TITLE: Citizenship Education in the UK and the Adult Migrant

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the policy reasons behind Adult ESOL Citizenship Education (AECE) in the UK and then examines whether AECE adequately prepares migrants for active citizenship in T. H. McLaughlin's *'maximal'* sense: involving active political participation premised upon a shared concept of democratic culture underpinned by rights and obligations. It argues that AECE, as envisaged by Bernard Crick and Terence McLaughlin, has fallen short of its maximal conceptualisation due to the watering down of CE and AECE in preference to Fundamental British Values, and the Crick reports' 'light touch' to their implementation. The paper calls for a need to reassert the reality of the modern nation as pluralistic and reject the current drive toward monism. It also argues that AECE is unlikely to deliver social cohesion and integration, or an actively participatory citizenry, unless issues of social justice and equity are addressed.

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Introduction

What does it mean to be a citizen? Is it possible for various ethnic communities to do more than simply exist? Moreover, for Mouffe (1992), 'the interpellation "citizen" to be able to fulfil that role, what conditions must it meet?' ((1992, p. 70). This question is of vital significance and its response depends on one's philosophical leanings. 'The way we define citizenship is intimately linked to the kind of society and political community we want.' (ibid. (1992, p. 70). Should it be conceived purely in terms of the 'minimal/liberal' *citizenship-as-legal-status*: full membership in a particular society, or the 'maximal/civic republican' *citizenship-as-desirable-activity*: where the extent and quality of citizenship depends on one's participation. I have been a teacher of ESOL (English as a Second Language) to adults since 2003 in various contexts, from the private sector to Local Authorities and Further Education college, yet not once in any of these sectors have I been offered/encouraged, or had Citizenship Education (CE) training made accessible to me, nor have colleagues with whom I have worked. What are the consequences of this? Further, what does this reveal in the context of CE becoming a legal requirement in compulsory education in September 2002? This legal requirement came about following the Crick report (Crick and Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998). The two subsequent reports, from Crick-chaired committees, concerned the CE needs of 16-19 year olds (Crick, 2000), and migrants to Britain (Crick, 2003) which affected the teaching of ESOL courses by making it a requirement to have CE components in the ESOL curriculum. The provision of CE was seen as a means to combat the perceived

democratic deficit – with declining political participation of the polity, and in the context of community cohesion for migrants. This paper will explore the context of Adult ESOL Citizenship Education (AECE) to answer the above questions, and consider to what extent Bernard Crick's desire *'to change the political culture of this country both nationally and locally'* (Crick, 1998, para. 1.5) has come about. The paper begins by briefly articulating the main conceptualisations of citizenship to gain some perspective of what the aims of AECE should be, in order to understand its current philosophical underpinnings in the UK. Then the current policy and legislation with regards to AECE will be articulated. Next, the policy motives behind AECE will be investigated - particularly the assertion that the learning of English is of paramount importance to stimulating *integration* and *civic participation.* This should reveal where AECE stands vis-à-vis the different conceptualisations of citizenship and the wider discourse surrounding lifelong learning. Finally, using T.H. McLaughlin's *maximal* civic republican conceptualisation, I argue that AECE does not equip migrants for such a citizenship.

The concept of citizenship

The Western concept of citizenship is complex and contested; it has run along

- the civic republican approach (whose roots can be traced back to Sparta, Athens and Aristotle, through Harrington, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Cicero and Tacitus), which emphasises a direct relationship between citizenship and active political participation in Aristotelian terms as defined in his *Politics* of a citizen who is both able to rule and to be ruled in turn;

- liberal models founded upon legal rights having a Universalist vocation

(whose racines can be traced to the Roman Empire of the mid-5th century BC, through Rawls, Dahl, Marshall, Adam Smith, Locke and Hobbes);

- to communitarian approaches emphasising cultural belonging and community (Walzer, 1983; Kymlicka, 1996) and finally

- to radical pluralistic approaches in which any identity can find its place (Young, 1989).

