Is tolerance of faith helpful in English school policy? Reification, complexity and values education

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Abstract

Government policies for teachers and schools in England promote values including tolerance of faiths and beliefs alongside law keeping, democracy and respect. Tolerance of faiths has been highlighted as a key value but complexities around tolerance make interpretations and applications of the policy difficult. Policy documents in this area are inevitably interpreted through the context of events and concerns and with the education accountability culture as a driving motivation. In addition, insights from leading scholarly treatments of tolerance raise further difficulties of conceptual clarity and moral worth. One treatment critiques tolerance discourses as sustaining unequal power relationships. Another posits tolerance as reciprocal respect necessary in a democracy. A key claim in the article is that teachers and school leaders are left to resolve difficulties in translating tolerance policy into practice with the threat of sanction through inspection and associated processes. The article identifies for the first time an additional specific danger that the context of this policy simplifies complex factors by compressing concerns about a number of issues into single category of the value of tolerance of religion. While tolerance of religion is necessary in plural liberal democracies, emphasizing religion contributes to a reification that religion is the determining identity criteria of concern which may have the unintended consequence of polarising interests and communities.

KEYWORDS
values; tolerance; religion; identity compression,

Biographical note

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Introduction

As part of an anti extremist agenda the UK government's Department for Education (DfE) policy on fundamental British values encourages English schools and teachers (Education policy is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) to promote tolerance and other values including the rule of law, democracy and respect (DfE, 2014). The policy for English schools states that pupils must be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. This is part of a focus in English education on the moral and civic priorities for supporting and sustaining a modern society which is democratic, plural and liberal. It is one response to support cohesion in society at a time when there are manifestations of incohesion, violence and intolerance, and the association with extreme political and religious ideologies linked to Islam. England now has a population of over 2.6 million Muslims, a population that has doubled in the last decade (The Guardian, 2015). Though this article is focused on England, migration, community cohesion and questions of extremism and tolerance are prevailing issues in many contexts and the question of how education policy is shaped to response to these issues is a common one.

The UK policy initiative has become a major focus of schools and a major priority in school inspections, in an education system that focusses on the performance measurement of teachers and schools closely (Glatter 2012). The policy advocates tolerance as an attitude to be shown by pupils, promoted by school leaders and, for schools to be judged good in inspections tolerance, should be a part of the schools' culture. The policy requires that schools further tolerance and harmony between people from different cultural traditions. The fact that people have different faiths or beliefs (or no faith or belief) should be accepted and tolerated and should not be a cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behavior in English schools. Tolerance is at the conceptual heart of the project for schools to promote harmony in English society. Recent research found the promotion of tolerance to be a key concern among school leaders (Bowie and Revell, 2016) and something that needed to be reinterpreted by schools (Church of England, 2016). Some teachers are uncomfortable or unsure about what tolerance really entails and whether tolerance is the most appropriate concept to be promoting.

Tolerance as a philosophical, political and moral concept is notorious for its paradoxical nature. Tolerance is thought to be the conduct of government (Marcuse, 1965), a necessary

civic undertaking for democracy to be possible, but there is also link between tolerance and moral disapproval (eg. Mendus, 1989) – you have to tolerate that which you disapprove. There is a question of the different degrees of tolerance whether that is active or passive (Marcuse, 1965) or weak or strong (Warnock, 1987), and a concern that the combination of a belief in tolerance and a fear of being intolerant might allow the spread of intolerance ideologies that aim to destroy the foundations of tolerance (eg Popper, 1945). Tolerance is a debated and contested such that it divides thinkers in philosophy and politics (cf. Williams, 2006, McKinnon, 2006 and Newey 1999; Also see Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida in conversations with Giovanna Borradori (2003)). A key distinction can be made between those who think it is an essential problematic and those who think it is obligatory. Wendy Brown (2006) and Rainer Forst (2003, 2013) take contrasting (though not diametrically opposed) positions and they have debated together (Blasi & Holzhey, 2014). Forst argues it plays a vital role in plural liberal democracies (Forst, 2003, 2013) but Brown sees it as cloaking unjust power relations (Brown, 2006). Their distinctive and arguably complimentary observations, illuminate the difficulty in making sense of tolerance.

