An exploration of British values and the school curriculum: making space for counter-knowledge.

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Abstract

The current scope of knowledge and technically oriented nature of the curriculum undermines diversity, critical inquiry and perpetuates structural inequality. This thesis strives to understand the relationships of power that manifest through students' experiences and interpretations of British values and the school curriculum. It is necessary to examine the deeper narratives and values embedded in curricula practice and what is traditionally valorised as 'academic' knowledge in policy and practice. I am guided by an analytical dialogue between Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogy, and draw on in-depth case studies from a Year 4 and Year 8 class and their teachers in a primary and secondary school in Northern England. I worked with teachers to re-design part of the curriculum and used the principles of 'Funds of Knowledge' (FoK) to incorporate students' social knowledge and histories, as one approach to challenging the movement towards a 'traditional' academic curriculum. My analysis uses British values as a prism to reflect on contemporary citizenship, identity and belonging in a context of neo-assimilationist rhetoric and structural racism in Britain. I present three dominant narratives embedded in students' understanding of British values, history and national identity, which are reinforced by knowledge in the curriculum. These are; a performative celebration of progress, a perceived cultural clash with Islam, and the perpetuation of whiteness. I emphasise the shortcomings of such hegemonic narratives, how they permeate the curriculum, and argue why counter-knowledge is necessary to help deconstruct and create alternative meanings. I stress the need to reflect on the ethical purpose of the curriculum beyond neoliberal outcomes and argue against the false dualism between academic ('powerful') knowledge and social ('everyday') knowledge. I conclude that small sites of resistance *do* exist within the formal curriculum system, that could foster more equitable and transformative ways of being, relating and knowing.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

AQA – Advanced Qualifications Authority

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

BERA – British Educational Research Association

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

CCW – Community Cultural Wealth

CRT – Critical Race Theory

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government (now known as MHLCG)

DfE – Department for Education

DfES – Department for Education and Skills (now known as DfE)

EAL – English as Additional Language

EBacc – English Baccalaureate

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council

FoK – Funds of Knowledge

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

KS2 – Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11 in Primary Education)

KS3 – Key Stage 3 (ages 11 -14 in Secondary Education)

KS4 – Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16 in Secondary Education)

MHLCG – Ministry for Housing Local Communities and Government

Ofqual – Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)

PGCE – Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PK – Powerful Knowledge

PP – Pupil Premium

PMO – Prime Minister's Office

PSHE – Personal Social and Health Education

R.E – Religious Education

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SMSC – Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education

Figures

Declaration

I , Aunam Quyoum, confirm that this Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research is grounded in the belief that schools as social and cultural institutions, play a vital role in shaping future society and fostering greater social justice. As part of this perspective, the overarching concern of this thesis is in questioning which types of knowledge and narratives become hegemonic and dominate practice as part of the school curriculum, and what the wider implications of this may be. This research is framed in response to current neoconservative curriculum policy and practice which has been reoriented towards, (a) the narrow pursuit of 'academically rigorous' knowledge, (b) the promotion of British values, and (c) the nationalisation of school subjects to convey a singular 'Island Story' narrative of Britain. Such policies indicate that schools have been increasingly embroiled into national identity discourses of assimilation and acculturation. Nationalist discourses are problematic as they are inextricably connected to long-standing issues of structural racism and hostility towards people of colour in Britain, particularly Muslims. And yet while schools are expected to impart an understanding of British history and culture, and promote British values, social justice issues related to structural racism are notably absent in 'official' policy and practice. This is even though research in schools has noted that racism is embedded in the education system in England. From discriminatory school policies (Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly, 2018), internal streaming practices (Gillborn et al., 2017), the surveillance of BME and Muslim students (Sian, 2015; Shain, 2012), the use of police presence in schools (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020), the absence of statutory anti-racist responsibilities or training for teachers (Sian, 2015; Lander, 2014a), the lack of knowledge diversity in the national curriculum (Alexander et al., 2015), to the discrimination and vulnerability experienced by the limited number of BME teachers working within the profession (Lander, 2014a; Lander and Santoro, 2017; Haque, 2016).

Despite this context, the focus of curriculum policy is instead on the pursuit of 'powerful' 'academically rigorous' knowledge as a means of achieving social justice (Gibb, 2018; DfE, 2016; Young, 2013). Social or 'everyday' knowledge, which is knowledge that bears greater connection to the lives and sociocultural contexts of students, is positioned as lower status and less worthy of intellectual pursuit. However, what is traditionally labelled and valorised as academic knowledge is rooted in European epistemological frameworks. Such hierarchical configurations of knowledge claim to offer universal, more objective ways of knowing, but in reality, serve to preserve and reinforce a hegemonic culture of whiteness and elitism (Said, 2003; Santos, 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Therefore, the central argument of this thesis is that what is conceptualised and labelled as 'academic' knowledge for curricula purposes, is culturally bound and selective. This is not to dispute the value of students acquiring knowledge labelled as 'academic.' Rather, this becomes problematic in conjunction with a national curriculum and political context in which some voices are inherently more powerful than others, is increasingly Anglocentric, and in denial of the realities of racism and structural inequality. As certain voices and histories are being memorialised and selected as part of standard practice, this will likely have an impact in how society and the reality of British history is understood. The curriculum contains hidden messages and codes, which influences whose history and knowledge is valued and deemed fit for universal consumption (Grosfoguel, 2007). The duty to promote British values through the curriculum serves as a prime example of hegemonic knowledge production in relation to national identity and belonging. As such, we must examine what and whose knowledge and values come to dominate, and evaluate its

relationship to social justice, as social justice is principally a struggle for cognitive justice (Mignolo, 2000).

1.1   Research Context

Whilst this thesis is bound within a specific time frame, issues around national identity, racism and nationalism have been, and continue to be a prominent feature of everyday public life in Britain. At a time when the diversity of school students across England is increasing (DfE, 2021), questions around immigration and citizenship, the alleged 'failure' of state multiculturalism, concerns of 'home-grown' terrorism, and the unshakeable image of people of colour living segregated 'parallel lives' remain persistent (PMO, 2011; Home Office, 2001; Kundnani, 2014, Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). In response to the issues I have raised thus far, I consider the context and key issues connected to three areas: British values, diversity, and knowledge in the curriculum.

1.1.1   British values

Not undermining the British values (*Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance*), has been part of statutory Teachers' Standards in England since 2012. The concept of British values originates from the anti-extremism, Prevent Strategy's definition of extremism published in 2011. This is defined as the vocal or active opposition to 'fundamental British values' (Home Office, 2011). In 2014, the duty to 'actively promote' British values via the school curriculum was introduced in response to the 'Trojan Horse' controversy in Birmingham. This event centred around whistle blown reports in which several Muslim majority schools were accused of being part of an Islamist take-over plot (DfE, 2014a: 2014b; Arthur, 2015). Despite the claims being false, the promotion of fundamental British values was deemed necessary across schools. The Trojan Horse controversy is noted as providing an opportunity for the state to intervene in prescribing assimilationist notions of national identity, as part of a project to promote a 'muscular' liberalism (Poole, 2016; PMO, 2014).

Yet, the liberalism which is embodied in British values, is based on ideals of political equality which refuse to examine deeper, structural issues around racism (Zamudio et al., 2011). Instead, teachers and schools are now actively situated within counter-terrorism discourse and frameworks of surveillance. Guidance to 'actively promote' British values is part of the curriculum and applies to state maintained and independent schools (DfE, 2014a: DfE 2014b), *as well as* academies and free schools, despite their exemption from the national curriculum (DfE, 2014c). This surveillance has also been embedded into the accountability structure of the school system. Teachers and schools must show they are compliant in promoting British values as part of attaining a top inspection grade by Ofsted (Ofsted, 2016).

The involvement of teachers into discourses around British national identity is problematic. This is because such discourse is increasingly connected to preserving whiteness and promoting a 'nativist' politics of authenticity (Breen and Meer, 2019; Habib, 2017; Smith, 2016). According to the latest Prevent statistics, the median age for education referrals to Channel is

just 14 years, with the education sector responsible for the majority of all referrals made[1] (Home Office, 2019, p.10). Wrongful referrals include cases such as the four-year-old mispronouncing cucumber as 'cooker-bomb' (BBC, 2016), to Muslim students expressing dissent against the actions of the Israeli state (Institute of Race Relations, 2016). Thus, the architecture of policies such as Prevent (and therefore British values) furthers the 'differential racialisation' of Muslims as suspect, or problematic communities (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Miah, 2017).

This very particular imposition of British values can be viewed as an example of 'everyday bordering' in which the internal borders of the state are being policed through the day-to-day roles of teachers and schools (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). British values are thought to actively situate teachers' professional practice within the ambiguous discourse of 'national identity and Britishness' (Revell and Bryan, 2018, p.65), in a wider context in which state multiculturalism is argued to have officially 'failed' (PMO, 2011). Overall, we can view British values as one moment in a continued policy trajectory in which institutions (in this case schools) have been co-opted into the neo-assimilationist aims of the state.

1.1.2   Diversity in the Curriculum

The process of knowledge production is rooted in particular understandings of history, society, and culture. In 1985, The Swann Report (Swann, 1985) recommended that schools should reflect the reality of multicultural Britain through holistic approaches through the curriculum to combat racism and promote greater understanding between students (Alexander et al., 2015). However, the national curriculum in England is cited as being far removed from the position adopted in the Swann Report on anti-racism and the curriculum (Uberoi and Modood, 2013). Instead, the emphasis in recent curriculum policy has been directed towards students developing knowledge of 'Our Island Story' – or rather, building a sense of pride and patriotism in British history (Vasagar and Sparrow, 2010). The need for students to understand the 'golden thread' of British history, culture and achievements through a concept of 'Our Island Story' and British values, was expressed by former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown in 2004 (Brown, 2004; Osler, 2009). Although Brown emphasised the values of fairness, diversity and civic duty, his driver to articulate such statements was in response to populist concerns over immigration and terrorism (Osler, 2009). Now, the policy reality of teaching Our Island Story, means significant aspects of British history, communities and the voices of groups that are already marginalised, are not typically featured as part of the British grand narrative. Ball (1993; 1994) has described such approaches to the curriculum by politicians as seeking cultural restoration to an imagined, selective version of a past, which prioritises liberalism, individualism and the concept of the island nation, over diversity (Parekh, 2000; Gilroy, 2004).

As such, there have been persistent concerns raised particularly over the scope of the school History curriculum, and the need for greater plurality in both academic research and public debate (Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Alexander et al., 2015; Alexander et al., 2013; Arday, 2020, Proctor, 2020). The inclusion of Black and Black-British History specifically has been highlighted as an urgent issue in the wake of Black Lives Matters protests in 2020 (Leach

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[1] Channel is a multi-agency programme which claims to provide support to people who are identified as being vulnerable or at-risk of being drawn into terrorism.

et al., 2020; Weale, 2020; HC Deb 20 October 2020). However, recent efforts by campaigners to launch a formal review into the scope of the national curriculum was rejected by the government in 2020 (Proctor, 2020). Currently, it is not statutory to cover content connected to people of colour and diverse histories in the primary and secondary curriculum, outside of migration stories. In Mansfield's (2019) experience of teaching school History, whilst there is space to teach a range of topics, there is still a persistent bias towards the history of white men. Further still, deficit narratives continue to dominate the scope of what constitutes as 'diversity' in the curriculum which offers limited histories and perspectives e.g., slavery and US race relations (Harris and Reynolds, 2014). This risks perpetuating a view of people of colour as 'outsiders' or without agency, and project an understanding of racism as occurring elsewhere in its most aberrant forms (Alexander et al., 2015; Warmington, 2020).

Meanwhile, research continues to emphasise the importance of diversity in the curriculum for students of colour (Bishop, 1990; Chetty, 2014; Harris and Reynolds, 2014; Hawkey, 2015), but also for the benefit of *all* students in developing a critical understanding of history and social life (Alexander et al., 2015; Diversi and Moreira, 2013; Doharty, 2019). Diversity in literature, images and teaching resources for example is noted not just for the self-actualisation and agency of minority students but to also challenge stereotypes, single stories and create more balanced perspectives (Bishop, 1990; Borowski, 2012). However, traditional multicultural approaches to diversity in practice are criticised for a narrow focus on the performative celebration of 'others', as opposed to a deeper pursuit of developing critical knowledge and anti-racist practice (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Troyna, 1987). Moreover, such an understanding continues to connect diversity as something principally connected to 'visible' minorities (Maylor, 2010). Such approaches to 'diversity' in curriculum practice, may reinscribe stereotypes and perceptions of cultural 'difference' in which minorities are presented as 'fixed' or homogenous group entities (Amanti, 2005; May, 2009).

While the celebrating may be well-intentioned and at least recognise the cultural diversity of students, often these forms of practice become the default, as they do not threaten whiteness (Chetty, 2014; Warmington, 2020). The effect of this, leads to the reproduction of white supremacy, which compromises more transformative modes of learning and teaching (Chetty, 2016; Dunne et al., 2018; Lander, 2014b). Instead, a sharper lens needs to be held-up to knowledge and pedagogical practices of the mainstream curriculum. As a result, I seek to move beyond multicultural recognition and identify how we can redistribute and challenge what we currently value in the curriculum. This necessarily means questioning the standard cannon of knowledge and the underlying narratives that influence what is taught and why.

