<u>Dissertation Proposal (Research interest):</u>

To explore the extent to which intercultural knowledge could be integrated in the design, planning and content of the primary history programme of study of the national curriculum in the UK

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The national primary review is seeking to trim the content of the history curriculum to constitute a body of essential knowledge that all pupils must learn (Department for Education, 2012). Although we live in a multicultural society, the curriculum will continue to be 'organised around concepts, events and paradigms that reflect the experiences of Anglo Saxon Protestant' history (Jay, 2003, p. 3). In light of the arguably restricted current monocultural provision that constitutes 'a local history study, three British history studies, a European history study and a world history study' (Temple, 2010, p. 233 – 234), this dissertation will explore the extent to which the integration of intercultural knowledge into the primary history curriculum could challenge 'essentialised notions of culture and essentialised representations of the members of cultural groups' by including diverse historical narratives (Jay, 2003, p.8).

Intercultural knowledge goes further than the remit of multicultural knowledge to imply that conceptions about what constitutes 'history' be based on 'comparisons, exchanges, cooperation, and confrontation between groups' (Cushner, 1998, p. 4), rather than, as Khoi (1994) posits, as 'unrelated juxtapositions of knowledge about particular groups without any apparent interconnections between them' (Cushner, 1998, p. 4), Thus, diversity in history, which is often neglected within the curriculum and proposed remit of the review, could be incorporated systematically into the curriculum to validate the 'significance of the life experiences and contributions of ethnic and cultural groups that historically have been vanquished, marginalized, and silenced' (Harris and Clarke, 2011, p. 160). Subsequently, Kelly (2009, p. 60) argues that such curriculum innovation could, within 'a class-ridden society, which is

also multi-ethnic', challenge the aggravated 'cycle of poverty, unemployment, disaffection, alienation and social disorder' caused by an Anglo centric curriculum. Thus, a correlated analysis of the hidden curriculum could be developed, in this research, through Antonio Gramsci's (1971) complex notion of hegemonic structures to problematise the maintenance and 'dominance of mainstream academic knowledge', against the subordination of minority groups (Jay, 2003, p. 4).

In an effort to respond and extend beyond the apparent 'stagnation' of the multicultural education agenda of the last three decades, as argued by Jay (2003, p. 4), this dissertation proposes a fusion between intercultural perspectives and critical race theory to examine the extent to which a shift from a passive stance (reflection, identification, analysis) to an active one (transformation)' may be possible within curriculum design (ibid, p. 8 – 9). Although broader intersectional dimensions, such as class and gender must be explored, and are central to this research, the discussion must be kept as distinct from a general critique about liberalism and education, which often loses sight of the central research issue (ibid, p. 5).

Several examples of empirical work highlight the necessity of the integration of intercultural knowledge into a primary history curriculum. For example, Harris and Clarke, (2011, p. 160) cite 'Nieto's (2004) case study research [that] identified the difficulties, such as marginalisation within the curriculum, that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds face when confronted with an ethnocentric curriculum'. In addition, 'Zec's (1993, p. 257) comparative case

study of two schools in the UK that highlighted how high levels of positive social interaction at the institution between pupils of diverse backgrounds was reinforced by curricular initiatives, and which was absent in the comparison school, illustrates how approaches informed by intercultural perspectives enhance the experiences of students learning in multicultural environments (Harris and Clarke, 2011, p. 160), Thus, the empirical evidence supports the assertions of Steiner – Khamsi, G. (1996, p.41) and Ahonen, S. (2001, p.190) that inclusive education is dependent on a history curriculum that integrates diverse historical narratives of the past to strengthen communities to develop identities, whilst providing them with 'an understanding of their own cultural roots and shared inheritances' (Haydn and Harris, 2010, p. 243 – 244). Although the claims in case studies cannot be generalised, when considered alongside the theoretical claims presented, it could be proposed that by restricting the imposition of grand narratives, through the integration of intercultural knowledge, a curriculum that reinforces a 'uniform identity, excludes minority groups from the historical community' (Ahonen, 2001, p.190), whilst limiting possibilities of social cohesion, could be reevaluated or reconstructed to incorporate intercultural perspectives. Thus, Pole (2002, p. 272) argues that in the aftermath of the Macpherson Report (1999), caused as a result of the death of Stephen Lawrence, and the subsequent Parekh Report (2000), the history curriculum must 'counter racism in all its guises…to ensure that pupils, students and those who work in the education system are presented with the same chances and opportunities regardless of their racial and ethnic origin'. As an underpinning theme, conceptions of politics and power need to be critiqued (Ahonen, 2001, p. 190) 'to avoid the naive