Tolerance has been advanced as a central element of British fundamental values, often cited by Government, specifically in response to Islamist extremist outrages. A chronology of events around global conflicts and school concerns, creates the perception that tolerance as mainly a matter of tolerance of Muslims or Muslim faith, whether or not that was the original political intention. It is hard to imagine tolerance being a necessary British value were it not for the sizable British Muslim community and the recent concerns around religious radical extremism, even though concerns about right wing political extremism are a likely influencing factor supporting the policy (For illustrations of the extent of this context see Kundnani 2015 and Esposito and Kalin 2011) .

 In advocating tolerance of faiths as a fundamental British value, the UK Government is following in a tradition linking toleration to matters of religious intolerance (Locke 1689), but there are challenges for schools to enter a contested conceptual complexity at a time of acute political tension around migration, social change and constitutional uncertainty. The key requirements for schools to promote tolerance of faiths and beliefs encourages the compression of multiple identity factors into a single faith/belief meaning. The policy is likely to be interpreted in such a way as to constitute an example of religification, the positioning at local and national level of a range of recent and more established migrants from different national and ethnic backgrounds as others ascribing a religious identity as a trump over other forms of categorization or affiliation (Gha ar-Kucher 2011). That positioning is a result of a wider

political chronology and a focused performance management culture in schools, that inevitably frames and interprets policy references.

A policy response to multiple factors and complexities (ranging from the concerns around sex education, the separation of girls and boys in education, the promotion of respect for different religions) is being made through the single religious factor in tension with a national or civic notion of values. Religion or faith/belief is likely to be seen as the determining and defining issue. Whilst this may be how some view the challenge, it is the central thesis of this article that by many of the issues related to questions of tolerance in the public are also issues of gender, power, sexuality and citizenship, to name a few, issues captured more adequately by a broader range of human rights values than are presently promoted in school policy (Bowie, 2017). In naming tolerance of religion as the central focus, the complexity of discreet factors (e.g. women's equality, patriarchy), are problematically centralized around the compressed single identity attribute of faiths/beliefs. If religion is underscored as the key causal identity factor of concern when it comes to promoting national values, those within religious communities who distinguish between religious identity and attitudes towards patriarchy, equality and freedom, for example, become interpreted as *part of the problem*, and are forced by the policy perspective into the same grouping as those who share a belief in the interconnected religious and political identity that the values policy articulates. Equally, the tolerance of faiths, arguably a vital element of modern western life, might be (wrongly) perceived as acceptance of inequality around a range of issues relating to other identity factors, playing into arguments that tolerance of faiths prevents progress towards equality in areas such as gender identity. This is more likely since the documented decline of human rights education in English policy which used to point more explicitly to a broader, and more balanced, range of equality and justice dimensions (Bowie, 2017). This article examines the policy initiative of tolerance of faiths and beliefs through a prism of Brown (2006) and Forst (2003,2013) and the theory of reification/religification (Ghu ar-Kucher 2011).

Tolerance in English school policy

The policy requiring schools to promote tolerance has teeth. School inspection judgements in England may lead to the removal of school Headteachers, the imposition of new governance structures, or even trigger a pathway to school closures. The appraisal of how well schools, teachers and school leaders promote tolerance is enforced by the systems around the inspection part of powerful English school performance management (Glatter 2012). Schools that do well

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in respect of other subject areas may still be graded poorly if they do not support fundamental British values adequately. This is considered in the policy documentation to be an essential safeguarding responsibility of schools as it is intended to reduce the risk of the radicalization of children.