Arguably, Crick's intention was toward the civic republican conceptualization of citizenship. His reports drew strongly on the work of T.H. Marshall (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992) who had argued that citizenship comprised three distinct - albeit related - dimensions: the civil, the political and the social, which were transformed into three strands: social and moral responsibility; political literacy; and community involvement. The Crick report (1998), referring to an earlier report Encouraging Citizenship (1990), emphasized that greater import be paid to 'the reciprocity between rights and duties; and, more than Marshall, on welfare being not just provision by the state but also what people can do for each other in voluntary groups and organisations, whether local or national' (**para. 2.3**). Concerning political citizenship, it reiterated that it should not be taken for granted, and that: 'Civic spirit, citizens' charters and voluntary activity in the community are of crucial importance, but individuals must be helped and prepared to shape the terms of such engagements by political understanding and action. (**para. 2.3**). I will however use a contemporaneous conceptualisation of maximal citizenship articulated by T.H. McLaughlin (1992), which has considerable overlap with Marshall, and Crick's 'maximal' conceptualisation of citizenship. McLaughlin proposes the conceptualisation of contrasting

interpretations of citizenship (and democracy itself) along a continuum 'rather than in terms of discrete conceptions', which can be illustrated with reference to 'four aspects of citizenship' (236).

- the extent of the *political involvement* of the individual
- identity: a dynamic membership of a shared democratic culture, involving rights, responsibilities and obligations
- *virtues* that enable justice and empowerment of one's fellow citizens
- the *social prerequisites* necessary for effective citizenship – consideration of social disadvantages as barriers to full citizenship participation.

The four aspects are conceived in social, cultural and psychological terms, which address the heart of a citizen's identity that such a citizenship confers. McLaughlin's conceptualisation is particularly appealing because it looks at

the virtues of the citizen that are required, the extent of the political involvement on the part of the individual that is thought to follow, and the social prerequisites seen as necessary for effective citizenship (1992, p.236).

McLaughlin's reinterpretation helps us locate policy and AECE provision for migrants in a more nuanced way than 'distinct conceptions' of citizenship; it helps us to go beyond the assumption that 'minimal' conceptions are more free than their 'maximal' counterparts of ideological content or significance' (ibid., p. 237). For example, liberals stress the importance of personal autonomy as being part of public virtues to be promoted, but this requires living an examined life

that is critical of perceived wisdom., However, philosophers such as Galston (1989, 1991) argue against living an examined life, as it may lead to the questioning of one's private beliefs. McLaughlin's interpretation 'merely insists that questions relating to substantial identity, to virtues of general focus, to significant participation and to the problem of social disadvantage' be considered *relevant* in questions of citizenship', without requiring a specific answer (237). But, before I address whether the current AECE for migrants allows them to function fully as citizens in McLaughlin's 'maximal' sense, or as envisaged by Crick,[1] it is worth outlining the current state of play in AECE in the UK in terms of policy, legislation and their origins, to discern their intent.

AECE discourse, policy and legislation in the UK

The UK strategy for the integration of migrants was formulated primarily by the work of the *Community Cohesion Review* (2001) led by Ted Cantle, the reports by Denham *et al.* (2001) and Crick *'The New and The Old'* (2003) chaired by Bernard Crick. The changes in British Law that proceeded the Denham Report were part of a greater change in the debate on citizenship, which led in September 2002 to citizenship becoming a statutory foundation subject in the national curriculum as recommended in the first Crick report (Crick and Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998); the subsequent two reports, from Crick-chaired committees, concerned the CE needs of 16-19 year olds (Crick, 2000) and migrants to Britain (Crick, 2003).

The report's primary concern according to Crick was *'to change the political*

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[1] It is worth highlighting that the maximal form of CE advocated by Crick is not uncontroversial and contested as being a minority view (Miller 2000) of leftwing anti-capitalist bias (Tooley, 2000) and undermining of private beliefs and practices (Galston, 1989) cf. Kymlicka (1999).

culture of this country. Such language 'sees citizenship as process rather than status, as activity rather than nationality, as enabling rather than behavioural' and consequently 'seeks to address a variety of agendas: the democratic deficit, community cohesion, social inclusion, and civic renewal' (Breslin, 2005). Regarding adult migrants, the Crick report (2003) recommended that something similar to what was being taught in CE in schools should be extended to migrants, with the proviso that a Programme of Studies should be tailored to fit the 'different attainments and different skills' of those seeking naturalisation' (p15).