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assumptions that those threatened by transformative knowledge intend to stand idly by while the system is challenged' (Jay, 2003, p.4).

Thus, having critiqued intercultural perspectives and the claims of critical race theory, it will be essential to delve beyond theoretical assumptions and engage in empirical research, such as that of Nieto (2004) to evaluate the extent to which the integration of the curriculum innovations being highlighted are feasible.

Thus, drawing on McNiff and Whitehead (2010, p.42) this research will adopt a three – phase study of discourse analysis, semi structured interviews and focus groups. The initial stages of action research will be adopted: identifying a problem; researching the problem (using discourse analysis); and developing an initiative (using focus group interviews). The latter stage will constitute teachers working collectively to generate ideas around the potential for a 'transformative' curriculum' (ibid, p. 35). This research will present opportunities 'for improving practice through improving learning, and articulating the reasons and potential significance of the research (ibid, p. 3). There is potential scope for subsequent work to the study of the dissertation itself in terms of implementation and evaluation. Initial consent to carry out the action research will be obtained from the head teacher of the school (the empirical setting for this research) that I currently work in.

The research interest may be summarised by two focal questions. Firstly, how is history constituted within the context of primary history curriculum texts? Secondly, what are the possibilities of integrating or constructing a curricular

approach that is informed by intercultural and critical race theory perspectives? Such questions may utilise Fairclough's (1992) notion of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as a 'mode of interrogation' (Dowling and Brown, 2010, p1), to provide interdisciplinary perspectives that 'combine textual and social analysis', (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, p. 66; see also Liu, 2005, p. 235). Unlike discourse analysis, CDA extends beyond a simplistic textual, linguistic analysis to draw on Phillips and Jorgensen's (2002, p. 66) claim of 'a macro – sociological perspective' that could explain how 'discourse systematically constructs versions of the social and natural worlds and positions subjects in relations of power' (Luke, 1995, p.8). Thus critical race theory and Gramsci's (1971) conception of hegemony, amalgamated alongside intercultural perspectives, could be integrated with CDA to illuminate how the primary history curriculum could be 'produced or decoded' (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, p. 82). Thus, CDA could support the aforementioned research 'interrogation' process further by highlighting the socio – cultural context in which conceptions about knowledge and curriculum constitution could be interpreted (Liu, 2005, p. 235).

Furthermore, Luke's (1995, p.18 - 19) notion of CDA as a 'critical political sociology', as opposed to a linguistic method, could provide a broader scope to examine Foucault's (1972, p. 49) claims about the knowledge in the curriculum representing constructed versions of "truths", whilst exploring how far these claims could be interpreted as reflecting the government's selections of knowledge or political ideals (Liu, 2005, p. 234). Thus, as a critical approach, that is 'politically committed to social change' (Phillips and

Jorgensen, 2002, p. 65), CDA could be understood as complementing action research in the effort to not only dismantle how history is constituted within history curriculum documents and resources, but also in examining the extent to which it could be reconstructed to integrate intercultural perspectives. This analysis will incorporate Kelly's (2009, p. 9 – 13) notion of the 'total curriculum' to examine how elements of the hidden, planned, unplanned, received, educational curriculum could impact on marginalised groups (Kelly, 2009, p. 9 – 13, Yosso, 2002). Again, such curriculum definitions will support this action research to consider the interplay of intersectional dimensions and their effect on the history curriculum's hegemonic structures (Jay, 2003, p. 7 – 8)