1.1.3   Knowledge in the Curriculum

Academic debates on knowledge in the curriculum remain contested. But such debates are necessary because they help to consider how the curriculum acts as a history of the present. Curricula help to shape what is to be known and how, for future society (Popkewitz, 2011). At one end of the debate are calls for a standardised, subject based curriculum in which the pursuit of academic, 'powerful' knowledge is deemed requisite for social mobility (Young, 2013). 'Powerful knowledge' or 'academic rigour' are phrases frequently conjured by policymakers in England (DfE, 2016; Gibb, 2018; Williamson, 2020) and invoked by Ofsted, the national school inspectorate in England (Spielman, 2018). Such concepts represent a

movement in curriculum studies and policy amongst neoconservative politicians and social realists, that places disciplines and subjects at the centre of thinking about what schools are for and what knowledge is to be valued (Morgan, 2012; Young and Lambert, 2014). From this perspective, social or everyday knowledge which reflects the lifeworlds and contexts of students is only of use if it helps students acquire more allegedly 'objective' academic knowledge. The alternative argument is for a historically sensitive curriculum that uses multiple sources of 'everyday' knowledge and strengthens relationships for learning (Kincheloe, 2001a). However, the criticism of social knowledge amongst social realists is that knowledge contextually bound to students' lives will only serve to disadvantage students, particularly those of a lower socio-economic status (Rata, 2012; Weelahan, 2010). Proponents of PK maintain that access to academic knowledge is a matter of social justice, particularly for working-class communities (Young, 2013) and vocational learners (Weelahan, 2010).

The concept of powerful knowledge is noted as influencing the national curriculum review in 2013 and policy Think Tanks such as the Policy Exchange (White, 2018), with the principal argument being that knowledge in the curriculum had been undermined in England. The national curriculum was reviewed in 2013 in England under the then Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, led by Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove. Social realism and 'powerful knowledge' is a small movement within academia; principally associated with academics in England (Lambert, 2012; Moore, 2013; Young, 2007: 2014a), Australia (Weelahan, 2010), New Zealand (Rata, 2012) and South Africa (Muller, 2000). However, it is nonetheless worthy of analysis (Zipin et al., 2015), as its principles align to what Wrigley (2018) describes as a position of the new right and has been used as a basis for neoconservative curriculum reform in England – despite that lead advocate of powerful knowledge Michael Young (2014b) maintains he was not a supporter of Gove.

The curriculum reforms also introduced the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) in which secondary schools would be ranked on the number of secondary GCSE students who obtain passes (grades A-C), or the Progress 8 measure[2], in what are labelled as traditional, academic subjects (English, Maths, Science, a modern foreign language, History or Geography). Greater emphasis was placed on core subjects whilst the arts, music, design and technology were considered non-compulsory, and not included in the Ebacc or Progress 8 measures (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2020b). Whilst in primary education, greater emphasis was placed on student progression in phonics and multiplication. This system however, is argued to favour short-term accountability in the form of metrics and cultures of managerialism, which can end up reinforcing inequality through practices such as neglecting students who are not as close to desirable grade boundaries (Ball, 1997; Lingard and Rizvi, 2010). This technical context may also condition students to become more 'astute' in deciding where to focus their energy based on exam and assessment requirements given the competitive nature of exam performance (Ormond, 2017). This may further conditions under which students may be acquiring more knowledge, but, learning less (Lipman, 2003). The rationale behind such an approach was that a 'rigorous, knowledge rich academic curriculum' benefits everybody, especially socially

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[2] Progress 8 was introduced in 2016 as an indicator measuring school performance. It argues to capture the progress that students in a school make from the end of primary school to the end of key stage 4. Students results are compared to the progress of other students nationally with similar prior attainment levels (DfE, 2020b).

disadvantaged students who were left behind by 'dumbed down' curricula emphasising skills and competencies over content (DfE, 2016, p.23).

Social realists assert that access to disciplinary, academic knowledge is the means to achieving social justice. Therefore, it is only appropriate to explore the relationship between social justice and knowledge particularly as 'academic' or disciplinary knowledge is often upheld by European epistemic frameworks and practices which position such knowledge as neutral, universal and more 'objective' over others (Mignolo, 2000; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). In reality, this represents a site of struggle over what constitutes as 'legitimate' knowledge and worthy of reproduction within academic disciplines and school curricula (Said, 2003; Spivak, 2010). This continues to raise concerns over 'whose culture has capital' in the knowledge selected and labelled as 'academic' as part of standard curriculum practice? (Yosso, 2005). For example, if we look to the social realists who argue for 'powerful knowledge' one of its lead advocates Elizabeth Rata, has taken a firm stance against biculturalism in the New Zealand education system (Andreotti 2009; Rata, 2012). Rata ardently argues against the status of *Kaupapa-Maori* knowledge from a position of veiled assimilation in which the sanctity and objectivity of academic knowledge is the cause, but which in reality serves to maintain and protect a system of whiteness and cultural supremacy (Andreotti, 2009; Stewart and Devine, 2019). Such perspectives fail to consider that social and academic knowledge continually intersect.

Therefore, I focus specifically on the issue of knowledge in this thesis; the knowledge that is taught and reproduced in curriculum policy and practice. The curriculum is often presented as a technical matter; as forms or bodies of knowledge that are necessary to master within a knowledge economy. But knowledge is socially constructed, and some configurations of knowledge are valued over others (Apple, 1996). The higher status placed on particular forms of knowledge has a parallel relationship to power asymmetries within society (McLaren, 2009), particularly as power over *what* is taught is increasingly concentrated with political ministers, often without public debate and researcher review (Pring, 2012). Any curriculum, school or national, is part of a 'selective tradition' based on some group's version of legitimate knowledge (Apple, 1996, p.22). I note that not all schools in England have to follow the national curriculum and can implement their own iteration. However, the national curriculum reveals a wider cultural thesis about what and who should be valued by society, and therefore worthy of study and memorialisation (Popkewitz, 2018). Moreover, national exam boards have a steering influence in which stories and perspectives are ultimately given 'academic' credence over others. In a context of limited teacher education in matters of race and social justice (Aronson et al., 2020; Bailey, 2017; Lander 2014a; Sian, 2015), this is even more relevant to consider today as British values, and even the recent guidance categorising resources from anti-capitalist groups as akin to anti-Semitism and the endorsement of illegal activity, illustrates the ideological nature of knowledge of the curriculum (DfE, 2020a; Busby, 2020).

1.2   Research Aims

There are three lines of inquiry this thesis is interested in. The first is in exploring interpretations of citizenship and national identity in the context of British values. The second is in analysing the hegemonic knowledge and narratives that underlie and dominate curriculum policy and practice, and why. Whilst the third and final interest of this thesis is in identifying

what spaces exist within the curriculum for a greater plurality of knowledge. To do this, I draw on the analytical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogy. I discuss this further in the next section, but for now note that both critical theories work in tandem, as they seek to make transparent issues of power and inequality, but also believe in the capacity for resistance and social action.

For this study, I have identified two research questions:

1. *How do students understand British values, both as a concept and its purpose?*
2. *What spaces are there in the curriculum for counter-knowledge?*

Research question one seeks to understand how students interpret British values and national identity discourse more broadly, in light of the securitised context such policies have. National identity discourse in Britain is argued to be inextricably connected to preserving whiteness and hegemonic interpretations of belonging which are necessary to unpack further (Crawford, 2017; Smith, 2016). Existing research has documented these issues in relation to British values well, however there is limited empirical research on which details the voices and perspectives of individual students at primary or secondary school level. Studies have incorporated the perspectives of *senior management* (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Maylor, 2016; Revell and Bryan, 2016), *teachers* (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Farrell and Lander, 2018; Lander, 2016: Maylor, 2016; Panjwani, 2016; Vincent, 2018), and *student teachers* (Smith, 2016; Farrell, 2016; Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012; Sant and Hanley, 2018). Presently, less is comparatively known about students' responses and perspectives towards British values. Whilst it is necessary to investigate how teachers and student teachers are interpreting, mediating and responding to British values, it is equally important to examine how it is understood by students in practice. With curriculum matters, there can often be a disconnect between what is planned by teachers, and what is ultimately received by students (Kelly, 2009).

Specifically, greater research in understanding the perspectives of primary students is important, as research highlights that young children do develop identities, beliefs and assumptions about themselves and others which includes prejudice and negative stereotypes (Bryan, 2012; Elton-Chalcraft, 2011; Maylor, 2010; Vincent, 2019; Welply, 2018). For example, lessons celebrating British diversity or 'tolerance' which remain dominant in practice, will not necessarily challenge racist attitudes or 'encourage pupils to develop antiracist practice (Maylor, 2010, p.250). At the time of writing this thesis, only Habib's (2017) research on British values with GCSE Art students provides a rich body of work in this area with students navigating ideas of Britishness. Furthermore, research on British values is spatially less representative of students in the North of England. Currently research with or observing students on the topic of values has been conducted in London (Habib, 2017; Green, 2017; Vincent, 2019), the North-east, South-west and Midlands (Vincent, 2019).

Research question two is much broader in focus as it considers what it means to teach and learn today, in a context where (a) social and race inequality persist, and (b) standard curriculum practice and policy lacks diversity in scope and perspective. This research question seeks to address structural and epistemological issues around knowledge in the curriculum by exploring the power dynamics that underlie what constitutes as curricula knowledge (Collins 2009; Gillborn, 2005). Power and whiteness are noted to influence the knowledge currently

valorised and labelled as 'academic' in curriculum policy and practice. This is argued to sustain a false dichotomy between 'academic' and 'everyday' knowledge. However, there are few studies that have examined the social realist concept of 'powerful knowledge' and neoconservative approaches to knowledge in the school curriculum from a critical race perspective. Rudolph et al. (2019) provides one rare critique from a CRT perspective. Overall, there is limited research examining the rhetoric of 'academic knowledge' and 'rigour' in curriculum policy and practice in England, despite the colour-blind, objective claims of universalism they embody (Grosgugel, 2007; Santos, 2014). I seek to contribute to this area of debate regarding knowledge in the curriculum in the English school context, by emphasising the social justice benefits of knowledge that may typically be less valued and subsequently labelled as 'everyday' or 'social' knowledge.

This line of research inquiry seeks to challenge existing configurations of knowledge in the school curriculum, by identifying potential spaces for resistance through the production of counter-knowledge. Counter-knowledge is knowledge that can support critical thinking and allow for the generation of alternative ways of making sense of the social world, whilst giving students space to develop their own voice (Zamudio et al., 2011). The aim here is to explore what spaces exist in the curriculum for interventions that are able to incorporate and draw on different sources of knowledge for curricular use (Bernal, 2002; Zipin, 2013). Part of identifying what spaces exist, will likely include documenting the constraints of the contemporary, technically oriented context of schooling. Schools face the weight of managerial cultures and technical outcomes. Accountability metrics and school performance measures are known to constrain the professional agency of teachers, but also contribute in creating a culture whereby some subjects as deemed more academic and valuable than others (Ball, 2013). Such professional pressures mean teachers are increasingly drawn away from opportunities to reflect on issues such as race equality and knowledge diversity in the curriculum. Moreover, university-based teacher education programmes are noted for their shortcomings in discussing the importance of such topics to professional practice (Dunne et al., 2018; Lander 2014b). This furthers a teaching context in which the relationship between knowledge, the curriculum and social justice, is less considered or understood more widely (Kanu 2006; Lander, 2016).

As such, I seek to explore what contribution critical theory can make in education research, teaching, and praxis. My aim is to work collaboratively with teachers and students to produce knowledge and re-develop aspects of the curriculum. Research should speak back to the realities of the classroom and identify what changes *could* be feasibly introduced. Within academic research, there is less practical insight into what hope and alternatives there could be, which account for the numerous constraints placed on educators and students. Whilst theoretical perspectives offer sharp lenses in which to examine hidden, deeply rooted inequalities, currently such work has not been 'sufficiently connected to the actual realities of schools and classrooms' (Apple, 2011, p.24). A key interest guiding this thesis therefore, is in understanding how critical social theory on the curriculum, can be translated and applied in schools whilst being responsive to the performative constraints they experience? This is particularly important to consider as the provision of curriculum resources for example, does not guarantee its uptake or purposeful use (Bracey, 2016; Harris and Clarke, 2011). This raises the further question of, given the risks and shortcomings posed by curriculum policy and practice, how can teachers be supported to create spaces to resist hegemonic, culturally selective knowledge hierarchies? How can teachers and students challenge either the colour-

blind objectivity of academic knowledge, or equally, that challenge the performative celebration of cultural difference?

1.3   Overview of Data

The data in this research is based on two in-depth case studies of one Year 4 class in a primary school, and one Year 8 History class in a secondary school. Both schools were located in a post-industrial city in the North of England. Data collection took place between October 2018 - July 2019. Whilst both schools were state maintained, the primary school was part of a Church of England foundation and multi-academy trust. *Brook Valley Primary School* serves a predominantly 'disadvantaged' catchment area based on measures of Pupil Premium, SEND, and has a majority BME school population, with Islam as the majority religion represented in the school. Brook Valley serves around 200 pupils and was rated as Outstanding in all areas, by Ofsted in 2016. The secondary school is a state-maintained school with a considerably more advantaged catchment area along measures of Pupil Premium and SEND. *Moorside High School* serves a larger number of students, averaging around 1,500. Whilst the student population of the school is majority white, there is also a small population of BME students identified as mixed ethnicity, Pakistani, Yemini, and Somali in official reports.