The Crick report also considered English language competency as being 'the most important means of diverse communities participating in a common culture with key values in common' (Crick, 2003, p. 11). English competency was seen as being essential in the process of integration and therefore the report recommended unified 'language-with-civic-content programmes' (ibid, p. 14). Section 1 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 amended the requirements for citizenship in the British Nationality Act 1981, to include language requirements and knowledge of UK life, for people seeking naturalisation. The recommendations of Crick's 2003 report were enacted by subsequent changes to the legislation concerning the acquisition of UK citizenship. Since 2004 those with ESOL Entry 3 English skills have been expected to demonstrate knowledge of the official publication on citizenship (Home Office., 2013) by answering multiple-choice questions about life in the UK. Those less capable in English could take an ESOL course containing elements of citizenship and, by progressing a level (evidenced by passing a speaking and listening exam), would be eligible for settlement or naturalisation without

having to undertake the Life in the UK test. In April 2007, the UK Immigration Rules were amended so that the aforementioned requirements were extended to people seeking indefinite leave to remain (ILR). And from October 2013 an additional English language test may be required for some applicants subject to 10 caveats (Brooks, 2013, p. 5).

The discourse on AECE and its subsequent enactment in statute can be traced to the British government's underlying concern about social unrest which took place in three towns and cities[2] - with large ethnic minority populations - in the north of England in 2001. The riots led to the formation of *The Community Cohesion Review* led by Cantle who noted that 'community cohesion fundamentally depend[ed] on people and their values', and recommended strategies that would make migrant settlements feel "at home", including an agreement on 'some common elements of "nationhood" ' (Cantle, 2001, p. 18).[3] Following these reports the White Paper on immigration, asylum and nationality stated that: 'We need to develop a sense of civic identity and shared values, and knowledge of the English language … can undoubtedly support this objective' (Home Office, 2002, p. 32). Thus English fluency viewed through such lens, is seen as a British value by which to judge the willingness and ability of the immigrant to integrate. Consequently, ESOL classes are considered a front line in government policy on national cohesion and homeland security policy.

However, another important underlying motive of AECE policy has been influenced by the *learning economy* discourse in the UK, premised upon the *economic* imperative (OECD, 1996; Kocanova, Bourgeois and de Almeida Coutinho, 2015), which sees learners as human capital who must improve their

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[2] Leeds, Oldham and Bradford.
[3] (see also Denham, 2001).

economic skills;[4] for migrants this means mastery of English is for employment; as such ESOL was partly conceived in economic terms.

From the preceding policy narrative, there appears to be a conflict between the initial intent of the Crick reports' civic republican – maximal - model of citizenship, and successive governments' economic imperative of the learning economy - improving skills for employment - rather than on an emancipatory agenda of social justice. To highlight this, I will use McLaughlin's four aspects of citizenship to compare policy intent and its delivery with respect to AECE provision and ask the question: does AECE encourage political involvement or political literacy?

Political involvement

For McLaughlin, political involvement needs to go beyond the *minimal* views of loyalties and responsibilities, which are viewed 'primarily as local and immediate in character' (McLaughlin, 1992, p. 236) - that is to say a citizen should be law-abiding and 'public spirited', for example helping neighbours via voluntary activity. This contrasts with McLaughlin's *maximal* view, which regards citizens as possessing 'a responsibility to actively question and extend their local and immediate horizons [to greater] considerations such as those of justice, and to work for the sort of social conditions that will lead to the empowerment of all citizens.' This concurs with Crick's transformative *maximal* aims: to see the citizen as having the potential to participate actively in democratic and political processes in the widest possible manner, rather than the narrow (minimal) sense of a citizen merely upholding democratic ideals and

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[4] Rather than education's emancipatory social justice that was advocated prior to the 1980s. See Faure et al., (1972; UNESCO, 1997).

participating to the limited degree of voting in local and national elections. However, one could argue as Benjamin Constant (1819) did that the scale and complexity of *grands États modernes* precludes the kind of civic engagement envisaged by Aristotle (and Crick). The present-day citizen, unlike the Aristotelian, does not see herself as a *zoon politikon* with politics being central to her identity; politics is now just one of her many interests. An individual should be free to choose her level of engagment: whether maximally or minimally. But to exercise this choice, she must first know that such a choice exists and to have sufficient knowledge to make this choice: she needs to be informed.

With regard to *new* citizens and migrants, arguably the learning of English is motivated mainly by integrationist needs: to gain employment and survive in their daily lives in their communities (Han, Starkey and Green 2010). This concurs with my anecdotal evidence from 15 years' teaching. It fits with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954): many ESOL students are pre-occupied with the need to survive rather than the contemplation and/or actualisation of citizenship in a maximal sense. But as Ralph Miliband argued (1994, in Martin, 2003, p. 575) 'the practice and the habit of democracy' needs to be understood, experienced, and practiced as part of the texture of our everyday lives. For all citizens 'to make themselves effective in public life' (Crick, 1998, para. 2.12), they need first of all to possess political knowledge in addition to simply learning the language - only by becoming so informed, will they come to realise the importance of becoming active citizens in order to secure their freedoms and rights, as well as understand their obligations.