Tolerance itself is not a new 'value' in English schools. It has long been mentioned in guidance from the schools' watchdog and inspectorate Ofsted (eg. 2003) but recently it has been directly linked to faiths and beliefs, has been structurally incorporated into school accountability mechanisms used to manage performance and has become politically sensitized. There is a political chronology of events conxtualising and framing the policy development. References to tolerance and fundamental British values were mentioned in revised standards for teachers (DfE, 2011, updated 2013) but it was not until 2014 that these were fully integrated into the expectations placed on schools by Ofsted. The language of tolerance of faiths, alongside the other fundamental British values provision, was a focus of a letter from influential and high profile figure, the Chief Inspector of Ofsted sent to all schools in July 2014 (Wilshaw) with detailed advice published in November (Ofsted, 2014), with a revised inspection guidance handbook published in the following January (Oftsed, 2015). This change to the focus of school inspections was a reaction to the events of spring 2014 with the allegations (Guardian, 2014; The Telegraph, 2014) and reports (Clarke, 2014) suggesting pupils in some Birmingham schools were in danger of radicalization due to an organized plan to unduly influence the ethos and leadership in their schools (associated with the so-called Trojan Horse letter). A series of emergency school inspections in spring 2014 produced reports raising concerns about how children were being prepared for life in modern Britain, and specifically the values framework they were being educated towards.

This political chronology inevitably frames the interpretation of the policy against the background of Muslims in Britain and the concerns around security and extremism. The promotion of tolerance of other faiths is directly related to a concern about safeguarding Muslim children in British schools and therefore is linked to the place of Muslim communities in Britain, radical extremism, migration and community cohesion. How Muslim children are educated to be prepared for life in what the British Government refers to as modern Britain, how schools are held to account as state informers on children at risk of radicalization, and how they directly contribute to a tolerant society, have all become politically sensitized aspects that are appraised within school and teacher accountability systems. It is not exclusively a concern about Muslim communities. The British government is also concerned about the rise of far-right extremism (Wodak et. Al., 2013; Trilling, 2012) recommending training packages

for all school employees on general awareness around preventing radicalization and extremism and one of those training programmes includes material on concerns about far right extremism (http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html). There are grounds for a genuine concern that public political expression includes a vociferous and aggressive anti Muslim, anti-Semitic and anti-migrant expression, and that this has the capacity to influence extreme acts of violence among more susceptible elements of the population (for example see Marmot, 2016, Strabac and Listhaug, 2008, and Zúquete, 2008).

This political strategy has implications for different practical matters for schools including questions around wearing dress that has symbolic meaning in schools (for pupils and staff), the nature of personal, social and health education, citizenship education, religious education, sex and relationships education, the approach taken to assemblies and corporate acts of worship, as well as how schools prepare for inspection, school governance, leadership and ethos. It has also become a matter for safeguarding. The expectation that schools identify pupils of concern about radicalization to external agencies associates this policy with a professional response linked to the kind of response expected when there are concerns a child may be suffering from physical abuse – a critical matter to be reported to an external agency for evaluation. The policy expansively affects English schooling by enforcing a defining adjustment to the values culture of schools. It mandates a preferred specific set of values to be advocated in English schools, in a context of heightened professional expectations within the tough accountability frameworks for teachers and schools. This is a narrower list than the broader range of values framed by international human rights education (Bowie, 2016, 2017).

The policy initiative inevitably affects change in schools around a particular value — the tolerance of faiths and beliefs. In the UK government's policies, tolerance is framed through a sense of British heritage, but the wider policy debate about pupil's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development extends the framing perspective into a realm that includes a range of questions including migration and the identity and security of Muslims living in Britain. This makes the insights of Brown (2006), with her concern for unequal power positions, and Forst (2014), with his concern that tolerance is a necessary norm for managing disagreement in democracies, of crucial importance.

