 1981).

I think the message of this story is clear; we cannot look at strategies and provision for the education of students from minority ethnic group backgrounds separately from addressing the wider context of collective social justice and equity in a diverse society.

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