But unfortunately, as Keating and Kerr (2013) state, the initial emphasis on political literacy by Crick et al. (1998) has been weakened due to a greater

emphasis being placed on promoting community cohesion and integration as one of the fundamentals of the Citizenship curriculum, and this I contend also holds true of AECE. This emphasis on community cohesion was made a legal requirement by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2007 following the *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review 2007*. The National Curriculum was then updated in 2008 to include a fourth thematic strand to be attached to CE, that of *Identity and diversity: living together in the UK* (QCA 2007, in Keating and Kerr, 2013, p. 8). As a consequence, political literacy had to be deferred in favour of discussions on diversity, community and social cohesion. In a similar vein, CE was further watered down with the coming into effect in 2015 of a legal duty to promote *Fundamental British Values* (FBV) in schools: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith, as part of the *prevent* policy (HM Government, 2011) aimed at children at risk of being drawn to terrorism. The teaching of FBV has filtered through to AECE.

For me maximal political participation could not have been the intent of government policy in the UK regarding AECE. Even if this were the case, one could 'question as to whether language and citizenship tests and courses are a genuine contribution to preparation for [adult] citizenship' (Han, Starkey and Green, 2010). The status of CE (and AECE) was undermined at its inception by policy design flaws and implementation. The 1998 (and 2003) Crick reports applied a 'light touch' to its implementation in the school curriculum by not requiring a more prescriptive curriculum. The fear was of a) being accused of political interference in subject content (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 546); b) a need to recognise teachers' professional abilities by trusting them to engage learners by

localising and personalising the content and format(s) (Halliday 1999, in Keating and Kerr, 2013, p. 8); and c) understanding the different levels of linguistic attainment of migrants (2003, p.15). These intentions were laudable; however, this pragmatic approach has led to the main aims envisaged by the 1998 report, such as political literacy, being delivered patchily, with some schools developing good Citizenship practices while others squeeze Citizenship into cracks in the timetable (this is also true of AECE).

Compounding the variations in provision, as little guidance was provided to implement CE concerning its format, content, teaching qualifications or resources, Benton (2008) identified a gap between the policy and what was being taught in practice due to a lack of subject specific knowledge: one fifth of the teachers lacked confidence in teaching about the EU, parliament and government and the global community, with nearly 20% not at all confident in delivering about voting rights. Additionally, a survey of teachers found 50% of the teachers reported they had received no training on Citizenship, and two thirds believed they required more training (Keating *et al.*, 2010, pp. 39–41). Jerome (2012, p. 117) estimated a shortfall of 1160 qualified Citizenship teachers in England. The problem of a shortage of CE specialists in AECE is even more acute. Teachers are the most important and final link in the delivery of AECE; the wish that it be taught in its maximal sense is undermined by the fact that it is often delivered by ESOL tutors with little CE knowledge. In my 14 years of teaching ESOL at various institutions, I have yet to be offered any training on CE. This state of affairs hinders the migrant attaining political knowledge and therefore becoming politically literate for a maximal understanding, and or engagement.

Thus the problems that surfaced in CE in schools are being mirrored in AECE: a mismatch of policy intent and implementation. This situation is further compounded by the fact that most ESOL students are below Level 1, and therefore do not possess the linguistic capacity for a maximal understanding of citizenship.[5] This could in part explain the finding of Han, Starkey and Green's (2010) study that the ESOL learners interviewed had very little understanding of the maximal concept of citizenship. Another explanation for this could be a lack of subject-specific knowledge on the part of the ESOL teachers themselves. However, even if one were to have subject specialists teaching CE to ESOL adults of Levels 1 and 2, it is questionable whether they would gain sufficient political literacy that would prepare them for maximal political participation. The reason for this is to be found in the Adult ESOL Curriculum and the CE handbook: *Life in the UK*, which singularly fails to provide an in-depth understanding of citizenship and British culture in its profound sense; the Test contains some trivial knowledge questions (Brooks, 2013; 2015). It is not *fit-for-purpose* - it would fail the *validity, reliability* and *fairness* test as it contains outdated information, meaning the respondents need answer incorrectly to gain a correct mark (Brooks, 2013; 2015). Thus, simply passing a language test and the Citizenship Test, which is not fit for purpose, does not ensure that those who pass will have skills sufficient to engage actively in civic life. This is especially so when one considers that:

Maximal conceptions require a considerable degree of explicit understanding of democratic principles, values and procedures on the part of the citizen, together with

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[5] This is not to say that they do not possess the intellectual capacity for such an understanding in their native tongues.

the dispositions and capacities required for participation in democratic citizenship generously conceived (McLaughlin 1992, p. 237).