Tolerance as a norm of reciprocal respect to manage areas of conflict
Tolerance is not intrinsically good as to tolerate the intolerable undermines the very aim of tolerance. Tolerance is relative to that which is being tolerated, and the context in which something is being tolerated. Tolerance is only good if it is justified. It is necessary to be

intolerant of some things (such as violent and other hate crimes) and tolerant of other things in areas where people may disagree well with one another, without undermining reciprocal respect. Not all things that some object to warrant prohibition. The key question is what reason, what justification is there to be tolerance or intolerant. Forst (2014) concludes from this kind of argument that tolerance is arguably a norm of reciprocity in the conflicts which result from contradictory convictions and irresolvable differences. This is a *reciprocal respect* conception of tolerance made necessary by collisions in ethical or religious beliefs, hence a UNESCO definition which states,

> 'Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law.' (UNESCO, 1995, 1.3)

In this sense tolerance is an essential value necessary for secularism, if we take secularism as a comprehensive political order that accepts plurality in democracy, as opposed to an absolutist political order. Tolerance is, therefore, a requisite of plural democracy. Setting aside a utopian vision in which all different views can be resolved with a shared understanding, plurality means there will be things reasonable people disagree strongly about, and despite those differences, people will still need to come to an agreement about the norms governing how to live in common. Tolerance of plurality provides space for the autonomy necessary for taking different positions. It is, therefore, necessary to tolerate people in the exercise of their autonomy not just in their personal life but also in their engagement with democracy.

Forst suggests tolerance is made up of three components: an objection component, an acceptance component and a rejection component. In tolerance there must be something you actually object to or otherwise you would simply be indifferent to it. To be able to object to something implies a power to resist it or curb it. Tolerance also has an acceptance component – you have to find reasons to tolerate things you believe are wrong or bad, but not bad or wrong enough to merit stopping them happen. The limit to toleration is when something is so bad that there are no good reasons to tolerate it. This is when it must be rejected. Forst gives the example of a teacher wearing a Muslim headscarf. Someone thinks a headscarf sets a poor example for young girls would need tolerance to manage living with that view, if they wish to be secular (where secular entails accepting of plurality that includes living with objections). This is an issue for debate but things that are objected to are not necessarily always rejected. Someone who has objections to wearing the headscarf needs to reconsider this objection in the name of tolerance, out of a sense of fairness and proper justifications for what you can force people to

do. Forst concludes that 'Tolerance is the art of testing your reasons and asking whether they're good enough to reject certain practices if you could,' (Forst, 2014, p.54). He sums it up in this way,

> That is a kind of democratic toleration as a presupposition for engaging in a democratic justice discourse. And then we need to come to terms with each other as citizens who ask themselves: what is the right way of arranging our common life?' (Forst, 2014, p.37).

The value of tolerance as a kind of reciprocal respect for the process of reflexively agreeing to reason things through and reaching to agreed positions with those we disagree with, is present in the language of fundamental British values. Tolerance is part of a package of values that mentions the rule of law and democracy, the agreed processes through which people in liberal democracies resolve and debate matters affecting common life. This civic sense of tolerance is clearly inferred by the government policy through the association of tolerance in a list of values that includes with the norms of democratic citizenship. This sense of tolerance is not so much a personal moral virtue, but a practical process principle – something that informs the structures of decision making in common life.

If tolerance is understood in these terms then it rests at the core of the civic purpose of education, as it defines the system in which citizens live. It also relates to the school systems and structures, when decisions must be made about what is reasonable in terms of assemblies, school uniform and other matters that might attract a plurality of perspectives. If this is the value of tolerance to be promoted, then schools should look to how they treat these matters in their curriculum and in their processes, but the issues pertaining to this range far beyond matters of faiths, to include matters of ethics and politics, questions about social and economic equality and inequality, and aspects of culture and justice. Faiths and cultural traditions are not the only matters that tolerance speaks to and it is the nature and quality of discourse and reasoned debate in decisions governing behavior in society that tolerance is most acutely related to, rather than the particular qualities of the attitudes that human beings hold for one another. The religification of tolerance in English parlance, collecting issues together under a category of faiths, or Islam, obscures the many different aspects of issues of behavior and lifestyle which political and civic processes must account for if people are to disagree well with one another in a liberal democratic state. The value of tolerance goes beyond matters of faith.