In terms of sampling, Philips and Jorgensen (2002, p. 78) state that 'the choice of research material depends on several aspects: the research questions, the researchers' knowledge as to the relevant material within the social domain or institution of interest, and whether, and how, one can gain access to it' (ibid). Thus, I will, in consultation with the history coordinator and class teachers at the primary school I work at, select a history textbook currently used as a resource to support the schemes of study in history. Informed by Creswell (2007, p. 126) a small number of texts will be used as a 'sampling strategy in the data collection process' to collect 'extensive detail' for CDA. Although the resources are readily available within the classroom, following Creswell's (ibid, p. 141) guidelines about ethical protocols, I will obtain permission from the head teacher to use the identified textbooks to

conduct the research. I will also use sections of the National Curriculum text, which are widely accessible and in public domain.

Although the sample will constitute a smaller range of texts than those interrogated by Liu (2005), in an examination of discourses of cultural knowledge and ideology in Chinese language textbooks in China, the history text book and selection from the history programme of study in the national curriculum will enable an analysis of how 'textual features, such as lexical choices, grammatical elements and generic structures, are manipulated in the construction of a particular version of' historical knowledge and the impact on minority groups' (Liu, 2005, p. 233). Thus, it may be possible to draw further from Liu's (2005) empirical research, even with a small range of texts, to provide scope for 'an intertextual analysis', by identifying any dominant themes, whilst exploring how texts are oriented to develop a point of view, as well as the possibility of identifying generic structures (ibid, p. 236).

The second phase of the study will incorporate semi-structured interviews. Although time consuming – especially in terms of transcription – and thus typically placing restraint on sample size when selected to generate in – depth/rich qualitative data (Dowling and Brown (2010, p. 78), semi – structured interviews, when used in the context of the proposed empirical setting, will facilitate the data collection of five teachers from the senior leadership team of the school; they represent the key figures who would spearhead the implementation stage of the action research. Prior to the interviews, following Creswell's (2007, p.123) guidelines, a consent form

which will detail elements such as 'the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; comments about protecting the confidentiality of the respondents and so on' would be provided to all participants (ibid). Further informed by Creswell, (ibid, p. 139), as the research will be conducted at a site where I have a 'vested interest' as a teacher employed at the school, it will be essential that I remain open to 'diverse perspectives…or developing themes'. In line with Newby (2010, p. 340) I will have starter questions and introduce themes during the semi – structured interviews. The basic structure will expand upon the findings of the literature review and discourse analysis, yet provide participants with 'the freedom to clarify people's understanding and to ask follow – up questions to explore a viewpoint, to determine knowledge or to open up other explanations and answers to questions that were not foreseen when the research question was determined' (ibid). Thus, developing Brown and Dowling's (2010, p. 78) assertion, that the format be 'flexible', analysis of the interviews will 'construct an understanding of how the [sample members of the senior management team] makes sense of their experiences' (ibid). The claims made from the discourse analysis could be further used to inform and 'focus on making sense of what the interviewee says and how they say it' (ibid). Each interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.

The third phase will use focus groups to share the outcomes of the literature review, discourse analysis and interviews (respecting confidentiality), using a power point presentation, whilst providing the forum to discuss potential implementation and integration issues (these could contribute to the results)