The next section addresses the importance of identity, and what it means to be a citizen in McLaughlin's conceptualisation. It examines the contention that language proficiency with (AE)CE is sufficient in promoting a shared identity of the migrant into the host nation in a maximal sense.

Identity and language competence

In the *minimal* concept of identity; citizenship is seen through the lens of the formal, the legal, and the juridical. Such a status confers on the citizen a certain civil status, with its associated rights. In contrast, identity in maximal terms should be considered in dynamic rather than static terms, requiring the citizen to have

a consciousness of him or herself as a member of a living community with a shared democratic culture involving obligations and responsibilities as well as rights, a sense of the common good, fraternity and so on. [This dynamic interpretation of identity] is seen as a matter for continuing debate and redefinition. It also gives rise to the question of the extent to which social disadvantage in its various forms can undermine citizenship, especially when a sense of effective personal agency is seen as a necessary ingredient of what is at stake (McLaughlin, 1992, p. 236).

This issue of social disadvantage will be considered below in the later section on social prerequisites. Government policy (Home office, 2002; QCA, 2007) and the FBV narrative of social integration and promotion of a shared culture and values

appear to go some way to align with McLaughlin's maximal conceptualisaton of identity. To this end one can argue that the mastering of English language is a 'strong enabler of integration' (Casey, 2016), as is the Citizenship Test, for its purpose is to help the migrant understand British culture and history. Such knowledge and language competency are an important step toward enabling the new citizen to eventually bond with her host nation. Creating a bond between citizenship and nationality goes back to Aristotle, who stated that '[t]he citizens of a state should always be educated to suit the constitution of their state' (Heater, 1999, p. 171). The reconstruction of the migrant's identity in the new society is essential and enriches it, and makes it more complex (Griswold, 2011, p. 618); identity reconstruction enables a deeper understanding of the host nation's history, customs, culture, and legal and political systems. Learning the language of a country is inextricably linked to accessing civil freedom and understanding its culture and society. As such, it is not unreasonable to believe that greater knowledge of the host country would facilitate social integration and acceptance in the host nation.

But what evidence is there for the above suppositions? One would find few newcomers to any new country who do not understand the importance of acquiring linguistic competency in order to 'flourish' and gain personal agency; most also understand that learning about the host culture, people and history can be beneficial. This may explain the persistence of the belief that citizenship and social integration are not possible without language proficiency in the host country, however, there is little empirical support for this (Etzioni, 2007). This idea persists because research on the discourse on citizenship suggests that language proficiency signifies one as legitimately belonging to a particular

community, whether ethnic or national (Griswold, 2011, p. 407). This discourse, which purports to promote inclusivity and social integration is in fact premised upon the fact that those speaking other than the dominant national language are perceived as being *outsiders* and not truly belonging to the nation (Blackledge, 2003; Bjornson, 2007). This association has led to the targeting of new migrants with ESOL and CE, instead of tackling failures of integration amongst long-standing minorities. Consequently, it ignores that fact that evidence for the assumption 'that speaking languages other than English leads to a breakdown of social cohesion is hard to come by' (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012, p. 6). For example those minorities who participated in the 2001 riots spoke English as their first language. To conflate 'the presence of long-standing minority citizens with newer migrants and refugees' (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 135), ignores the root causes of the riots which were not to be found in values and language but instead in racism, discrimination, poverty, housing, unemployment, education policies, and class as the root cause of the social unrest (Tomlinson, 2008).[6]

Nevertheless, this link is constantly alluded to in political discourse; for example David Blunkett in 2002 wrote about the 'schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships' in bilingual families (in ibid). Underpinning the desire for English fluency is an anxiety about 'incursions' of foreign cultures and terrorism (former Prime Minister David Cameron in Mason, 2016) into the national domestic space; of neighbourhoods (Fortier, 2010), or homes (Byrne, 2013) where English is not spoken. Mandatory language classes and/or tests in the national language(s) for immigrants are seen as a way to facilitate – or compel – such integration (Bjornson, 2007). The current narrative of the failure