I used multiple qualitative methods to gather data in each case study school, which included questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, in addition to the curriculum development work. The curriculum development work included collaborating with teachers to re-design the content, teaching, and assessment of one unit of the Humanities curriculum, and evaluating this intervention with teachers via a reflective interview, and with students via surveys. The following summarises the methods employed at each school:

- **Case Study Primary School**
  - o Collaboratively re-developed, implemented and evaluated a Year 4 Geography unit of study with the teacher.
  - o Observed the class over a five-month period.
  - o Conducted six individual interviews with students, including one pilot interview.
  - o 29 students participated in carrying out a research activity and completed an evaluation survey.
  - o Conducted one individual interview with the teacher.

- **Case Study Secondary School**
  - o Collaboratively re-developed, implemented and evaluated a Year 8 History unit of study with the teacher.
  - o Observed the class over 12 lessons, totalling six weeks.
  - o 29 students completed a survey.
  - o 29 students participated in carrying out a small research activity and delivering a five-minute presentation in class.
  - o Conducted one individual interview with the teacher.

1.4   Theoretical Framework

Theory is often looking towards a future that is yet to be realised, meaning it cannot be neutral as it is seeking change in the future (Giroux, 2009). The theoretical framework guiding this study is a dialogue between critical pedagogy and Critical Race Theory (CRT). Their role in this thesis is to consider and oppose the hidden, institutionalised systems of inequality that manifest in curricula structures and pedagogic relations. Solórzano and Yosso (2002b) describe CRT as a framework of perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to deconstruct power and challenge racial inequality in education and research. Critical pedagogy seeks to make transparent systems of power that influence how and why knowledge is constructed in the way it is (McLaren, 1995). Not only this, it also asks why particular constructions of knowledge are labelled as 'academic' and celebrated by mainstream culture, whilst others are not (Apple, 1996; Darder et al., 2009). Critical pedagogy seeks to promote a more critical literacy, sense of agency and self-reflection amongst students, and considers how educators can work to resist hegemonic practices and policies for social change (Freire, 1996; Freire and Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 2010: Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 2006). However, critical pedagogy is not without its analytical limitations. Its theoretical roots in Marxian critical theory is argued to have neglected the realities of racism and whiteness (Allen, 2005; Leonardo, 2005; Parker and Stovall, 2004). Critical race theorists argue race cuts across other social identity markers as race affords advantage regardless of economic status (DiAngelo, 2018). Further, critical pedagogy is noted to lack diversity in the knowledge it draws on, such as African, Asian and Indigenous knowledge (Kincheloe, 2012).

However, critical pedagogy and CRT share similarities, which I believe can work together to extend the scope of my analytical framework to consider race as well as wider social injustice in education. Both for instance reject epistemological claims of 'universal' 'objective' or 'neutral' knowledge (Lynn, 2004). Claims which are heavily embedded in curriculum policy discourse in England through concepts such as 'powerful knowledge,' 'academic rigour' and cultures of competitive testing (DfE, 2016, Williamson, 2020, Young, 2008). With respect to this theoretical overlap, there has been some work in the area of 'critical race pedagogy' in education research (Leonardo, 2005; Lynn, 2004; Lynn and Jennings, 2009). Research is limited however and focuses on the US context, as well as being more polemical in style. Rather the purpose of the work is to highlight the limitations of critical pedagogy and the need to confront racial domination through pedagogical tools that generate counter-knowledge and stories, which value the experiences of people and educators of colour as holders of knowledge (Bernal, 2002; Lynn, 2004; Parker and Stovall, 2005; Solórzano and Yosso, 2005).

When considering issues of race or social class in education, it is important that we refrain from starting with an assumption that relies on students labelled as disadvantaged on account of race or social class, as needing to emulate what the 'advantaged' have (Hinto, 2015). Part of this desire to reconceptualise what is labelled as 'disadvantage', has steered me towards Yosso's (2005) articulation of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). CCW is informed by CRT and identifies alternative sources of capital amongst students. One source of cultural wealth outlined by Yosso is familial or household capital, which also relates to research informed by the theory Funds of Knowledge (FoK). FoK recognises students as existing holders of cultural capital and producers of curricular knowledge (Bernal, 2002). FoK approaches seek to create a pedagogical bridge between the homes and sociocultural contexts of students and the classroom (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2014; Moll et al., 1992; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011; Rodriguez,

2013). However, FoK has also been noted for its limitations in considering issues of race and racialised inequality in schooling (Rodriguez, 2013). Rodriguez (2013) does believe that FoK and CRT can work in dialogue however given their mutual aim in producing counter-knowledge and valuing the lived experiences of students for academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

As a result, I took inspiration from FoK for the curriculum interests of this research as principles to guide curriculum redevelopment activities with teachers, given its analytical compatibility with CRT and critical pedagogy. In adopting these principles, I believe students are learners beyond the classroom and households have a pedagogic role. Figure 1 illustrates my interpretation of the theoretical links between critical pedagogy, CRT and FoK. My aim has not been to locate a particular 'method' in applying a FoK approach but rather to explore approaches that engage students in the production of knowledge and the impact of this, if any, in relation to social justice aims.
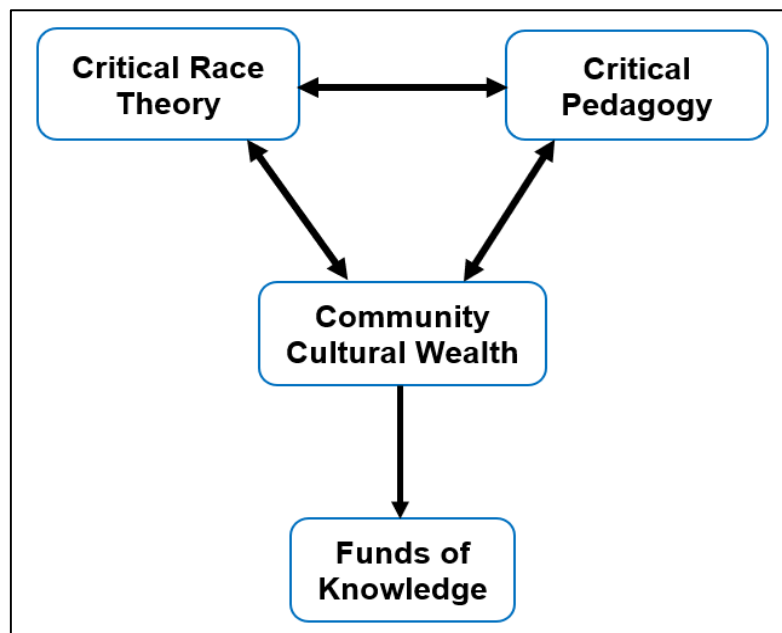
Figure 1: Diagram illustrating theoretical framework

In summary, there is an overlap between the analytical perspectives of CRT and CP in that they both seek to:
- Highlight the values and norms that are structurally embedded in society's institutions, such as the hidden curriculum, which reproduce social inequality amongst those traditionally marginalised or made voiceless by society.
- Challenge deficit thinking and received wisdoms such as the objectivity, neutrality and universality of knowledge (Lynn, 2004)
- Foster critically informed practice, social action and transformation (Leonardo, 2005; Zamudio et al., 2011)
- Draw on participatory and interdisciplinary research approaches, which value the lived experiences of people and produce counter stories/knowledge as a way of promoting social justice (Giroux, 2009; Yosso, 2002; 2005)

No one theory or perspective can seek to address what are complex issues and involve multiple people with different needs at any given time. Whilst theory can allow us to 'see out of the ideological mud' (Kress, 2011), we must work across different theories to produce responses to what are multi-faceted, complex social issues.

1.5   Significance of study

Principally, my research intends to contribute to scholarship on British values, by exploring how such nation-state, securitised, post-racial discourses are interpreted and received by students. Currently research investigating the perceptions of primary and secondary aged students on such issues is limited. More broadly, my work seeks to contribute to scholarship that uses critical social theory to examine power and social relations in education. It is increasingly important to energize such arguments in a context where new-right policies such as 'British values' continue to prescribe limited notions of belonging, whilst curriculum policy and practice continues to perpetuate a hierarchy between different sources of knowledge and their value and overall purpose in education. This is all the more pressing to consider as we live under conditions whereby 'knowledge' is increasingly produced and sourced online, meaning our society is increasingly 'electronically mediated' (Kincheloe, 2012, p.166). This means it brings an era of; manipulated images and video footage, opinion pieces as news reporting, the political use of social media data, data bias against women (Criado-Perez, 2019), algorithm and search engine optimisation bias against people of colour, thereby rendering women of colour as doubly disadvantaged (Noble, 2018). This is an urgent time to step back and reflect on the purpose of education and its relationship to a democratic society and identify potential spaces (however small) to resist and see through the fog of misinformation (Giroux, 1983). As I see it, this resistance should be about students becoming critical, having self-knowledge and knowledge of others, asking questions, and classrooms becoming spaces which foster participation and incorporate pluralistic ways of knowing (Dei and Doyle Wood, 2006), but that also ensures the academic competencies students need to thrive within the constraints produced by a knowledge economy are also met (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The classroom is part of the real world; subject to the same power relations and inequalities that persist in society (Diversi and Moreira, 2013), but this also means it is a site for potential resistance and change too (hooks, 1994). As part of this belief, I seek to contribute by undertaking collaborative research with teachers to re-develop one aspect of the curriculum that considers issues of power and social justice through its design and delivery. With this research approach, I seek to contribute to scholarship interested in the curriculum and pedagogy, and the practical application of research, which is informed by the principles of critical pedagogy and CRT. I intend to contribute specifically to research informed by the principles of Funds of Knowledge (FoK), by adopting it as one aspect of my approach to producing counter-knowledge at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 level. Despite the prevalence of structural racism throughout the English education system, greater attention has perhaps been directed towards more functional issues of representation and diversity in the school curriculum, as opposed to ways of producing knowledge. I intend to incorporate issues of knowledge production as part of my research inquiry through FoK. As yet research using FoK in the English primary and secondary school context, is limited. For example, existing research on FoK has investigated early years education (Chesworth, 2016; Hedges et al., 2011;

Reinhardt, 2018), or multi/bilingual language learning (Andrews and Yee, 2006; Conteh, 2015; Martin-Jones and Saxena, 2003). Moreover, a review of FoK research in the US, found FoK approaches were most applied in Literacy, followed by Maths and Science (Llopart and Esteban-Guitart, 2018). As yet, there is limited academic research on FoK that has examined subjects such as History or Geography, despite the reality that students may have access to alternative or community histories which may differ from 'official' versions, or unrepresented in schools altogether (Loewen, 1995). Often, marginalised communities depend on access to un-official sources of knowledge or 'everyday' knowledge derived from the home or wider community to survive and navigate a system of elitism and whiteness (Leonardo, 2005; Yosso, 2005). Tapping into the knowledge and cultural assets of students will be an important step in moving away from a Eurocentric epistemological orientation that currently dominates the school curriculum and perceptions of academic knowledge (Bernal, 2002).

1.6   Personal Reflections

This thesis is based on a study which encouraged students to research and share information about their socio-cultural worlds and interests (and I am relaying such information back to the readers of this thesis). As such, it is only right that I am forthcoming about my motivations behind this research, my positionality and experiences. These subjectivities have all shaped my approach to the design of this research, its analysis and the knowledge which has been subsequently produced (Mason, 2006). Moreover, CRT and Critical Pedagogy are theories which seek to validate the lived experiences of people of colour and who are typically marginalised in society and academic research, which includes many of the participants in this research, as well as myself (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002a). My interest in Britishness, race and identity relates to my background and experiences of navigating a second-generation identity. I am a British female of Pakistani-Muslim heritage with immigrant parents with a CSE in woodworking between them. I was the Free School Meals child throughout schooling, and also labelled as the 11+ 'failure' in a Local Authority area that still has the highest number of selective entry schools. Despite that, now looking back at the school certificate album my mum kept, I was routinely awarded for being 'polite' 'kind and gentle' 'conscientious' 'giving 100% effort' and often described by teachers as 'quiet' - I can see now that I was perhaps a 'model minority' in my white majority, non-selective state schools. I behaved in the passive way the education system culturally understands and academically rewards (Bradbury, 2014; Gillborn, 2005).

Still as a student, I faced dull, culturally selective curriculums up until the third year of my undergraduate History degree. My master's degree in development studies frustratingly presented ahistorical accounts of complex global issues and made little reference to geo-political issues of finance investment and conflict (Andreotti et al., 2018). As a research student, issues around class, race and ethnicity were not part of discussions on conducting social science research, ethics, or even as key issues in education - yet the institutional ethics procedure flags such issues as 'high risk'. At best, I was represented in the school curriculum in haphazard, multicultural celebratory ways, which left the minority of us open to ridicule from the 'majority'. From reading the reflections of Chetty's (2017) experiences as a primary school teacher in multicultural schools in London, I realised that I too, like Chetty's young students of colour, did not write fictional stories or draw characters that were not white. It did not seem conceivable that even imaginary characters could be anything 'other.' The 'diverse' content

that I was exposed to consisted of slavery in the US, minus any mention of Britain's role or the involvement of other European states in the slave trade. I remember my Year 4 class pretending to be slaves packed together on a ship - pedagogical approaches which continue today (Weale, 2017; Traille, 2007; Doharty, 2019).