with the teachers. Following the recommendations of Barbour and Kitzinger et al (1997, p.7), the research will respond to 'demographic diversity', whilst making sure that 'voices that might be excluded' are considered; thus, the focus group will constitute staff (teachers as well as teaching assistants) that cut cross the three key stages of the primary curriculum, to gain a wide spectrum of perspectives, expertise and experience with the primary history curriculum. As an action research tool, 'focus groups [may be used] as a data collection tool and an intervention simultaneously' (Crabtree et al., 1993, p.146, cited in Barbour (2007, p. 21). Thus focus groups may provide teachers, at the empirical setting, with the impetus to discuss the technicalities associated with integrating intercultural education in curriculum, with an increased 'ability to discern the underlying values and assumptions of the curriculum specification' (Kelly, 2009, p. 28). Focus groups and unstructured interviews provide a unique opportunity to complement and challenge data interpretation; answers are often context bound and teachers may express views differently when in an unstructured interview as opposed to a focused group, especially if the same individual is included within the same sample (Barbour and Kitzinger et al, 1999, p. 6 – 7). Again, I intend to audio tape the focus groups, but will employ Barbour's (1995) recommendation of cutting down on the transcription required 'by employing a judicious mixture of written and tape – recorded sections' (Barbour and Kitzinger et al, 1999, p.13).

In terms of further interventions for the action research, the findings presented from the CDA and focus group could spark action for the development of school policies within the empirical setting. Thus, participants in the action

research may be empowered, in their role as members of the curriculum development team, to integrate intersectional analysis as 'a theoretical approach to the study of inequality that incorporates the interplay of gender, race, ethnicity, and race in a critique of a curriculum' (Fleras, 2010, p. 374). Such analysis could be developed further, with reference to the claims of Kalmus (2011), to examine the extent to which textbooks used within the empirical setting reinforce or challenge the status quo, in terms of the development of a curriculum that integrates intercultural knowledge. Thus, following on from the assertions of Crawford, (1996, p. 409), Yosso (2003, p. 94), Scott (2008, p. 14) and Kalmus (2011) such analysis could develop a more 'critical pedagogy', whereby curriculum planners, within the empirical setting, could assess the extent to which texts present afford opportunities for critical reflection and insight to address what may be deemed as controversial societal issues.

With regard to ethical concerns, I will need to maintain the confidentiality of the teachers during the semi – structured interviews, as some of these will be shared during the focus group meetings. I will need to seek their consent to share their views during the focus group meeting. Each participant would need to volunteer. Ground rules would be established prior to the group and individual meetings, and through 'debriefing and supplying literature after the group' (Barbour and Kitzinger et al, 1999, p.17). As this is action research, I would endeavour to be impartial and transparent when presenting the findings; the participants will be my colleagues.

Ultimately, this research will support my interest to innovate curriculum design and development in the interests of inclusive education in multicultural settings. Drawing on Jay (2003), it will provide a much-needed comprehensive and contemporary insight and contribution to the literature on intercultural education by examining how the content of the primary history curriculum could be developed in light of the current review. More critically, the findings of the action research could serve to generate discussion and instigate transformations in policy, pedagogy within the context of the empirical setting. Thus, it may be possible to radically impact upon the teaching and learning experiences of practitioners and students alike.

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A Critical review of: Ming-Tak Hue (2010) The challenges of making school guidance culturally responsive: narratives of pastoral needs of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong secondary schools, Educational Studies, 36:4, 357 – 369

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Hue's (2010) research contributes to a growing body of literature (such as Phillion, 2008) about diversity and intercultural issues in Hong Kong Schools. Through an exploration of the narratives of teachers, students and parents, the enquiry claims to illustrate how interpersonal dynamics between classrooms and the home may function, in partnership, to support the holistic development of ethnic minority students in three Hong Kong secondary schools. Such an approach is intended to explore 'culturally responsive approaches to school guidance and to ensure that every individual student can be treated equitably and receive equal opportunities for pastoral care and learning' (Hue, 2010, p. 365). The research emphasises the need for intercultural sensitivity in school settings with diverse cultural groups.

In seeking to develop a theoretical framework, Hue claims to adopt 'the sociological framework of the social construction of reality to help make sense of the social construction of the ethnic minority students' schooling experiences' (Hue, 2010, p. 359). Yet, the author does not explicate how this framework was used to frame or inform the construction of ethnic minority students' realities.