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[6] In a recent poll on bias in Britain (The Guardian, 2018), half of ethnic minority respondents felt treated differently due to their ethnicity. See also *The Race Disparity Audit* (Cabinet Office, 2017).

of multiculturalism and the drive toward assimilation under the guise of integration through the targeting of specific minorities such as Muslims, conflates 'language as an instrument of communication with language as a symbol of social identification and wholesale cultural identity. There is no room here for the multilingual speaker who might have multilocal or transnational attachments and identifications, including in Britain' (Fortier, 2017). This narrative is contrary to McLaughlin's conceptualization of an identity that is dynamic, changing and open to redefinition via debate. Current discourse denies the composite nature of identities and that suppressing one aspect of one's identity – in terms of one's nationality, race, religion, gender, profession, class, political ideology, family, and so on – is akin to cutting/erasing one part of what makes a person a whole. Consequently, one feels unwelcomed and attacked, and then begins to identify more with that part of one's identity which is attacked (Maalouf, 2000: 26). As Hannah Arendt says, 'If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew' (in Cassin and Brault, 2016, p. 42). But this Arendt suggests is a political response, 'purely political.' 'There is no essentialization, no naturalization, no substance, just a simple predicate' (ibid. Cassin and Brault, 2016, pp. 42–43).

Moreover, the current form of identity construction is predicated upon the weakening notion of citizenship as being attached to a particular nation, and ignores the transnational nature of citizenship with the increasing prominence of international law and supra-national agglomerations such as the EU. Research conducted by Yuval-Davis (1999) for example emphasises that migrants' legal status as citizens of one nation does not preclude their political participation in another, and Hanauer (2008) argues that such transnational individuals

belonging to communities such as the EU would be more interested in the functional nature of citizenship, i.e. what Stokes (2004) deems the liberal perspective on citizenship – concerned mainly with the legal status and the rights of individuals - rather than the republican one. This whole scenario calls into question the assertion that without language proficiency in the host country, the new migrant would be unable to participate in civic life or to integrate socially or culturally (Bjornson, 2007).

The importance of language competency, and knowledge of the host country's history, culture, customs and values (through AECE if it is taught maximally), are undoubtedly an important step toward enabling the new citizen to eventually bond with her host nation. However, language competency and AECE alone are insufficient, if it means being forced to give up some of one's previous identities. In the present climate, with the rise of nationalism and hostility toward migrants and ethnic minorities, as exemplified in Brexit, and the election of people like Trump and Viktor Orban in Hungary, whether any new citizen would feel a greater bond to their host culture, and inclined to active citizenship engagement, is questionable. It is discomfiting that a recent Yougov survey (Smith, 2017) suggests half of Brexit supporters state that gaining citizenship through naturalisation does not make you British – for these individuals notions of national identity are inextricably tied to ideas of blood and soil.[7]

In the following section I will examine to what extent AECE can encourage those public virtues that lead to engagement in struggles for social justice and the empowering of all citizens.

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[7] For more on this idea, see Bauman (1992)

Public virtues and the importance of language competency

In the context of a pluralistic democratic society, the public virtues CE promotes are not without controversy. Liberal governments have to balance legitimate *unifying* influence on society without promoting 'monism or homogeneity of public virtues, that lay it open to the charge of indoctrination. Conversely, not promoting a set of shared public values, may contribute to the disintegration of society itself.[8] As McLaughlin (1992, p. 241) argued, these are not abstract notions but vital to the kind of society that we wish to inhabit and maintain; their articulation through CE are crucial in a pluralistic democratic society. For McLaughlin virtues maximally conceived imply engagement in struggles for justice 'and to work for the sort of social conditions that will lead to the empowerment of all citizens' (1992, p. 237), whereas minimally conceived imply being law-abiding and helping one's neighbour. This point as McLaughlin states is of course linked to the level of political participation that is deemed appropriate for citizens, and this in turn is dependent upon whether one holds to the maximal, or minimal conceptualisation of citizenship.

Should one conceive of AECE in maximal terms (Crick's intent) then I would argue that the AECE on offer is unlikely to empower, liberate or lead to the political and social agency of the migrant. The idea of needing to learn English (AECE) in order to access one's rights, to become a fully participatory citizen and avoid marginalisation is a simplistic notion if the underlying discriminations and structural inequalities are not addressed. Initially, the need to speak English was couched under the liberal terminology of social cohesion, but has now given way

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[8] For more on this see Callan (1997)

to a '[s]ustained rhetoric insisting that migrants have an obligation (rather than a right) to learn English, which grew in pitch under Prime Minister Blair's Labour Government in the UK, [and] has continued under the Coalition' (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012, p. 6), and subsequent governments. Thus there is a deep suspicion of some communities, especially of Muslims, as not desiring to integrate.