In secondary school, it was US Civil Rights or the mention that Gary Powers U2 plane departed from a base in Peshawar. I asked my Dad about the Cold War in Pakistan after - one of the rare times I would speak to him voluntarily growing up. Overall, these were topics that presented race and racism as occurring 'way-over-there' and in its most aberrant forms, or the histories of other places only being referenced as footnotes of a European or North American story. I recall reading books at my local council library on aspects of British and local history, including a piece on the SUS laws which was perhaps the first time I came across the reality of institutional racism. But it was from my parents I learnt about the existence of the British empire (despite their lack of formal education), from which I began my academic interest in History. I often wondered why the curriculum was selective and I had access to two different histories, or so it seemed. These experiences undoubtedly influenced my interest in looking at the curriculum, as I want to challenge deficit perspectives that I often internalised during my schooling. I actively tried to downplay my Asian identity or Muslim upbringing - which particularly peaked to coincide with 9/11 and 7/7.

You will later read in [section 4.7](#) that a handful of students in this study at the primary school felt irritated by the unfairness of colonialism across Africa. *Carlos* however, had a slightly different opinion. *Carlos* was proud when he discovered a historical link between Ethiopia and Italy when researching the history of the Obelisk. This was his favourite fact about Ethiopia, the place where his family are from. I understood this pride in the context of his avid interest in football. However, I could not help but be reminded of my own experience at the same age in Year 4: *"if only I could have explained that seviyan is vermicelli and that makes it okay because Italian's eat it too."* At the behest of the teacher, myself and the other two Muslim students, were specifically asked to bring in 'Muslim food' for the sake of an Eid Party in class. I remember being shouted at home for making a last-minute request for Mum to cook something. I obviously was not at the age where I could loosely interpret the teacher's instructions, nor could my Mum, into something like 'bring whatever food you want in, but you are also not obliged to either.' I went into school with a large bowl of *seviyan*, which only the other Muslim students ate. I remember the other kids being vocally disgusted, likening it to a bowl of worms, then asking the teacher what it was. The teacher did not seek to inquire about it, nor challenge the reactions of students. I looked on at the spread of iced party rings and Pringles and thought '*why can't my life be more English like that*?'. I was once again shouted at back at home for a mostly untouched bowl of pudding.

By that summer holiday, which were mostly spent at family homes within a three-mile radius, I had worked out the Italian food connection through one of my Uncle's cookbooks, hence the *'if only I could have explained that seviyan is vermicelli and that is okay because Italian's eat it too' lo*gic to add some validity to my socio-cultural world. Perhaps this is why I started to take issue with 'celebrating' the 'diverse' lives of racial others. I experienced it as an embarrassing spotlight, which did little to foster social understanding or open young minds in appreciating different ways of being. My story and perhaps *Carlos'* appreciation of Italian colonialism, reflects the cultural hegemony of European cultures and the validity of all things 'Western' - these messages *are* widely received and reinforced from a young age.

1.7   Terminology: Race and Ethnicity

A key aspect of this thesis is centred on examining how race and ethnicity are constructed and the meaning and values that are attached to such constructions. I seek to examine how patterns of structural racism manifest in the formal and informal structures of the education system. For that reason, it is necessary to examine the terminology of race and ethnicity as they are complex terms to conduct research on. Moreover, how we interpret and understand such terms have very real consequences, feelings and emotions attached to them. The language around race and ethnicity perpetually changes and the issue continues to divide opinion (Parker, 2020; Okolosie et al., 2015). In Britain, ethnicity is the category officially used in how data is typically collected, analysed and reported on in the public domain, as opposed to race. The terms BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) and BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) are commonplace when discussing the lives of people of colour.

However, such terms are often used with less understanding of *who* is being spoken about and how it is defined, with a range of 'minority ethnicities' subsumed and homogenised under broad collective identity markers (Aspinall, 2020). As both are also terms used by public institutions and bodies, they are also received with increasing resistance by marginalised communities, who reflect on the implications of such terms acting as enforced identities in a context of institutional racism (Parker, 2020). As Mamdani (2002, p.10) notes:

> When the political authority and the law it enforces identify subjects ethnically and discriminate between them, then ethnicity turns into a legal and political identity. Ethnicity as a cultural identity is consensual, but when ethnicity becomes a political identity it is *enforced* by the legal and administrative organs of the state.

Pearce (2005, p.110) notes the majority of 'white people do not have to give a great deal of thought to race' and what it means to be racialised as different. Ethnicity in reality is therefore typically used to denote racial outsiders or 'others', meaning those that are not readily identifiable as White-British (Virdee, 2014). However, people experience varying forms of racism and disadvantage in relation to their specific 'ethnicity' marker. There are greater disparities and inequalities between groups, particularly in educational outcomes. For example, students of Chinese ethnicity are typically labelled as 'model minorities' in terms of academic achievement, whilst students of Black-Caribbean ethnicity are overrepresented in permanent school exclusions (Gillborn et al., 2017; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). As a result, we cannot assume there is some collectivism either between different minority ethnicities, or even within (Andrews, 2014). For example, some white minority communities, white Gypsy/Roma/Traveller or people of mixed ethnicities can be left out of the imagination of collective terminologies such as BME/BAME, and equally lack an identification to terms such as 'race' or 'people of colour.'

Moreover, additional identity markers such as social class, religion and gender may influence the extent to which there is some collectivism or identification with ethnicity labels (Bhopal and Preston, 2011). For some Muslims, the Islamophobia experienced in a post 9/11 context, has led to what researchers have described as the racialisation of Muslims as a homogeneous, ethnic group (Garner and Selod, 2015). Often with minority ethnicities, there is a perception that identity is seen as linear; that an identification with one group will weaken attachment to another (Burton et al., 2008). We can see this particularly with British Muslims and the frequent

public and policy questions raised in relation to their integration and acculturation into Britishness or 'British values' – questions which my research seeks to challenge (Breen and Meer, 2019; Kundnani, 2014; Mythen, 2012; Smith, 2016).

The terminology of race however, is increasingly used to highlight the shortcomings of ethnicity and how it is applied to minorities that appear 'visibly different.' The concept of race is used to draw attention to the structural racism that underlines such identity markers and systems (Andrews, 2014). CRT is critical of the notion of 'race' but finds it has analytical power. From this perspective, the ideology behind 'races' has led to the enslavement, capital exploitation, colonisation and daily subjugation of people of colour, which has been supported by allegedly 'scientific' 'objective' knowledge and beliefs of race as a biological or physical fact (Parker and Stovall, 2004; Williams, 2014). CRT rejects race as a social fact but uses it as a framework to examine policy and practice beyond the surface level, to investigate how racism and structural disadvantages are perpetuated in society and through its institutions, through the ascendancy of whiteness (Gillborn, 2008; Warmington, 2020). As Lynn (2004, 155) argues, not using the terms of race is unlikely to eliminate racism, rather the language of race offers a framework to engage with the social processes and privileging of certain racial groups over others.

Terms such as BME/BAME and ethnic minority are problematic and homogenise diverse people under identity markers that are simultaneously public, political, cultural and nationalistic. Yet they are still widely used when reporting on the experiences of marginalised communities who experience racism and greater levels of inequality along measures of ethnicity, in policy and academic research. Given the nature of this debate will continue to change, I have found it difficult to commit to one specific terminology. As such, rather than fixating on specific terms that all have different meanings to the multiplicity of people they are applied to, throughout this thesis I may refer to 'people or students of colour' or 'BME' or 'racialised Muslims' interchangeably depending on the context of the discussion. However, I do this within a wider thesis that seeks to challenge forms of structural racism that are experienced differently between groups, and the general cultural differentiation of minority ethnicities from a standpoint of whiteness (hooks, 1990).

1.8   Limitations of the Study

Throughout this thesis, I aim to be transparent about the limitations of this study and the decisions I have taken. Social research is a way of producing knowledge – methodology concerns discussion around the methods that are used to produce that knowledge. Given a key interest of this study is on the production of knowledge, it is essential that I am transparent about the limitations of the knowledge I have produced here (Schostak, 2002). There are some general limitations to this study that I wish to address. The first may relate to the small scale of this research study, which focused on only one class in one primary and one secondary school in the North of England. It may be difficult therefore to identify how the approach to the curriculum development work and the process of drawing on students' social knowledge for curricular use, could be replicated or achieved in other contexts, or in subjects other than History or Geography.

A second limitation may relate to my case study schools and the fragmented reality of school types and populations. My case study schools were multicultural schools, but the nature of

catchment areas and the parental choice market, may also make it difficult to apply any insights from this research to different school contexts (Lingard and Rizvi, 2011). School populations tend to reproduce the socio-economically segregated residential patterns that occur across cities and towns in England. More often, this means some schools become majority white, or majority BME, and/or either have a lower intake of students labelled as Pupil Premium or such students are over-represented (Reay, 2017). Ball (2003) and Reay (2017) note how racial inequality is reproduced by the school choice market and catchment areas. BME students are particularly concentrated into the state-maintained sector, who are required to follow a national curriculum which they are less represented and reflected in (Alexander et al., 2018). This means a critical examination of national curriculum policy is warranted as its main recipients are students of colour. It is interesting to note that general feedback from observers suggested it would have been more worthwhile for me to have targeted schools with lesser ethnic and cultural plurality. But this relates to a common misconception or assumption that a multicultural school population means its teaching, learning and curriculum practices are anti-racist or culturally relevant (Maylor, 2010; Priest et al., 2016). It also reveals an assumption that diversity is limited to perceptions of visible cultural or ethnic difference, as opposed to accepting the plurality of all identities and lived experience.

Further on the issue of the fragmented school system, this does also mean it is difficult to conceive of broad scale changes across school curriculum practice as the pluralism of school type system means schools have varying levels of autonomy over what aspects of the national curriculum they choose to follow. The range of schools includes private fee-paying schools, selective entry state schools such as grammar schools, faith schools, comprehensive or community schools, independent, 'free' or academy trust schools. The continued extension of the school type or parental choice market has been a recurring feature of education policy which is known to reinforce educational inequalities (Reay, 2017). Where schools are exempt from following the national curriculum, their responsibilities are to cover a 'broad and balanced' curriculum which includes, English, Maths and Religious Education (DfE, 2013). Therefore, despite the debates within policy and curriculum studies regarding what knowledge should comprise the national curriculum, its relevance can seem diminished in a context where students attend whichever school they have the resources to gain access to. Even lead advocate of 'powerful knowledge' Michael Young (2013, p.115) acknowledges the issue of private schools, but labels it as a 'political issue' not an 'educational issue' - but educational issues are inherently political.

Of course, my findings are not easily generalisable to other school contexts as schools have their own unique populations, statutory duties, and cultures (Thomson and Hall, 2017). However, what insight can be drawn from this study can be used to reflect on the messages students receive from the scope of National and school curriculums, the curricular value of social or experiential knowledge, and the relationship the curriculum has with wider social justice aims. Moreover, the goal of qualitative and case study research is not in broad testing and extrapolating findings (Tight, 2017). Such research in this case is rather (1) an exploration of how and why certain types of knowledge are constructed and valorised over others and its relationship to wider social inequality and, (2) developing insight into ways of theorising race and education, and approaches to developing critically informed practice. It is the depth of empirical knowledge gathered on students' perspectives in this thesis and its reflections on having developed and implemented a school curriculum intervention, which this study seeks to contribute. This rich detail is much needed in a research space where academic theory can

be disconnected from the day-to-day experiences of teachers and students (Apple, 2011). But equally, gaining access to schools, and the funding to conduct more intensive research is also challenging. Of course, trying to disrupt the racism and the social inequalities of the curriculum in this manner is not going to remove the multiple barriers some students face, but at the very least, these types of interventions do offer a step in the right direction, that official policies are currently not.