Tolerance discourses reproduce and stabilize unequal positions through a compression of factors into a reified faith category

A second critical lens on the tolerance discourse was expressed by Derrida when he commented,

> 'Tolerance is always on the side of the "reason of the strongest," where "might is right."
> … I am letting you be, you are not insufferable, I am leaving you a place in my home, but do not forget that this is my home…[T]olerance remains a scrutinized hospitality, always under surveillance, parsimonious and protective of its sovereignty.' (Derrida, 2003, 127)

The problem with the suggestion that tolerance has an important function in the democratic state is problematized by the observation that there is some unfairness implied by the tolerance discourse. This is argued expansively by Brown (2006; also in Blasi & Holzhey (Eds.) 2014). She claims it continuously reproduces and stabilizes unequal positions between those tolerating and those tolerated — those who are othered. This is in effect a *permission* concept in that one weaker party is asking permission of the powerful party. Brown does not happily distinguish between permission and respect concepts of tolerance as Forst does. She suspects tolerance always contains a permissive dimension, undermining the respect quickly.

Tolerance compounds different factors. Brown says, 'I'm interested in why most Europeans today would metonymically associate tolerance with the problem of immigrants, and how tolerance discourses fuses culture and religion and also renders cultural and religion ontological, requiring tolerance at the very level of being.' (Brown in Blasi & Holzhey, 2014, p.18) Rather than tolerance operating at a practical political level of viewpoints, it shifts focus to the intrinsic identity of those who are 'other'. It is acutely concerned with Muslim dress, Muslim attitudes to women, Muslim religious and political beliefs and fundamentally, the possibility of a British Muslim identity in a modern liberal state. Brown here is identifying a compression of factors into a single identity marker – one effect of this compression is reification.

In setting the tolerance policy around a conception of fundamental British values, a civilizational narrative is conjured, linked to the development of a British political history, and Brown is skeptical of such narratives. Individualism, secularism enlightenment civility and tolerance are all linked in civilizational discourse such that western liberal democracy becomes identical with tolerance and cleansed of historic episodes of slavery, colonialism, imperialism

and fascism. Meanwhile Islam is relentlessly identified with intolerance. Ultimately Brown thinks that discourses of tolerance have a set of unfair normative operations that hide themselves and any conception of tolerance, even the respect conception that Forst defends, inevitably operate within dramatic power differentials.

> '[Tolerance] does not operate as a conception, it operates as a discourse; and if it operates as a discourse that means it is already organized by certain arrangements of power that it masks, and it means that it is also situated in arrangement of power that aren't avowed in the discourse itself.' (Brown in Blasi & Holzhey, 2014, p.34).

Tolerance itself is not a new 'value' in English school policy but this focus on faith and cultural traditions is newly articulated in a UK context that is critically stratified by the issues of political extremism, migration and now, after the referendum decision to leave the EU, constitutional and identity uncertainty. An era of rapid social change including the formal legal recognition of same sex marriage and the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender change within human rights protected characteristics, has coincided with significant migration of Muslim populations. No discussion about tolerance as a value for children can exist apart from the fear of radicalization within British Muslim communities, the divisions between progressive and socially conservative ways of life and divisions around the distinctive attitudes towards gender and sexual orientation equality. The context in which tolerance of faith is advanced, is inextricably linked to such advancement.

Tolerance remains ambiguous, controversial and contested, despite the heritage in the toleration movement of previous centuries, specifically as a measure to move away from inter-religious conflict (Forst, 2013). It seems both necessary and impossible, as Bernard Williams once said (2006, p.126). The advancement of democratic citizenship education on the one hand requires it and yet it sustains power imbalances. When Forst and Brown debated their contrasting approaches (in Blasi & Holzhey (Eds.), 2014) they were not directly opposing one another completely as each maintained a discreet project – one to appraise the discourse and the other to advance a political concept. However, both also raised observations that point to further challenges for the English school. Forst observed that tolerance works where debates that include different religious and belief identity constructions are argued about in commonly agreed terms. The particular identity construction of an individual is supported within a common conception of political conduct. The dual emphasis in English policy on tolerance of faith and cultural traditions, alongside agreement over the rule of law and democracy reflects these complementing factors. However, the specific issues that tolerance debates are associated