There is a 'European-wide moral panic about "difference"' (Grillo 2007 in Byrne, 2017, p. 324). There is a worry that fostering and celebrating *too* much difference leads to the weakening of national unity and national culture which needs to be preserved. Many minorities are perceived as living separate lives without having a sense of 'Britishness' to foster national sentiment. This perception contradicts the report on *The Impacts of Migration on Social Cohesion's* (2012, p. 2) analysis that regarding a sense of belonging to Britain, migrants score more highly than native-born, native-heritage Britons. There is an undoubted tension between promoting diversity and unity, but by denying the idea of multiculturalism, we are trying to erase an important element in the identity of many migrants and minorities. To deal with this tension is a necessity, especially as this tension has heightened post-Brexit, and the rise in nationalism in Britain and Europe has helped the far right and populists to propagate a narrative of Europe as 'a besieged fortress … forever threatened by trespassing of enemies, dilution, slackening of vigilance' (Bauman, 1992, pp. 678–79) – swamped by antithetical cultures. For McLaughlin, the way to deal with this tension was to advocate a public debate to define shared values within a diverse society, suggesting that we need to reach agreement on public virtues and the common good.

To blame multicultural tolerance and celebration of diversity as being responsible for too much separation, and of preventing a more forceful response toward those who are perceived to be hostile to Christianity and Western culture, is to deny the pluralistic nature of modern societies. The reality of transnationalism and super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), the existence of supra-identities such as EU citizenship, and powerful multinational corporations means '[m]embership is more fluid and transcends national or regional borders' (Abowitz and Harnish, 2006, p. 675), and makes the idea of fostering national identity seem rather parochial. It is wrong to view diversity as 'disintegrative or a fault to be overcome' (Figueroa, 2000, p. 54) but should be seen as an ideal. For Figueroa, encounter with the *other* is natural to human experience, and consequently citizenship should promote commitment to the society in its diversity; openness to, solidarity with, and respect for the different other; acceptance of the basic worth of all people; rejection of any form of exploitation, inequitable treatment or racism is important (Figueroa, 2000, p. 57).

Social prerequisites

For McLaughlin, a maximal concept of social prerequisites for citizenship has to go beyond the minimal approaches, which merely grant the formal legal status described earlier; it must take into consideration social disadvantage, and acknowledge the diverse nature of Britain society, and the imposition of monism to be rejected. This requires a real debate as to the social prerequisites needed to give recognition to the plural nature of British society. The Parekh Report (Runnymede 2000: 105, 107) carrying forward McLaughlin's debate advocated the reimagining of multicultural Britain as a 'community of communities',

predicated upon a combination of five tasks:

(a) reimagining Britain's past story and present identity,

(b) balancing equality and difference, liberty and cohesion, . . .

(c) confronting and eliminating racisms . . .

(d) reducing material inequalities and

(e) building a human rights culture.

The Report sought to disentangle Britishness from Englishness, viewing Britain as a shared nation rather than one dominated by or belonging to any particular group. However, as the rhetoric of scapegoating multiculturalism for the disintegration of society (due to a perceived lack of shared public virtues) has gained momentum, the suspicion and targeting of minorities and *difference*, has resulted in the conflation of native ethnic minorities with new migrants. Such suspicion and targeting of certain communities has alienated them, and is unlikely to make them feel 'at home', as envisaged by Cantle (2001). **But,** to impose monism or homogeneity of belief, practice and values **in such a diverse society such as England's**, borders on a new form of imperialism; the dominant culture (invariably Western) deems itself progressive, and the rest as archaic. More insidious yet, the narrative of English for integration devalorises the subject who speaks other languages, sometimes several other (Fortier, 2017). Or as Sneja Gunew says (Fortier, 2017), the first language of some migrants is 'rendered alien, shameful, transgressive, particularly if it is outside the acceptable repertoire of "foreign languages"'. In the current post-Brexit and post-9/11 securitised politics of language, speaking other languages whether at home

or in the streets has 'become associated with non-assimilable alterity and danger' (Fortier, 2017).