1.9   Structure of Thesis

Following this introduction, **chapter two** identifies the wider research context and interdisciplinary literature that exists on three overarching areas of interest. This includes: (1) fundamental British values and national identity, (2) knowledge in the curriculum, racial literacy and theories on race, and (3) debates on academic and social knowledge in curriculum studies, critical pedagogy and CRT. **Chapter three** positions my study within a qualitative, interpretivist tradition. I introduce my two case study schools, the participatory approaches adopted, and the multiple qualitative methods I applied in each school. I outline the influence critical pedagogy and CRT have to the methodology of this study. I discuss some practical challenges in conducting school-based and race-related research, my positionality, and reflect on ethical issues. My data and analysis are presented in **chapter four**, first on Brook Valley Primary School, followed by **chapter five** on Moorside High School. In each chapter I bring together the multiple sources of data I collected into a number of key themes in relation to British values, students' responses to the curriculum and the research intervention. **Chapter six** presents a discussion on the overarching theme of 'Values and Narratives' in response to British values and the curriculum. I discuss three issues, which includes the performative celebration of British progress, a perceived cultural clash with Islam, and the perpetuation of whiteness. **Chapter seven** discusses the 'Politics of Knowledge', which reflects on different aspects of debates on academic and social knowledge, with a particular focus on the subject of History. My thesis closes with **chapter eight**, reiterating the significance of my research problem and the importance of social justice aims in how we approach education, in the context of pervasive social inequality and structural racism. I emphasise the importance of creating pedagogical spaces for counter-knowledge in the curriculum, in the hope of creating alternative ways of making sense of the world and our relationship to it.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I present a conceptual review of the literature in relation to the main interests of my research, which are: British values, knowledge in the school curriculum, and social justice in relation to knowledge. This review is by no means exhaustive of the research that exists, instead its purpose is to identify key issues and debates to direct and contextualise my research (Wellington, 2000). The broad intent of my research is on understanding students interpretations of British values, and identifying approaches to increase the diversity of knowledge in the curriculum. The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- Sections 2.1 - 2.3 focus on the development of fundamental British values in education and its securitised policy context. I consider wider discourses around British national identity and citizenship, followed by a review of research specifically on how teachers and schools are interpreting and responding to British values in practice. I conclude that it is necessary to consider British values within wider school practices in relation to knowledge and diversity.
- Sections 2.4 - 2.6 consider issues of around the scope of knowledge and diversity in the national curriculum and dominant practice. I focus on issues related to racism and barriers to racial literacy. This is followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of three theoretical perspectives that consider issues of knowledge, race and diversity in relation to social justice. These are: multiculturalism, postcolonialism and Critical Race Theory.
- Sections 2.7 - 2.9 evaluate debates in relation to knowledge labelled as 'academic' or 'everyday' knowledge. I focus on the social realist concept of 'powerful knowledge' and draw on the perspectives of Critical Pedagogy to evaluate its relationship to social justice in education. I then focus on Community Cultural Wealth approaches to producing counter-knowledge and reflect on one approach 'Funds of Knowledge' in greater detail.
- This chapter concludes with a summary of the main issues raised by the literature. I argue why British values, students' experiences of the curriculum and policy/academic perspectives on knowledge, are three inextricably linked research areas warranting further investigation.

2.1   British Values and Securitisation

The starting point of my inquiry into British values begins from the point at which the concept was introduced into the curriculum in 2014, although I note that teachers' professional duty to uphold British values came into effect prior to this in 2012 (Lander, 2016). The literature cites the 'Trojan Horse' controversy in Birmingham in 2014 as the immediate prompt for the then Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government to integrate British values into the statutory curriculum (Awan, 2018; Richardson, 2015; DfE, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c). The Trojan Horse controversy relates to the incident whereby 21 Muslim majority schools in Birmingham were accused of spreading anti-democratic values and extremist Islamist ideologies, which 'whistle blowers' raised concerns over via an anonymous letter to DfE (Richardson, 2015: Clarke, 2014, p.11). Immediate investigations were carried out across schools by DfE and central school inspection authority, Ofsted (Clarke, 2014; House of Commons, 2015). The allegations were deemed false, although investigations reported issues of concern in relation

to teacher practices, school governing bodies assuming control, and the inadequacy of sex and relationships education (Clarke, 2014). This was noted to include some schools which had previously received an 'Outstanding' inspection grade or had received praise in progressing standards. Yet the professionalism and an evaluation of Ofsted was noted to have escaped scrutiny by central government (Holmwood and O'Toole, 2018). Further, Arthur (2015) argues neoliberal policies of de-regulating schools and Local Authority oversight, which increases the risk of school governance and accountability issues, were issues also escaped scrutiny.

Therefore, despite the anonymous letter itself being a forgery (Richardson, 2015b), the controversy has been highlighted as a watershed moment illustrating the extent of suspicion towards Muslim identities (Miah, 2016). For example, fears of similar 'Islamist plots' in schools spread to other areas of England with greater Muslim populations such as Bradford and East London. Research also describes the ensuing press coverage as a deliberate manipulation of events to present the controversy as a coordinated Islamist plot, to appeal to anti-Muslim public opinion and anti-immigration sentiment (Awan, 2018; Cannizzaro and Gholami, 2018; Mogra, 2016; Poole, 2016; Richardson, 2015a). Awan's (2018) research with Birmingham communities at the centre of the controversy, described greater levels of mistrust towards the government in consequence, and felt vilified by the media as extremists.

As such, the literature notes a longer institutionalised history of mistrust and unease around British Muslim identities, in which the Trojan Horse controversy was described as a 'gift horse' for such agendas and opinions (Richardson, 2015a, p.40). Many researchers have cited the appointment of Peter Clarke, former Head of Counter Terrorism at Scotland Yard, to lead what was argued to be an issue of educational governance, as evidence of an institutionalised mistrust towards Muslims (Holmwood and O'Toole, 2018; Arthur, 2015; Awan, 2018; Abbas, 2017). Sian et al. (2013) argue that prior to the Trojan Horse controversy Muslim majority schools were already perceived to project anti-Western values and have therefore historically been under greater scrutiny and vilification from the press (Awan, 2018). This institutionalised suspicion is noted as one factor driving the disparity between schools with larger Muslim or BME populations to, be on alert for signs of extremism, be recipients of greater levels of staff training on Prevent, and be subject to greater state scrutiny over promoting 'shared values' compared to majority white schools (Vincent, 2018; Sian, 2015).

Thus, the controversy and subsequent responses by central government and the media, can be described as symptomatic of a wider climate of Islamophobia, leading to a greater securitised relationship between the state and schools, which was enshrined in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 and the anti-extremism responsibilities it enshrined for schools (Abbas, 2017; Richardson, 2015; Mogra, 2016; Miah, 2015). Crozier (2015, p.36) argues British values forms part of a securitised agenda which sustain dominant discourses which centre on the 'difference' of people from BME backgrounds as 'lacking value and at times, are dangerous,' whilst Breen and Meer (2019) argue that whiteness secures the way for the continued racialisation and homogenisation of Muslims as a suspect community. This issue is raised in Farrell and Lander's (2018) research with Muslim R.E teachers, who acknowledged the racism and whiteness connected to British values and the greater scrutiny this context may pose towards their Muslim students in particular.

As a result of this securitised context, the literature points to a number of issues British values embodies and presents towards students, teachers and considers what this means for educational relationships. One issue raised is the governmentality of embedding British values as part of students' SMSC education and Teacher Standards, as it is argued to be a deliberate attempt to make the requirements appear less imposing or controversial (Farrell, 2016; Farrell and Lander, 2018; McGhee and Zhang, 2017). The requirements are also highlighted as problematic because they have redefined the pedagogical roles and responsibilities of teachers (Lander, 2016; Revell and Bryan, 2018). As a consequence, relationships between teachers and their students have been altered, with teachers now acting as 'analytical lenses' and observers on behalf of the state (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015, p.29). British values is therefore noted as furthering cultures of spying and surveillance on Muslim students and students of colour (Shain, 2012; Sian, 2015). It is noted to have led to instances whereby young Muslim students have been wrongfully considered 'at-risk of radicalisation' and referred to the Prevent agency Channel, or they and their families have been questioned by police because of minor concerns raised by teachers (Addley and Topping, 2017; Breen and Meer, 2019). Others have discussed how the concept of British values undermines the professional voice and agency of teachers (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017), and the Rights of Children to freedom of expression and safety (Institute of Race Relations, 2016; O'Donnell, 2016).

2.2   Failed Multiculturalism and Integration

In many ways, the literature suggests the promotion of national values in education is nothing out of the ordinary but rather symptomatic of wider long-standing uncertainties and debates around Britishness, particularly amongst the English (Richardson, 2015a), and of managing diversity through discourses of integration and assimilation (Miah, 2015). In the aftermath of the Trojan Horse controversy, then Prime Minister, David Cameron described British values as the much needed 'muscular' assertion of national identity and patriotism British society was lacking; suggesting the controversy was a product of a lack of liberal values education in schools (PMO, 2011; Cameron, 2014; McGhee and Zhang, 2017; Richardson, 2015a). Uberoi and Modood (2013) note the rhetoric around 'British' values is not unique to Cameron however. They recall Margaret Thatcher's 'fundamental British characteristics' and Gordon Brown's early concept of 'British values for all' in 2006 citing tolerance as one such British value (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p.28). Brown also expressed the importance of students knowing 'Our Island Story' (British history and achievement) as part of the wider curriculum (Osler, 2009). However, despite earlier discourses around British values, David Cameron is noted as the most explicit British politician to repurpose citizenship discourse to suit an assimilationist political agenda and argue against state multiculturalism (Maylor, 2016; McGhee and Zhang, 2017; PMO, 2011).

However, whilst state multiculturalism has been criticised as leading to a proliferation of division and lack of assimilation amongst racial minorities into British liberal values, Tuhiwai-Smith (2012, p.62) argues liberalist values such as Rule of Law, which is noted as a 'British value' say little about how people live together and is about 'economic self-interest' instead. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2009, p.178) argue that multiculturalism in fact 'follows in the very tradition of Liberalism' which facilitates a proliferation of difference, giving the illusion of progress but preserving the status-quo of white supremacy. This was echoed in the earlier work of Paul Gilroy (1987) who argued multiculturalist discourse was a way of pacifying and

diluting the anti-racism movements of the 1970s and 80s. Darder and Torres (2009, p.161) extend their criticism of multiculturalism as a 'flawed paradigm' used by states to 'manage and preserve' racialized class division and the inequalities capitalism needs to operate (Melamed, 2011).

However, Cameron's official vocalisation on the alleged 'failure of multiculturalism' is noted as but one short term factor leading to the introduction of British values in the curriculum. Research has cited the 7/7 London bombings in 2005 and concerns over home-grown terrorism as the point of formal departure from state multiculturalism into securitised, assimilationist policy (Kundnani, 2014; Lynch, 2013: Maylor, 2016; Osler, 2009). Following 7/7, the Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review Group was established to examine the curriculum and its relationship to national identity. Commonly known as the Ajegbo Report (DfES, 2007), it argued for greater diversity in the national curriculum that students could relate to and recommended the inclusion of a specific topic as part of the citizenship curriculum: *identity and diversity and living together in the UK.* However, Kundnani (2012a) argues that the political discourse around 'values' and national identity had reached a turning point earlier in 2001, following civil disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. A noted consequence of this was the shift from multiculturalism towards 'community cohesion' which was driven by concerns of communities living 'parallel lives' (Levey, 2019; Home Office 2001). However, Pilkington (2008) describes community cohesion as a new nationalist and racial discourse which abandoned the more challenging imperative to address institutional racism as outlined in the Macpherson Report (1999).

Further, community cohesion is argued to have focused on immigration and integration amongst people of colour, rather than issues connected to post-industrial decline and structural deprivation across communities (Ratcliffe, 2012). Moreover, Samad (2013) argues the focus of cohesion discourse was primarily directed to Muslim communities, particularly South Asian women (Smith, 2016). The gaze on South Asian Muslim women was emphasised in the more recent 2016 'Casey Review' on integration, which also recommended 'new' migrants take an oath on British values (DCLG, 2016). May (2009) describes such policy language as a form of 'new racism' in which minorities are constructed as internally homogenous groups, whilst Fortier (2018, p.1257) places such policies as part of an on-going 'British citizenization' project. Fortier (2018) argues English language proficiency and shared values have taken centre stage, as exemplified by the Life in the UK Citizenship Test introduced in 2005 (Dillon and Smith, 2019). Yuval-Davis (2006) describes such policies as approaches to 'managing the borders' of national identity.

As a counter to the potential exclusion British values embodies in education, Struthers (2017) argues human rights are more socially just values to teach, since they have been developed over a longer period of time, and stress common humanity instead. Those that advocate for human rights discourse are thought to do so because of its alleged universalism, cosmopolitanism and applicability beyond the confines of the nation-state (Abdi and Shultz, 2008; Osler, 2015; Struthers, 2017). However, such advocates are criticised for failing to consider how such discourse can be equally used to undermine struggles for racial and social justice. Postcolonial theorists, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009) and Gayatri Spivak (1999) argue that claims of universalism are part of a colonial projection of Western cultural values. In a similar vein, human rights discourse is argued to mask the realities of structural racism and cultural imperialism by framing socioeconomic inequalities as a product of cultural

deviance (Kachur, 2008, Sian et al., 2013). Sian et al. (2013, p.22) situate human rights within a pervading post-racial logic, which dissolves racism into a more generic form of injustice to avoid perceptions amongst the majority of the excessive accommodation of minority rights (Modood, 2014). As such, discourses around rights more broadly in the British context have been argued to divert attention away from structural racism. Further, a discourse of 'values' is described as a form of 'raciology,' (Gilroy, 2004, p.381) and a 'culturalization of politics' in which minority cultures are pitted against 'culturally particularist' universal values (Lentin, 2014, p.1280), which embody whiteness (Nayak, 2007). In such a racialised context, Maylor (2015, p.28) argues that less 'emphasis' should be on promoting British values but rather 'developing teaching skills which can facilitate the effective education' of students in a multi-ethnic society. As such, the next section explores the practical interpretations of British values in the school context, in light of the issues identified thus far in relation to assimilation, racism and securitisation.