with, and that schools are likely to encounter, are wide ranging including various aspects of the curriculum (religious education, citizenship education, sex education, etc.) and matters of leadership, governance and ethos issues (such as those around uniform, behavior policies, assemblies and community relations). Tolerance of faith is not the only category of consideration. For example, differences around appropriate symbolic dress is as much a question of political differences, as religious ones, as it pertains to the view of the normative ethos of the school and the extent to which plurality can be symbolically expressed in a school context. A secularized political culture might lean towards less visible symbolic expression, out of a concern about the detrimental impact of women's public appearance or in/visibility and a concern for equality or a sense of women's powerlessness. This question is not exclusively resolved through the prism of faith tradition. It is not simply a matter of faith and belief, but a question that intersects with politics and gender as well. Similarly, sex and relationships education might reflect multiple beliefs and attitudes about the relative responsibility of this topic to be a matter of state led instruction and family led enculturation. The extent to which home values are socially conservative or libertarian play as much a part in the discussion as a question of faith tradition. There may commonly be an interplay between these two dimensions, but that interplay will include a range of other factors as well, including race and ethnicity and socio economic indices.

In emphasizing tolerance of faith and cultural traditions there is an attempt to strongly assert the legitimacy of a plural modern society, perhaps precisely to resist the messages around the dangers of Muslim migration and Islam coming from far-right organizations (Wodak et. al., 2013; Huffington Post UK, 2016; Trilling, 2012). But it is left to schools to carefully negotiate these distinctions and pitfalls. Schools are in the unenviable position of negotiating a potentially hazardous set of moral messages that could lead to or encourage debates around the tolerance of Muslims and Islam at an essential or ontological level. Matters of patriarchy, social and economic inequality, and ethnic histories and cultural expressions should not be consolidated into a single identity parameter in the terms of engagement of the policy. The simplification of complex arguments into a single artificially compressed binary debate around an 'othered' group constitutes a threat to the values of plural liberal democracy that tolerance is supposed to support. As well as bringing schools close to this danger, there is an additional loss in the process of simplification that comes from the compression of complex issues. Here Brown is instructive when she argues,

> [M]uch tolerance discourse today takes place with regard to beliefs of practices that have nothing to do with religion … When we're speaking of tolerating certain people, things, practices, cultures, sexualities, we're not talking about this objects of tolerance as beliefs, (Brown in Blasi & Holzhey (Eds.), 2014, p.16).

She goes on to note that a critical feature of issues often linked to matters of doctrine can be discerned meaningfully and arguably more pertinently under different categorizations,

> [E]ven if you decide that you believe in the naturalness of heterosexuality or white supremacy is but a matter of faith, it remains for the Arab or the homosexual who is the candidate for tolerance, not the heterosexual or the white Englishman or Frenchman. (Ibid)

The focus on tolerance of faiths and beliefs, as a key value does not adequately engage with issues of cultural patriarchy and inequality that go beyond faith. The focus compresses identity issues into a single characteristic, faith, and thereby frame the discussion and issue as one of religious tolerance or intolerance with an essentialized ontological conception of Muslim identity.

Elevating tolerance of *faith* as the key cultural feature around which judgments of what should and what should not be tolerated creates unhelpful binaries, inviting talk about Muslims tolerating non-Muslims and Non-Muslims tolerating Muslims, faith tolerating non-faith and non-faith tolerate faith. The discussion moves from behaviours to an essentialised and compressed identity around faith. This invites precisely the kind of binary civilization discourse Brown is worried about where right minded liberal western attitudes to women, gender, sexuality, are contrasted with wrong minded Muslim attitudes, ignoring the European history of slavery, imperialism and fascism. Cultural patriarchies and inequalities, expressed through attitudes to gender and sexuality, are submerged under faith and an opportunity for clarity of diversity and complexity is lost, exchanged for a discourse that reinforces the question of compatibility or incompatibility around the identity category of faith.