Hue claims to employ narrative analysis, which 'attempts to capture the 'whole story' of participants' experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2008, p. 4). Although Creswell (2007) acknowledges that narrative analysis need not follow a 'lock stock approach' (ibid, p. 55) typically, 'the procedures for implementing this research consist of studying one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically

ordering (or using life course stages) the meaning of those experiences' (ibid, p. 54). In contrast, Hue's accounts do not seem to fit with this general definition. Whereas a 'narrative study [typically] relies on (and sometimes has to excavate) extended accounts that are preserved and treated analytically as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories as is customary in other forms of qualitative analysis' (Riessman, 2008, p. 12), it could be argued that the sixty – minute unstructured interviews, facilitated by Hue, do not constitute extended accounts. Although unstructured interviews could have enabled some of the sample group to share extended scenarios, drawing on Riessman (ibid, p. 27), it could be argued that such a diverse sample should have necessitated consideration about the extent to which 'religious, class/race, and age difference' could have impacted upon data collection.

In addition, Hue's sample of 32 teachers, 32 students and 15 parents, did not seem to allow for deep case-oriented analysis of participants' experiences. Drawing on Eisner (1988) Webster and Markova (2009, p. 88) emphasise the 'gentle nature' of this approach, in terms of allowing time to uncover the analysis, whereas Hue's approach could be conceived as the kind of 'commando raid conduct' (ibid, p. 88) that must be appealed against in qualitative research of this kind.

Whilst Hue claims that 'personal experience' was adopted as a data collection method, there is no indication – following a more reflexive approach - of what the method actually refers to, or how far it impacted upon the study and the

analysis. The research could have been supported with detail of the extent to which personal experience could have been conceived to have shaped the 'restorying' of the research as 'the parties negotiate[d] the meaning of the stories, adding a validation check to the analysis' (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). Thus, Riessman (2008) draws attention to the role of researchers in terms of constituting the narrative data to be analysed to assert that,

> '…through our presence, and by listening and questioning in particular ways, we critically shape the stories participants choose to tell. The process of infiltration continues with transcription, for language is not a 'perfectly transparent medium of representation' (Riessman, 2008, p. 50).

Thus in a study focussed on cross – cultural experiences, ethical considerations about the researcher's own attitudes and the correlated impact on the data seem pertinent - especially in narrative analysis.

The findings of narrative research are often presented 'in the forms of scene, plot, character and event sketches related to critical events' (Webster & Mortova, 2009, p. 23). Although it is arguable that with Hue's large sample (in terms of the size normally adopted within narrative analysis) and so many characters, scenes and sketches, it would have been difficult to organise the data coherently on 'one plot line' (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). Whilst Hue's experiences clearly provide a fascinating insight into some of the participants' experience, the accounts are not detailed and seem to be woven together to generalise for the population. Broad phrases such as 'most students' are used to support claims; it is difficult to differentiate between whether the Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, Nepali or Thailand students' and parents' narratives. Thus, as the main research interest was to examine cross-cultural experience of

these specific groups, the findings and narratives exemplified in the research could have been supported with clearer reference to the individual students' demographics and ethnicity. Such an approach could have enabled insight, understanding and a more detailed account or narrative of how the individual pastoral needs of the sample group were responded to through the school guidance initiatives.

Hue tape-recorded the narratives, which provides 'descriptive evidence of the precise words spoken or written by narrators to strengthen persuasiveness' (Riessman, 2008, p. 191). However, recordings should be viewed with caution as they 'often assume a sense of authenticity which eludes other forms of data…people whose words were spoken in response to specific questions [and for a specific audience], and who have little input into how their thoughts are represented in the write – up of the research' (ibid). It could be argued that Hue's findings could have been more persuasive if they included the context within the accounts derived, rather than presenting 'quotations stripped of context' (ibid).

Riessman (2008, p. 26) suggests 'it is limiting to rely only on the texts we have constructed from single interviews, and we must not reify 'our holy transcripts' of these conversations'. One might use a triangulation of approaches to overcome this. Although, Bloor et al (2001, p. 13) highlight that the

> '…rejection of a validating role for triangulation should not be
> confounded with a rejection of multiple methods. Rather, analysis of
> different kinds of data (including focus group data) bearing on the same
> topic may serve to deepen and enrich a researcher's understanding of a

topic. Extending the range of methods used may extend an initial analysis, but it is not a test of it'.