2.3   Interpreting and Teaching British Values

The context surrounding the provenance of, and migration of British values into the school curriculum, means it is important to consider how the concept is interpreted and taught in schools in practice. Firstly, the literature suggests there are a number of challenges in teachers' obligation to 'actively promote' British values when there is a lack of government guidance on what such values mean in practice, and how to teach them across different age groups, which includes early years (Lander, 2016; Mansfield, 2019). The lack of official guidance, combined with the complexity and ambiguity of what the values mean, is argued to have influenced the pedagogical reliance of some teachers in using display boards, symbols and stereotypes as 'quick wins' to communicate to students what may be 'British' about these values (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2017; Pells, 2017). Examples of recurring cultural images used are noted to include touristy images of the Union Jack, Big Ben, the Queen, Shakespeare, Houses of Parliament and London busses (Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2017: Vincent, 2019). Imagery used to articulate what a sense of national identity might be is what Smith (1991) considers central to fostering a collective imagination of a nation. However, the cultural symbols used to denote British values in practice are described as those relating to an English culture or personality (Revell and Bryan, 2018), or as representing an elitist, white version of Britain (Race, 2020). Such interpretive teaching practices of British values intended to 'represent Britain' are argued to be more commonplace amongst primary schools (Vincent, 2019), although this is an approach Ofsted Chief, Amanda Spielman has criticised, calling for greater focus to be on an embedded curricular approach (Pells, 2017; Spielman, 2019).

Beyond the performativity of teaching practices around British values, the literature highlights deeper ethical concerns around the labelling of a set of values as 'British' in what appears to be a coercive form of nation-building through schooling. Mansfield (2019) argues that the complexity of what the values mean combined with the lack of statutory guidance, can leave its teaching open to promoting exclusionary or 'slanted' versions of what being British is instead. This conflation between national values and national identity is argued to risk projecting a narrow understanding of contemporary Britishness (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Struthers, 2017; Panjwani, 2016), which is likely to vary depending on the subjective opinion, knowledge and experience of individual teachers (Farrell, 2016; Mansfield, 2019). For

example, Keddie's (2014) research in a multicultural school noted that teachers applied a 'culturally reductionist' understanding of Britishness by citing a lack of affiliation to Britishness amongst students of colour, for not knowing of the Olympic games in London or the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. On the contrary, Habib's (2017) research on British values found secondary students of colour saw little conflict between the multiple ethno-cultural aspects of their identities, and instead expressed a sense of pride and agency in rejecting a culturally hegemonic notion of white Britishness. Yet, Keddie's (2014) research exposes the wider expectation placed onto minorities of colour to evidence their identities as aligning to hegemonic narratives of white-Britishness (Race, 2020). Moreover, it is asserted that an emphasis on 'British' risks reinforcing whiteness by default, as conceptualisations of Britishness are historically linked to colonialism and histories of racism and exclusion (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Smith, 2016; Crawford, 2017), whether this is consciously acknowledged or not (Habib, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). Research in this space has drawn on CRT to examine British values to highlight how such discourse risks reproducing whiteness and obstructs anti-racism efforts (Smith, 2016; Habib, 2017; Breen and Meer, 2019).

So far I have described how British values have been deemed problematic because of its securitised and racialised context (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017). In addition, research notes the impact of an increasingly performative education context on issues of race and social justice. Teachers and student teachers are reported to lack opportunities for praxis, meaning the ability and space to reflect on the wider impact of policies such as British values in relation to race equality and social justice, may be limited (Lander, 2016; Gillborn, 2015; Sian, 2015). In addition, teachers are noted to lack spaces for reflection on their own cultural subjectivities in how they teach (Kincheloe, 2006) or why they should include diverse perspectives across the curriculum (Harris and Clarke, 2011). Lander (2015, p.32) argues statutory priority towards British values has undermined the duties of schools to tackle racism, noting an '[erasure]' of race, ethnicity and cultural diversity in Teacher Standards altogether. This is cited as a growing area of concern as teacher education is increasingly being situated within schools, leading teachers to miss out on the critical, reflective spaces allegedly offered through University based teacher training programmes (Alexander et al., 2015; Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017, Lander, 2014).

Elton-Chalcraft et al. (2017) found that student-teachers who were critically aware of the limitations and potential threats posed by British values, were those who had studied University based modules related to race and ethnicity. However, Ball (2013; 2003) argues greater emphasis is instead placed on students' performance in exams and teachers' ability to deliver on technical outcomes as evidence of good teaching. An accountability culture driven by central government is argued to have fostered a performative culture of schooling in which the role of teachers is reduced that of a 'technician' (Apple and Jungck, 1993; Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2015). Lipman (2003, p.175) argues that such a technical context can reinforce existing teaching practices and teacher education which 'avoids controversy and in-depth analysis of politically charged issues of race, culture, and educational disparities.' Given the concerns research on British values has raised in relation to facilitating exclusion, and potentially narrow, culturally reductionist interpretations of Britishness, it is therefore necessary to examine the wider knowledge and narratives that are presented as part of the curriculum. As such, I now move on to consider broader theoretical and practical issues around knowledge in dominant curricular structures and practice.

2.4   Diverse Knowledge in the Curriculum

Arguments have consistently been made regarding the inclusion of greater diversity in the national curriculum, stressing its importance as an approach to challenging institutional racism and students developing critical thinking skills and more balanced perspectives (Alexander et al., 2015; Proctor, 2020). However, the literature suggests there are several factors that constrain diversity practice which includes the scope of the national curriculum itself but also the capacity, knowledge and pedagogical practices adopted by teachers. The first noted barrier is the scope of the national curriculum - the statutory topics selected in the official guidance, but also what topics schools choose to teach as their non-statutory options (Alexander et al., 2015). Debates on diversity in the curriculum in England often focus on History. The reason for this focus is because History is deemed to have wider educational value through its disciplinary skills of critical and interpretive analysis, by helping to establish a sense of shared unity, and generate a 'public' understanding of a national past and present (Harris and Reynolds, 2014; Osler, 2009). Others have noted that the study of History has a role to students sense of identity and belonging particularly amongst BME students (Hawkey, 2015; Harris and Reynolds, 2014).

It is therefore unsurprising that politicians and prominent Historians in England have been keen to change the History curriculum. The 2013 national curriculum review in England for both primary and secondary education focused on students developing a greater, chronological understanding of 'Our Island Story', which Alexander at al. (2015) describe as an overt effort to 'nationalise' the curriculum. Guidance emphasises the importance of knowing '*the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world*' through KS2 and KS3 History (DfE, 2013, p.188). However, Alexander et al. (2015, p.4) argue the scope of the History curriculum 'artificially imposes barriers between British and global history' which fails to locate British history within its wider, global context. Moreover, the focus on BME histories and the 'wider world' aspect of History are noted as being absent from the national curriculum. Harris (2017, p.6) argues that:

> From a history teaching perspective...decisions to exclude particular topics from a curriculum or choices over how to present a topic can send out strong messages; adopting a positive view about the legacy of the British Empire, whilst glossing over concerns about colonisation and oppression, may promote patriotism at the expense of a focus on the value of freedom.

However, nationalistic curricular selections are noted to occur across the world and are not unique to England (Osler and Starkey, 2001). A comparative analysis of Geography, History and Citizenship curricula across Greece and Germany, as well as England, found a 'monoculturalist' national perspective dominated textbooks in each state, particularly in History (Fass, 2011). Carretero's (2011) study of school History curricula across Argentina, the former USSR, Germany, Japan, Spain and Mexico, evidences the subjects instrumental use to foster patriotism, at the expense of a more democratic education predicated on critical thinking skills. Loewen's (2008) infamous 'Lies My Teacher Tells Me' argued US school History and the pedagogical reliance on official textbooks, presents a boring, whitewashed, one dimensional view of History. Research has therefore suggested that diversity in the scope of the curriculum

has a relationship to students acquiring not only a depth in understanding and critical thinking skills, but also with the interest or enjoyment of subjects such as History amongst a variety of students.

Research in the English context has argued for greater reference to potentially 'more challenging' topics in British history such as colonialism and Empire (Alexander et al., 2015; Arday, 2020; Weale, 2020). Presently, it has been noted that Black History Month is not statutory as part of the national curriculum in England. But even where Black History is taught in schools, it is argued to project deficit narratives or reinforce problematic stereotypes of Black people. Topics are noted to include either trans-Atlantic slavery, which presents Black people as victims without agency, or an civil rights equality narrative which is rooted in white acceptance (Doharty, 2019; Harris and Reynolds, 2014; Traille, 2007). It is reported that such topics while important to teach, are often approached without reflecting on the ideology and systems behind the histories, and/or are positioned as topics outside of the grand historical narrative (Bell, 1992; DiAngelo, 2018; Traille, 2007; Van De Mieroop, 2016). Furthermore, issues of pedagogical practice are raised in relation to how Black History is taught in English schools. Troyna (1987) argued that issues of pedagogy rarely appear on policy statements in relation to diversity and anti-racism. The inappropriateness and insensitivity of topics such as slavery are approached is also noted, with examples of students performing the roles of slave owners and slaves, with little understanding of the negative, traumatic impact of this on Black students (Doharty, 2019; Weale, 2017).

But is it not just History that has raised concerns around diversity, Teach First (2020) note that secondary GCSE English Literature courses (compulsory for all students to study) currently feature no texts by Black authors. This means students can leave secondary school without having studied either a Black author, or even a non-white author. In primary education, it has been noted that greater progress needs to be made regarding positive and authentic representations of BME people in children's literature (Chetty, 2016). Between 2017-2019, only 7% of children's books featured a BME character (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, 2020). Bishop (1990; 1992) argues diversity in children's books is essential for the purposes of self-actualisation and validation amongst students of colour. This area of research has suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between what is taught and how students develop their sense of identity and understanding of others. Further still, Bryan's (2012) research in Dublin highlighted the relationship between how secondary students understood race and racism and the partial information presented to them in official textbooks and the curriculum. Bryan (2012) argues that a lack of diversity in knowledge prevents white people from taking action against racism and being anti-racist, as they are likely to internalise the dominant discourse reflected in the curriculum.

Lack of diversity in scope, perspectives and practice are considered problematic as the curriculum is likely to be engaged with and viewed differently by students who are not represented by, or familiar with the "selective" traditions embodied in the curriculum (Apple, 1996). Moreover, a lack of diversity in subjects such as History is noted as having long term implications by influencing who goes on to develop learner identities and study such subjects at GCSE level onwards. The development of 'academic' identities is argued to be influenced by hegemonic representations within subjects, which may establish perceptions as to who has the right to belong to a particular subject (Atkinson et al., 2018; Carlone and Johnson, 2007; Harris and Reynolds, 2014; Alexander et al., 2015). However, some of the barriers to diversity

in the curriculum are also noted to be influenced by teachers' level of confidence, subject knowledge, time and resources (Alexander et al., 2015). Moreover, Bracey (2016) notes that even where teachers have been provided resources on teaching Black History, this was still not a guarantee of its uptake and use. It has therefore been suggested that the level of racial literacy and understanding amongst teachers and subject leaders in *why* and *how* to include diversity is important to consider also, in increasing knowledge diversity (Harris and Clarke, 2011).

2.5   Racism and Racial Literacy

Research has highlighted the presence and effects of structural racism on the educational experiences of students of colour, but also on teachers and faculty of colour. Studies have highlighted the realities of prejudicial attitudes children bring from home and the differentiation or racism endured by students of colour (Elton-Chalcraft, 2011; Lander, 2015; Maylor, 2015; Gayle, 2020). Examples include more overt assumptions around Muslims being terrorists (Vincent, 2019), or subtler forms of discrimination that are 'discursively framed as devoid of any racist intent' even amongst primary aged children (Welply, 2018, p.383). King (2004) refers to these assumptions and behaviours as 'dysconscious racism' in which students accept the existing social order of white norms and privileges. In response King (2004) argues teachers need to be equipped with counter-knowledge. However, the literature suggests a key factor currently limiting antiracist practice in schools, is the limited racial literacy and preparation amongst teachers to understand and handle such issues (Lander, 2015; Pearce, 2014). Racial literacy is defined as the knowledge and understanding of race and racism, but also the skills to develop anti-racist practice (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). In terms of practice, Picower (2009), makes the distinction between teachers being able to handle individual acts of racism, from addressing more institutionalised forms of racism, such as the knowledge embedded in the wider curriculum.

Regarding teacher education, Lander (2014b; 2016) reflects on how little progress has been sustained since the multicultural initiatives of the 1980s, noting an erasure in education policy in teachers' responsibilities towards anti-racism. Picower (2009) describes the absence of policy and training as a method of silencing calls to address structural racism, but also how silence can be used as a performative tool by white teachers to reject antiracist responsibility and self-reflection. In this context, CRT has been used as a lens to expose the tension between teachers' refusal or limited capabilities in acknowledging issues around race and the lived experiences of students who are raced or 'othered' in society (Frankenberg, 1993; Gillborn, 2008). Lander and Santoro (2017) reflect on the institutional whiteness of University teacher education and its curriculum. They argue it risks training future teachers within the norms, values and cultural competencies of the white majority. Further, Reinhardt's (2018) research examining an early childhood teacher programme emphasised the power of teacher educators, who for may perpetuate existing divisions between the realities of classrooms and university training, thereby limiting pedagogical innovation and change. The argument made here is that if University staff/supervisors are unlikely to see the myriad ways racism is embedded in the education system, they are unlikely to develop an anti-racist practice and instil such values amongst student teachers either (Aronson et al., 2020; Dunne et al., 2018; Picower, 2009).