A more diverse set of values are needed as was well understood by the drafters of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) which associated with tolerance, peace, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic and national groups and persons of indigenous origin alongside religious groups. It is not just a matter of tolerance of faith. UNESCO (1995) was correct in its implicit acknowledgment that tolerance interrelates

and interconnects with far more nuances than those of faith. The promotion of tolerance is associated closely with a range of other moral principles:

- the promotion of non-violence and the intolerance of violence: especially regarding resolution of differences
- the promotion of gender equality and the intolerance of gender inequality: especially around questions of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic violence
- peaceful and lawful political activism, as opposed to violent and lawless political activism
- the promotion of freedom of thought, freedom of belief and freedom of expression, and intolerance of forced conversion and repercussion for faiths/belief change, intolerance of restrictions of creative thought and expression, and intolerance of anti-democratic activity and tendencies.

These moral principles provide for a more sophisticated and complex, and arguably representative picture of the diverse issues alluded to in the British values tolerance discussion in school policy.

This essentialisation and danger of reductive binary polarity between western and Muslim cultures, belies a reality that both labels conceal immense internal diversity, and that many communities are in stages of transition as a result of globalization and migration, leading to new interactions with different social, political and economic forces (Aitchison, Hopkins and Kwan, 2016; Modood, 2003). An over focus on faiths in current times, without this wider range of considerations, has the practical impact of essentialising the tolerance discussion so that it casts Muslims and non-Muslims as a religious framing, rather than scrutinizing aspects of behaviours and practices that reflect multifarious forces and categories of distinction (Moulin 2011, 2012).

The performance management culture in the English school system will tempt schools to perform by restating and emphasizing the words and values listed in the policy documents. There is an almost irresistible urge to reproduce the formulations expressed in the Ofsted guidance documentation in school policies, values displays and school websites. There is an implicit message that language of policy should become the language of school values conversation. A more sophisticated account that includes a focus on matters of equality, nonviolence, freedom of belief and democracy focuses more precisely on the pertinent features of behaviors and attitudes. These behaviours and attitudes may be found in many unwanted strata of human life — political extremism, religious extremism, misogyny, as well as

individual criminality. Tolerance of faiths complicates efforts to challenge aspects of culture that are viewed as wrong, such as female genital mutilation, out of a fear of cultural relativism, or a misplaced claim that before you can try to change something for good somewhere, you must put everything straight in your own house (Nussbaum, 1999, 122-129). She goes on:

> … international national officials who have been culpably slow to recognize gender specific abuses as human rights violations are beginning to get the idea that woman's rights are human rights, and that freedom from FGM is among them. (Nussbaum, 1999, 1p.29)

While children and schools should be encouraged to develop a political conception of tolerance in a plural and democratic society (Forst, 2014), there also needs to be a complimentary critical perspective for challenging this kind of issue (Brown, 2006). Equipping children and schools to understand the role of tolerance in debates in a plural liberal democracy is important precisely because it supports and encounter with the complexity of Muslim cultures, which are ethnically, linguistically, culturally, politically and morally diverse generating diverse orientations towards many aspects of life. If education policy focuses on values around specific behaviors and attitudes, it can become a support for any movement within any cultural, social or political identity grouping that seeks to advance gender equality, nonviolent resolution of disagreements and freedom of thought, belief and expression. The reality of this complexity, and the paradoxes contained within, identifies the need for both the perspectives of Forst (2014) and Brown (2006) to facilitate a critical engagement.