It could have been useful to know the composition of the focus groups, in terms of gender; class, age, and educational background, as these dimensions could have impacted on the data collected and the freedom that the participants felt to talk about the issues presented. Although Barbour (2007, p. 101) argues that 'focus groups with minority ethnic populations require a sophisticated understanding of the differences within as well as between groups, an awareness that language, culture and religion are not synonymous, and an appreciation of interpretation and translation as being far from straightforward processes', Hue's claims do not appear to respond to these assertions. Yet, they could be interpreted as essential considerations to reflect intercultural sensitivity.

In conclusion, whilst one may argue that the methodology and approach undertaken by Hue is not always justified, the paper presents interesting insights about the complexities that arise in terms of meeting the diverse needs of some of the ethnic minority pupils in three secondary schools in Hong Kong. It successfully highlights the critical need to refine sensitive, intercultural school policies, in that context, that meet the diverse pastoral needs of the student population. Further research may complement this study by seeking to yield a richer account of participants' narratives with fewer individuals. A consideration of ethical concerns should also be expanded upon, particularly when dealing with children and such diverse cultural

groupings. This could enable the researcher to interrogate the cases further in an attempt to 'extend theory about a general problem' (Riessman, 2008, 194).

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McGlynn's (2009) research highlights how 'good practice', in terms of institutional responses to cultural diversity, are being integrated within eight schools in Northern Ireland. McGlynn's contribution to the literature on intercultural education offers suggestions to extend beyond debates between multiculturalist perspectives (with a focus on the acknowledgement of one's cultural grouping) and liberal egalitarianist assertions, to one of intercultural dialogue between cultural groups.

Although McGlynn claims that Northern Ireland would be used as a case study, the author's interpretation of what constitutes a 'case study' is unclear. Whilst it could be argued that the author adopted a 'collective case study' approach (Creswell, 2007, p. 74), typically, case studies focus on 'one issue or concern' (ibid), whereas the author's research interest in seeking to exemplify 'good practice' across many schools, infers that there could be several elements or areas for concern. Thus, the author's claim of adopting a case study approach could be interpreted as discordant with how the method is typically understood. Whilst the author claims to have relied solely on the data collection of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, case studies usually command 'detailed, in – depth [data] collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations…and documents and reports)' (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Although it must be acknowledged that there is no prescribed 'case study approach' (Dowling and Brown, (2010, p. 1717) that imposes the number of case studies that a researcher may consider in their analysis, Creswell (2007, p. 76) highlights that the choice of four or five cases could be used to facilitate detailed and in – depth data collection. Thus, a

sample of eight schools could be considered to have limited the potential

vigour of the overall analysis and opportunities to provide more in depth data

could have been restricted instead of developing richer accounts of good

practice in the schools (Creswell, 2007, p. 76). Drawing on Creswell (2007,

p.76) a more 'purposeful sampling strategy' that could have highlighted the

'boundaries of a case [and suggest at the outset]… how it might be

constrained in terms of time, events and processes' could have been useful

(Creswell, 2007, p. 76).

It could be further argued that the author's attempt to illustrate singular

examples of 'case studies' across several schools to exemplify attitudes to

diversity and integration strategies, appeared tokenistic, as the extent to

which the other seven schools might have been developing the same 'good

practice' is not clear.

With regards to the possibility of generating rich data collection, when used

with a small sample, semi structured interviews, can allow for participants to

clarify misunderstandings and explore issues deeply (Newby, 2010:342). Yet,

although, the author claims that this method of data collection enabled

participants who had been involved in integration activities to address themes

such as the 'strengths and challenges of current initiatives' (McGlynn, 2009,

p.302), the actual depth of those interviews across eight schools in a sixth

month period is questionable. Thus, there could have been a 'trade-off

between the quantity of data collected and its richness' (Newby, 2010: 342).