Maylor's (2016) research across multi-ethnic and predominantly 'white' schools, found that teachers were not aware or fully understood the extent of "difference" within their classrooms, with some holding naive views of BME students. Equally, Jerome and Clemitshaw (2012) found though their trainee teachers recognised the undesirability of racism, and other prejudices, they lacked certainty in how to handle racism in school. Priest et al's. (2016) research with children aged 8-12 in the Australian context found that racism was often discussed reactively by teachers (as opposed to proactively), noting they upheld colour-blind or race blind discourses - finding it easier to talk about cultural diversity than race. A colour-blind or post-racial logic according to Lentin (2014, p.1270) denies race as a means of discrimination and ignores how concepts such as culture and diversity have been incorporated into the minimisation of racism, and ultimately serves to regulate the importance of race in society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The preference to discuss cultural diversity over issues of race was also noted with the students' teachers in Dunne et al. (2018) and Bracey's (2016) research.

Research has therefore emphasised the importance of having space as part of teacher education to critically look at the democratic 'shortcomings of schools' and progress new ways of creating curricula in response (Giroux, 2009, p.453). Harris and Clarke's (2011) action research study with secondary student teachers noted that while they did care about diversity, they lacked an understanding of its place, value and how to begin to address such issues within their respective subject area. But it is also noted that the capacity of teachers to undertake such work has been lessened by a wider performative, neoliberal culture of standards. Giroux (2009) and Ball (2013) note that teachers are already constrained in their practice and development by neoconservative discourses of accountability. The pressure of raising student attainment outcomes is thought to influence what it means to teach and learn today, but also the status of teachers, their professional agency and values – or what Ball (2003) describes as the 'teachers soul'. Popkewitz (2018) argues that the most successful or 'effective' teacher is one who meets the benchmarks of performance, which means good teaching is reduced to better implementation strategies to achieve results. This performative culture is echoed in Dunne et al's (2018) research which describes the need amongst primary student teachers for the 'correct knowledge' to equip them with the one-size tools needed to teach across issues connected to race/ethnicity. In such a technical context, it is argued that teachers may 'become uncertain about what is to be valued, what is worthwhile, and how to prioritize [their] efforts' (Ball, 2003, p.220). This highlights the importance of creating space within teacher training and developing a professional practice that is responsive to the needs of its diverse students, and issues of power.

2.6   Multiculturalism, Postcolonialism and CRT

There has been a variety critical theory and pedagogical attempts to engage with issues of social and racial justice, in order to develop more transformative educational practice. One noted approach to challenging inequality and increasing the diversity of knowledge in curriculum practice has been through multicultural education (Banks, 1993a; 2009a). Multicultural approaches were originally argued to be rooted in a commitment to anti-racism and being critical (Jay, 2003). However, it is now often associated with superficial practices which have been criticised for obstructing a more critical understanding of knowledge and institutionalised inequalities (Yosso, 2002). Noble and Watkins (2014) argue multiculturalism

may be progressive in intention but is problematic in implementation since it relies on a bureaucratic essentialism that attempts to order the diversity of students into fixed categories. The focus on minority cultures is argued to perpetuate essentialised notions of cultural 'difference' or of homogenous, 'fixed' group entities (Amanti, 2005, p.131). Osler (2009) supports multicultural education as a way of telling minority stories through the curriculum. However, Osler says little in relation to how such 'stories' can be valued and respected without being positioned as 'other' against white norms (hooks, 1994). For example, Maylor (2010) found that white students often felt 'overdosed' on diversity, whilst teachers and schools made natural connections between diversity and the cultural difference of minority ethnicities and religions (Keddie, 2014; Maylor, 2010, p.239). Further, Welply's (2018) research in a multicultural school found the commitment to its much-celebrated multicultural ethos differed from the reality, in which children were discouraged from speaking other languages, and 'diversity' was confined to limited parts of the curriculum, notably R.E. Therefore, multiculturalism is criticised for being fixated on learning about other cultures, as opposed to critically examining the wider structural problems that exist such as racism and socio-economic inequality (Troyna, 1987).

Post/decolonial perspectives argue multicultural approaches to education often hinder the critical literacy of students, as it primarily does little to de-centre or challenge the Eurocentric ontology and epistemology which presents as universal knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007; Kincheloe, 2006; Mignolo, 2000; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Spivak, 2010). It is argued that this imbalance of power continues to reproduce knowledge of and about 'others' through a lens of Western, colonial superiority (Andreotti, 2011: Said, 2003; Mythen, 2012). Postcolonial theorists (Bhabha, 1990; 1994; Said, 2003; Spivak, 1990) have highlighted the persistent cultural representations used to differentiate between the modernity and knowledge of the 'west' and the primitivism and depravity of the 'east'. These dominant frameworks of knowledge production are what Tuhiwai-Smith (2012) argues lead to the continued perpetuation of tropes around the primitiveness of colonised/indigenous peoples as lacking arts, civilisation and ultimately unable to create their own histories or knowledge. This ontological and epistemological framework is argued to permeate the school curriculum through its representations of 'global others' and non-European cultures, through a-historical accounts, which offer limited knowledge of systems of global inequality such as settler colonialism (Andreotti et al., 2018). For example, Borowski's (2012) research investigating Year 6 primary students' perceptions of Africa found their understanding was unbalanced and limited to images of poverty, famine, agriculture and animals, evoking words such as 'arid' 'primitive' 'thirsty'. The majority of students were unaware of urbanisation or the existence of wealth across the African continent.

Some theorists (Bhabha, 2009; 1990; Soja, 1996; Mythen, 2012; Dei and Doyle-Wood, 2006; Richardson, 2006) have emphasised the cultural hybridity of all identities as a counter to group essentialism. They have conceptualised the notion of a 'third space' as a site of resistance to the coloniality of knowing. However, what this means in practical terms for school curriculum development and practice remains ambiguous and under-theorised - although its broader intention to highlight the diverse and unfinished nature of all identities, is worthwhile. Therefore, while post/decolonial perspectives offer an analysis of power relations that spans across race, ethnicity and the cultural selections of knowledge (Kanu, 2006), it is less of a framework that is accessible to school education issues outside of global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2011; Andreotti et al., 2018). Such theoretical approaches perhaps hold more

intellectual relevance within cultural studies or the race equality efforts of Universities - to the point of now being likened to a tokenistic bandwagon (*see* Bhambra et al., 2020; Santos, 2017; Moosavi, 2020).

In response to racial injustice and the issues of power embodied with the hidden curriculum, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been increasingly applied as framework of analysis on a range of school education issues in England (Jay, 2003). CRT is noted to have developed as a critique of liberal multiculturalism (Gillborn, 2006). The potential for transformative knowledge is noted as being undermined by multicultural educational practices which 'consume' minority cultures through performative celebrations of festivals, food or music relating to the 'culturally different', as opposed to building knowledge and challenging racism (Warmington, 2020; Dunne et al., 2018; Chetty, 2014: Troyna, 1987). Critical race theorists also assert that multicultural approaches remain dominant in this way in curricula practice, as they do not challenge the hegemony of whiteness (Jay, 2003). Whiteness theory is associated with CRT and used as an additional lens to examine how white norms and interests interact with the day-to-day lived reality of race, but also how it obstructs the ability of people to identify and act on racism (Leonardo, 2002; 2013). Whiteness is defined as a political, social, cultural mechanism which masks its power and privilege (Giroux, 1997 p.382; McIntosh, 1990). It is argued to offer a more nuanced tool of analysis to interrogate white identities and the benefits it confers, without focusing on the 'cultural difference' of racialised minorities (Lander, 2014; Nayak, 2007).

There is no single definition of CRT but in relation to school curriculum issues, Yosso (2002 p.93) argues CRT can act as a framework for educators to 'expose and challenge contemporary forms of racial inequality, which are disguised as 'neutral' and 'objective' structures, processes, and discourses.' While CRT offers an analytical lens similar to post/decolonial perspectives on the production and cultural selection of knowledge, it is noted to differ based on its commitment to anti-racist social action and producing counter narratives, in addition to making transparent a system of whiteness (Gillborn, 2008; Hylton, 2012; Lynn and Parker, 2006; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). A critical race curriculum critiques an essentialist notion of culture and the compartmentalisation of 'minority' knowledge and histories into discrete topics of study, and questioning which stories are traditionally marginalised, lesser known and silenced over others (Solórzano and Yosso 2002; Yosso, 2002).

However, advocates of *critical* multiculturalism (May, 2014; Osler, 2009; 2015) maintains its theoretical perspectives are preferable to CRT or multicultural education. However, Osler (2015) draws on the principles of cosmopolitanism and human rights education as the path towards being 'critical' and producing transformative knowledge. However human rights discourse as I discussed earlier has been noted as a problematic discourse based on culturally selective values which reinforce perceptions of 'otherness' (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Lentin, 2014; Sian et al., 2013). On the theoretical contribution and value of CRT, Osler (2015, p.18) states that 'it remains to be seen whether this theory, which has focused first and foremost on the African-American experience, will travel well, both within Europe.' However, the growing volume of research and scholars applying CRT in the UK education context highlighted by Warmington (2020), suggests it has travelled well, and continues to. Multiculturalism on the other hand, has been increasingly linked to reinforcing whiteness and serving a middle-class liberalism (Troyna, 1987; Grinage, 2020; Jay, 2003). Grinage (2020, p.10) asserts that the

history of 'superficial practices' associated with multiculturalism means it is now conceived of as the 'path of least resistance' rather than a commitment to being critical or transformative (May, 2003). Jay (2003) attributes the shortcomings of multicultural education to a lack of attention on the hidden curriculum. Therefore, based on the research application of CRT to school education issues in England, its commitment to social action, combined with the production of counter knowledge to highlight patterns of racial injustice, means it may offer a more suitable framework of analysis for the interests of this research.

2.7   Academic / Everyday Knowledge

One of the key points of contention when discussing the nature of the school curriculum, relates to differing perspectives on what constitutes as valid knowledge, and therefore considered worthy of the status of 'academic' knowledge. At the heart of these debates are issues around what we should teach, what knowledge is important and what the parameters are that make this knowledge important (Ayers, 2013). In England, the importance of an academic 'knowledge-rich' curriculum focused on subjects and 'rigorous' testing (DfE, 2013; 2016), was intended to be a distinct departure from interdisciplinary, competency or skills-based curricula associated with the 'failures' of New Labour education policy (Young, 2014b; Williamson, 2020). In this section, I address claims of an alleged 'crisis' and 'dumbing down' of knowledge in curriculum studies and the national curriculum in England (Beck, 2012; Priestly, 2011; Weelahan, 2010; Williamson, 2020; Young, 2013). I focus my literature review on the social realist concept of 'powerful knowledge' (PK) given the recent policy interest it has captured, through its emphasis on the pursuit of 'academic' knowledge (Gibb, 2018). Moreover, such discourse operates by distinguishing and creating a hierarchy between different knowledges, which has wider implications in terms of what or who is valued by wider society. As such, I evaluate the hegemonic values that influence what is considered as 'powerful' or academic knowledge and discuss this in relation to the wider aims of this research in considering social and racial justice.

PK is described as higher-status knowledge that should comprise the curriculum, as opposed to social or 'everyday' knowledge, which is drawn from the cultural experiences, lives and contexts of students (Young, 2008, Moore, 2013). PK is allegedly 'found in school subjects such as maths, science, history, geography, English and the arts, given that they are taught according to the canons of their parent disciplines as studied in higher education' (White, 2019, p.429). Whilst PK is primarily concerned with disciplinary knowledge at secondary level onwards, Fran and Catling (2011) argue that what is prioritised and taught at secondary level, is subsequently diluted for primary schools to consume. Principally, PK is an approach to the school curriculum which raises concerns over content, by emphasising the importance of disciplinary knowledge and critiquing the 'relativism' of social constructionist approaches to knowledge (Moore, 2013; Wheelahan, 2010; Young, 2008). The alleged 'power' of PK rests on access to higher order, specialist subject knowledge, which are historically grounded in the epistemological languages of academic disciplines, developed within Universities (Lambert, 2011; Hopkin, 2012; Young, 2008). PK proponents argue that conceptual, disciplinary knowledge is easily distinguishable from, and therefore of greater value than the everyday knowledge students have, as PK allegedly helps students understand how the world works and confer greater objectivity and reliability of knowledge (Young, 2012, 2014a; Young and Muller. 2013; Morgan, 2015; Weelahan, 2010). PK is reported to draw on the work of Basil

Bernstein's vertical and horizontal language. Horizontal knowledge relates to 'everyday' realities, ambiguous language, and imprecise contexts, whereas vertical discourse relates to systematic, ordered principles as found in the sciences (Bernstein, 1999). However, PK has been criticised for adopting a 'vertical' approach to curriculum knowledge, which by their own criteria, applies only to science and maths and not most traditional school subjects they label as 'academic' (Alderson, 2020; White, 2018).