The superficial perception by some policymakers and media is of ethnic minorities' reluctance to integrate and learn the language, rather than looking deeper, to discrimination, poverty, housing, unemployment, and so forth. Instead of addressing such issues, successive governments under the *learning economy* hegemony have viewed adult learning as an important lever for economic growth and global competitiveness. Language skills are equated with economic success, with the onus on the individual to make good the literacy deficit to improve her economic lot. The current problem with lifelong learning (including AECE) is that 'it converts deep-seated economic problems into short-lived educational projects' (Coffield, 1999).

Conclusion

Any answer to my preliminary questions: 'what does it mean to be a citizen?' and 'is it possible for various ethnic communities to do more than simply exist?', depends on one's conception of the citizen and that depends on your philosophical leaning: whether you hold her in liberal terms as *citizenship-as-legal-status*, or the civic republican *citizenship-as-desirable-activity*. Crick's intention was 'maximal': in order to transform the political culture of Britain, he wanted existing citizens to become more politically literate and active in civic engagement, and this he also intended for migrants and *new* citizens. So how has his vision faired? It is undeniable that linguistic competency is vital for accessing one's civil freedoms: exercising political power both as a citizen and as an informed elector, and for social integration, sharing 'the social heritage in its

wholeness and to live ... according to the standards prevailing in society'
(Marshall and Bottomore, 1992, p. 59). However, in order for the new citizen to
fully participate as an active member, it is not sufficient for her to master the
language of the host country, for that in itself does not make her fully conversant
with her civil, political and social rights, as well as her obligations as a citizen.
What makes a difference is having proper knowledge and understanding of the
social, legal and political systems of the host country and being equipped with
the skills and aptitudes to make full use of this knowledge and understanding.
This was the purpose of CE and AECE as articulated in the Crick report (2003).

Unfortunately, the teaching of AECE (and CE) has been undermined. AECE
can be instrumental in addressing issues of social cohesion and integration, but
for this to happen, AECE needs to be given more prominence in the ESOL Adult
Curriculum, and neither diluted nor superseded as it is currently by
Fundamental British Values. AECE also needs greater focus and definition to
develop in teachers a 'shared sense of what the subject is for if they are to teach
it well and not merely follow prescribed procedures (Tate, in Mclaughlin 2000, p.
560). It should be taught by subject specialists, or by ESOL teachers trained
adequately to deliver the citizenship components of the curriculum.

However, even if these elements were in place, there remains a fundamental
problem: citizenship is being taught to two groups: those in compulsory
education, and migrants from non-EU countries; this has resulted in 43% of
migrants (i.e. those from the EU) being exempt from CE (ONS, 2013). Moreover,
let us suppose that AECE were to deliver a comprehensive and effective
understanding as well as the desire to live a life of active citizenship. How does
this enhance the migrant's integration into British society, communities and

workplaces when the majority of the adults with whom they will interact have had not one single lesson in their entire lives about concepts of citizenship?

For CE (and AECE) to change the culture of this country, as Crick envisaged - to foster greater social cohesion, rather than simply *coexisting*, and to reduce the democratic deficit by having a politically active polity - it is essential that CE be taught to all migrants, and all native adults, for it makes no sense to have the majority native adult population of the UK ignorant of what citizenship means. Alternatively, if the *true* intent of AECE was to promote a 'minimal' conceptualisation of citizenship, then competency in English language is a prerequisite for the migrants' economic prosperity, and provides an interface with the wider British society.

However, contrary to political rhetoric, language fluency and AECE are insufficient in themselves to foster integration, engender greater civic participation and prevent social exclusion. AECE should not be seen as being the panacea for such deficiencies as the democratic deficit and all-pervasive social inequalities - it is not a fix-it-all (Halsey, 1972; Martin, 2003). If we are serious about promoting an active democratic citizenry with its concomitants of social inclusion and equity, then we must also look at what is 'being done to close the yawning gap between those citizens at the top and those at the bottom of our social and economic system?' (Martin, 2003, p. 572). We must 'ask some hard ... questions about the relationship between the social, political and cultural axes of citizenship' in order to prevent citizenship becoming a mechanism of exclusion (in ibid, p. 574). Without this, CE will perpetually reflect and reinforce the major social divisions of power vis-à-vis class, gender and 'race', and systematically exclude many 'others' (ibid). However, if taught in a maximal way that

encourages the reimagining of multicultural Britain as a 'community of communities' predicated upon a combination of the five elements recommended by the Parekh Report, AECE can be a stepping stone to greater social and political emancipation, and activism as envisaged by Crick.

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