The compression of issues of disagreement into faiths blurs their complexity preferencing engagement with faiths as the key policy intervention. The role of some cultural influences on some theological traditions within some geographical and historically contextual Muslim communities, are lost in a gathering together of complexities into a general simplified designation. This could unwittingly fan antireligious attitudes or prejudice. When it is not at all clear that the issues are essentially religious, rather than matters influenced by a complexity of gender, violence in culture, attitudes towards difference and freedom, and particular historical, cultural, social and economic contexts. If tolerance is to be advocated, it is better to do so alongside the discussion around gender equality, attitudes to violence and attitudes to freedom to encourage wider thinking around the specific issues of contention beyond a faith categorization, so that strength might more easily be given to those who raise the plight of people affected by these issues within their communities. This creates or at least invites a space

for reflexivity in the debate rather than pushing people into debating corners where their identity allegiances are framed mainly by predetermined religious or cultural binaries.

Governments want their citizens to tolerate each other and the UK government wants to encourage religious tolerance, but too many things are bundled together by the framing of tolerance around faiths and beliefs. There are sustained efforts to effect change around particular practices and attitudes which government and campaigners do not wish to tolerate: female genital mutilation, forced marriage, domestic violence and racism are some examples of things which are deemed beyond tolerance and in need of direct challenge and correction. These practices exist in many contexts and for good reasons the state and many other actors seek to prevent them. Arguably, there is a link between these practices and attitudes of power, violence and inequality that should be challenged and schools can and should play a role in this. Positive attitudes towards women's equality and dignity, nonviolence and freedom of belief should be the focus of attention within systems of culture and faiths. Tolerance of different faiths and cultural traditions may be important but it needs to be accompanied by other factors if it is to be promoted.

Conclusion

How governments use education to respond to migration and political violence is likely to be a concern for the foreseeable future. It is crucial that these responses are researched and evaluated if education policies are to be effective in supporting tolerance, understanding and respect in society and reducing violence. Whether the adoption of nationally framed value sets is more or less effective than international frames remains to be seen. It could be a necessary way of inculcating migrant communities into the shared conversation in a particular region. It might alienate those communities by not drawing more strongly on international frames, or on the frames important to the migrants themselves. Clearly some negotiation between national, cultural and international frames will be necessary.

This article is not an argument against tolerance, nor an argument that schools and teachers should avoid tolerance – there are important tolerances and intolerances that society needs. Tolerance is a more useful value than is commonly regarded though it is complex and sometimes paradoxical and discourses around tolerance make the terrain difficult for those in education who have to navigate it with pupils. The article is not advancing an evidenced solution to current concerns around how children should be better protected from violent extremism. Nor is it an argument against fundamental British values — there are good grounds for the promotion of certain moral and ethical behaviors and attitudes, as well as values, though

the sense in which they might be framed as British requires justification. Instead the article tries to make a different point that though faith identities are a key aspect of the modern British life, focusing on tolerance of faiths and beliefs is not enough without also engaging with other values including as gender equality, nonviolence, freedom of expression, human rights and dignity (Bowie, 2016, 2017; Moulin 2011, 2012). It may be that these concepts are perceived by some or many Muslims as signifying an imposition of a liberal conception on a life but it is the responsibility of the liberal state to present in its policies, the liberal democratic and legal framework that scaffolds society. If the liberal state is to be tolerant and promote tolerance in education then it should do so in a comprehensive manner that recognizes the multiple distinguishable features of concern and value. It should not be lost within a compressed faiths and culture tolerance debate. These issues are illuminated through a study of more differentiated identity groupings that speak to questions of class, social inequality, political power, and a range of cultural forms. The decline of the broader range of values encapsulated by human rights education polices of previous governments (Bowie, 2016, 2017) has deprived tolerance of a comprehensive tableau of values in which it might be situated, and so avoid the inevitable contextual framing of tolerance that reifies faiths. If there is to be a critical moral framework enforced through school accountability systems that schools and teachers must translate into their practices, then arguably they need an account that is translatable and comprehensive. Such an assertion by the state could open more possibilities of a dialogue into which multiple voices may engage, and introduce the possibility of a more hopeful range of conversations empowering schools and teachers to better support the formation of values; This article suggest that focusing on tolerance of faiths, is not likely to be enough without other moral initiatives, such as those that promote non-violent methods of resolving differences, or those that advocate universal human dignity (Bowie, 2016).

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