To address these critiques, one could 'triangulate the response through other

interviews or documentary sources' (Newby, 2010: 342). Indeed, more in–depth interviews with participants, though time consuming and perhaps costly, might have helped to uncover, in more detail, 'the values and mindsets that lie behind the facts' (Newby, 2010: 344). It is not clear how many participants took part in the study; this may have implications, for example, of making overall conclusions about good practice. For example, it might be that participants'' perspectives in a school, were not considered fully, or differed from the findings in another school.

Focus groups were used with children to collect further data. Yet, whether they were 'group interviews, group discussions or an exploration of individual views in a group context' (Newby, 2010: 350, Barbour, 2007: 2) is not made explicit. In addition, the constitution of the group is not made clear. For example, Mauthner, (1997, p. 23) argues that, 'gender is likely to play an important role in determining dominant voices in focus groups with children; thus, most researchers advocate holding single–sex groups to guard against the tendency of boys to 'talk more, more loudly and determine conversation topics [and] to overshadow girls' in mixed groups'. Similarly, detailed information about participants' class, social status or ethnicity is omitted, despite the fact that this could have had implications on the findings and seems critical in a study about how intercultural dialogue is being developed in each setting. Ethical concerns are also not raised within the paper, but as focus groups were conducted with children, they could be understood as a pertinent consideration.

Whilst McGlynn's research offers an insightful introduction into intercultural schools in Northern Ireland, the sampling and participant inclusion criteria used by the author may not be optimal. The researcher claims that the school principals selected the participants to be interviewed 'on the basis that they had been involved in integration initiatives' (Mc Glynn, 2009, p. 302). Yet, this approach could infer bias in sampling; it could have been a purposive strategy, though the reader is not given any insight for its rationale. The fact that the principals selected the participants could be further problematic as 'there is always the possibility that respondents will construct replies that place them in a better light' (Newby, 2010, p. 342). Participants may have wanted to please the principals, for example, or feared to disagree with their views. The issue of consent could be contentious because the principals selected participants, rather than ensuring voluntary participation in the study, which could have ethical implications. Although one should not infer that they were coerced into the study and the author claims that research limitations, in relation to the inclusion of participants who were 'not selected on the basis of empirical evidence […] (McGlynn, 2009, p. 302), the potential by products of such an approach, which include shifts in the relations of power between study participants and researchers, must be highlighted.

With regard to data analysis, the author claims that 'themes explored include identifying responses to cultural diversity, how cultural integration is promoted' and so on (McGlynn, 2009, p. 302). Yet, no clear indication about how these themes were developed, why they were prioritised, or why these themes were to be seen as providing the framework to determine whether schools were

developing good practice, is emphasised. Furthermore, during transcription, the author further claims that the analytical approaches of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) were adopted to generate 'natural units of meaning' (McGlynn, 2009, p. 302), yet, no rationale is provided to explain why the author used this model as opposed to any other.

Furthermore, drawing on Barbour (2009, p. 142 – 152) it is not apparent whether any systematic 'analytical interrogation' took place to identify any patterning in the data. Despite claiming from the outset that the analysis would be 'provided through the lens of Bhikhu Parekh's (2006) reconceptualisation of multiculturalism' (McGlynn, 2009, p. 299), the author does not locate the analysis within the context of Parekh's reconceptualisation, but instead in relation to the themes: 'openness to diversity and integration strategies'. Although Parekh's reconceptualisation is referred to in the conclusion, perhaps, this analysis might have been better placed within the results and analysis section, so that one could more clearly see how the results were being analysed 'through Bhikhu Parekh's lens' (McGlynn, 2009, p. 299).

Despite methodological limitations, McGlynn's research provides an important synopsis about how multicultural and intercultural practices are being developed in diverse communities. The findings could have wider implications for developments in policies on promoting diversity, equal opportunities and good practice in schools, institutions and societies, such as Northern Ireland, where there may be conflict or cultural divisions.

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