Nonetheless, it is argued that knowledge too connected to students' lives is thought to lack the intellectual challenge, objectivity and consistency disciplinary knowledge provides (Rata, 2012; Young, 2013; 2008). From a PK perspective everyday knowledge is only of value if it is a route towards PK, and not of value in its own right. PK theorists do however maintain that objective knowledge can be fallible. It is argued that the process of debate to get to the 'truth' requires disciplinary faculties of thinking that help students be part of society's conversation (Weelahan, 2010). The aim is to 'transmit' past knowledge to students to create new knowledge on that basis (Moore, 2011; Young, 2013). Still, under this ideal, Alderson (2020a) notes it would take students years of learning to be part of any conversation, when they could be part of it now by drawing on their existing knowledge and experience, as a starting point from which to progress from. Furthermore, the differentiation made between PK and 'everyday' knowledge has been critiqued by arguing that students are not limited to our subjective perceptions of their 'experience' but rather students build conceptual knowledge from it which has transgressive potential (Wrigley, 2018; hooks, 1994).

The emphasis social realism and PK place on access to academic knowledge designated as more objective, has drawn similarities to the 'core' knowledge curriculum movement, most associated with American theorist E. D. Hirsch. For instance, Moore (2013) maintains that PK does exist as some bodies of knowledge are inherently better and objective than others. Hirsch claims a body of canonical, standardised knowledge can exist, which all students can access equally, regardless of socio-economic background (Hirsch, 1988; Young, 2014a). Yosso (2002) describes Hirsch's (1988) 'core curriculum' movement specifically as one which furthers white middle-class advantage, and masks its cultural norms and advantages as neutral, universal knowledge. In England, Hirsch's work has been noted as influencing then Secretary for State for Education, Michael Gove during the curriculum review of 2013 (Beck, 2012). More broadly the work of Hirsch is noted as an influence for the right-wing think tank, Civitas, which carries out policy research for the Conservative party (Young, 2011). Young (2011) however distinguishes PK social realism from Hirschian principles, based on its denial of the epistemology and specialisms of academic disciplines (Young and Muller, 2011).

But whilst Young and Muller (2010) describe Hirsch as taking a traditional, elitist view of education, similar criticisms are made against PK/social realism. With regard to the epistemology of disciplines which construct 'academic' knowledge for school curricula, Bailey (2017) argues the epistemological terrain of disciplines can be used as tools themselves to preserve white privilege and advantage. Mills (1997) terms this as 'white epistemological ignorance' which acts as a tool to silence criticism and protect a system of whiteness. Gillborn (2002) asserts that the assumed superiority of the forms of knowledge, skills and abilities promoted by schools is a matter of social definition imposed by the most powerful groups in society, of which whites assume the most power. More broadly, the colonial histories, violence and the ethnocentrism involved in the production of disciplinary knowledge are described as forms of 'epistemic violence' which reinforce hegemonic, Eurocentric systems of knowing over

others, which perpetuate racialised discourses (Spivak, 2010, p.35; Mignolo, 2000, Said, 2003; Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Specifically on the concept of PK, Rudolph et al. (2018) challenge its belief in the objectivity of academic disciplines, by tracing its links to colonialism. In this way, Rudolph et al (2018) emphasise the relationship between structural racism and forms of knowledge which persist as being more 'powerful' over others.

Currently, research which has engaged with specific neoconservative curriculum policy and concepts such as 'powerful knowledge' from a critical race perspective in the English context is limited. Rudolph et al (2018) is the only paper as yet to explicitly consider issues of structural racism imbued in the notion of PK. Critiques more generally have focused on the wider principle of social justice, as opposed to issues of racism specifically. Alderson (2020b, p.29) for example provides a more general a critique of PK perspectives, arguing they ultimately disregard the complexity and socio-politics of designing, teaching, applying and assessing curricula and its effects in relation to social justice. In a post-apartheid South Africa, Zipin et al (2015) pose the question of whether social realism can do social justice, before concluding that its focus on cognitive gains is made at the expense of ethical concerns. Overall, there is a gap in the literature on the school curriculum which considers issues of epistemology and ethics in relation to racism and a white Eurocentricity, and contextualising this within the reality that the social world and context of students cannot be separated from school learning (Diversi and Moreira, 2013; Esteban-Guitart et al., 2014). In response, I now seek to examine the links between power and the production of knowledge through the analytical perspectives offered via critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy questions why particular sources of knowledge and narratives become celebrated, hegemonic and labelled as 'academic' whilst others are not (Apple, 1996; Darder et al., 2009; Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 2006). This is necessary to consider in light of the issues raised in the literature on the dominance of European epistemology in constructions of academic knowledge.

2.8   Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Knowledge

Critical pedagogical approaches to knowledge seek to highlight issues of power in the production of knowledge. However, such perspectives are criticised amongst social realists as overly socialised approaches to knowledge, which problematise knowledge to the point of not knowing what knowledge is, or should be (Moore, 2013; Young, 2011; Young and Muller, 2010). Moore (2013, p.338) argues 'new sociological approaches' to knowledge such as Bourdieusian cultural capital and anti-racist education as examples of identity politics, whilst others have characterised such approaches as a postmodern attack on objectivity (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Rata, 2012). Furthermore, social realist perspectives argue class disadvantage and inequality risk being reinforced if students are '[fixed]' into the confines of their own experiences with more contextualised forms of everyday knowledge (Young, 2010, p.17; Rata, 2012). For instance, Young (2014b) describes a curriculum in chaos in post-apartheid South Africa, since it was one based on everyday knowledge and guided by Freirean principles, which allegedly reinscribed disadvantage amongst Black communities (Zipin et al., 2015).

However, the focus of social realism's analysis is narrowly directed towards class and a belief in social mobility and is noted to lack consideration of intersecting educational issues such as student engagement, disaffection, structural racism and power. Social mobility is noted as a

flawed concept which focuses on 'exceptional' students from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds as proof that social mobility is realisable for all students, when the reality is that educational outcomes are persistently stratified in relation to socioeconomic status (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008; Gillborn, 2008; Reay, 2017). In particular, successful students of colour are highlighted as 'model minorities' to evidence the possibility of mobility which can deflect discussion away from the structural disadvantage students of colour experience (Tomlinson, 2014). Critical pedagogy asserts that standardised or 'official' school knowledge presented as objective or 'academic' in reality is based on culturally selective perspectives, which reinforce perceptions of working-class students, *and* students of colour (which will likely doubly disadvantage working class students of colour), as deviating from norms which align to white, middle-class cultures and modes of being (Apple, 1996; McLaren, 2009; Yosso, 2002; Zipin et al., 2012). In response, critical pedagogy frames issues of social justice in the curriculum through an engagement with multiple sources of knowledge for transformative learning, as opposed to competitive testing, and seeks to transcend existing cultural hierarchies between academic and 'everyday' knowledge (Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Wrigley, 2018).

Young (2011) argues that proponents of critical pedagogy, such as Freire, Giroux and McLaren, have a 'one sided emphasis on practice' rather than knowledge (Young, 2014a, p.13). On the other hand, Wrigley (2018) argues social realists reduce pedagogy down to teaching techniques. Giroux (2010) asserts that pedagogy is not about training or a set of techniques, but rather about how we approach teaching as both a moral and political practice, and a commitment to alter the asymmetric lines of power that influence the practices, knowledge and sources of cultural capital that are currently valued in education (Darder, et al., 2003; McLaren, 2009). Unlike research in social realism/PK which is predominantly theoretical in scope, research in the field of critical pedagogy has been developed through experiential research knowledge and praxis in schools and classrooms with students - or in Freire's case, creating successful adult literacy programmes (e.g. Biddulph, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008; Freire, 1996; Habib, 2017; hooks, 1994).

Therefore, drawing on the lived experiences and everyday knowledge of students is advocated for within critical pedagogy, as a route towards greater social justice in education and the development of students critical thinking skills. However, critical pedagogy is noted not to be limited to knowledge that is confined to students experiences, as has been characterised by social realists (Zipin et al., 2015). Rather the aim is to harness such knowledge for conceptual learning that can create greater possibilities for students to develop a critical consciousness and an awareness of the social conditions around them (Andreotti et al., 2018; Freire, 1996; McLaren, 1995; Shor, 2009). For Freire (1996) creating the conditions under which students can self-reflect was central to his articulation of the purpose of education, but also as a means to deepen reflection and participation in society for the long term, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged (Shor, 2009; Giroux, 2009).

Freire (1996) who is considered as the founder of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2010), argued against a prescriptive knowledge-led curriculum, likening it to a 'banking model of education' in which students become passive recipients of 'official' truths, as opposed to becoming agents in their own learning which allow them to develop a critical consciousness (Berry, 1998, Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 2006). Alderson (2020b) draws on the issue of student agency to challenge the principal argument of PK; that access to academic knowledge confers power on to students. It is argued that the confidence and interest in learning that access to culturally

relevant or everyday knowledge can facilitate, particularly amongst alienated or structurally disadvantaged students, has a particular relationship to social justice and academic success (Alderson; 2020b; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Reay, 2017; Wrigley, 2018). Duncan-Andrade (2004, p.317) argues schools have access to students' cultures which 'can be an important tool for teachers attempting to create more engaging educational environments.' This is important to consider in the context of the development of learner identities and diversity in disciplines, as Carlone and Johnson (2007) note in relation to women of colour in Science subjects.

However, whilst critical pedagogy is noted in providing an analytical framework to question hegemonic ideologies, power and inequality in the education system (Solórzano and Yosso, 2005), it has received criticism for neglecting issues of white supremacy and the permanence of racism (Allen, 2005; Leonardo, 2005; Parker and Stovall, 2004). Race is argued to cut across class and other social identity markers in terms of disadvantage and inequality (Leonardo, 2005). Allen (2005, p.54) notes some engagement within critical pedagogy to consider issues of race and whiteness (e.g., Giroux. 1997) but argues this was short lived within a wider theoretical space centred primarily around a 'white Marxist Eurocentricity' focused on class analysis. This is an important criticism to note when considering the possibilities of critical pedagogy in educational research. Lynn (2004) for example uses the concept of Afrocentricity and the lived experience/strategies adopted by Black African American teachers in his discussion of a critical race pedagogy.

However, whilst there has been some exploration into 'critical race pedagogy', research in this space is limited in its contributions, polemical in nature and US focused in scope (Lynn, 2004: Parker and Stovall, 2004). Both research areas acknowledge the inequality in curricular structures, processes, and the assumptions behind what is traditionally recognised as academic cultural capital in the curriculum (Yosso, 2002). Therefore, the need for greater theoretical dialogue between critical pedagogy and critical theories on race is noted as a research area that would benefit from further development (Leonardo, 2005; Parker and Stovall, 2004). In response to this, I seek to understand how critical scholarship on pedagogy and race, can be brought together to address issues related to the production of knowledge and practice in classrooms.

2.9   Community Cultural Wealth as Counter Knowledge

Informed by the principles of Critical Pedagogy, there is a body of work which Duncan-Andrade (2004) describes as the 'culture as additive' scholarship. It emphasises the social action teachers can take to recognise students as holders and producers of knowledge (Duncan-Andrade, 2004, p.334). Such work argues against the assumptions schools typically work from in trying to get students of colour and/or from less advantaged class backgrounds to emulate middle-class, white norms for academic success and progression (Hinto, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Yosso, 2005). As a counter to this, Yosso (2005) outlines the concept of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) as an attempt to reconceptualise what is valued as cultural capital in education. CCW in informed by CRT and seeks to challenge deficit views towards marginalised students, but also as a theoretical challenge to Bourdieuean cultural capital theory, which she argues has been used by some to inscribe certain communities as culturally wealthy, while others culturally poor. Yosso (2005) outlines six types of counter capital to

consider instead, which are: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital.

One prominent area of research which links to CCW, is the theory 'Funds of Knowledge', which focuses on familial capital as a conceptual framework for informing student-focused curricular and pedagogical approaches to knowledge production (Moll et al., 1992; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1995). Familial capital views households as cognitive resources which includes the knowledge and skills drawn from students' households, family relationships and socio-cultural backgrounds (Moll et al., 1992). FoK was first conceptualised by anthropologists Moll et al. (1992) in the state of Arizona in response to the growing number of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os students in public schools, and the desire to counter deficit approaches in relation to race/culture and a lack of social understanding. Teachers worked with academic researchers to conduct home-visits and observe their students of colour in their wider social context, speak to people in the household, and from there begin to develop curricular or pedagogical links to school knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). The principal argument in using FoK for curricular use is based on an ethical concern of redistributing power within traditional modes of learning and what is predominantly valued as curricula knowledge (Zipin, 2009). However, Hinto (2015) asserts that CCW and FoK as 'capital theories' suppress issues of neoliberalism and argues against 'capital' as a way of theorising culture. In response to this, proponents of FoK argue it seeks to develop curricula which exceeds capital, by looking beyond standardised outcome or assessment data to identify and value student's prior knowledge (Hogg, 2011, p.673), as a 'scaffold' for more conceptual learning (Amanti, 2005; Zipin et al., 2012).

Research argues the benefits of FoK principally through: redefining the scope of the curriculum through critical pedagogical practice (Amanti, 2005), engaging students in curricular activities, aiding the professional development of teachers (Hogg, 2011; Llopart and Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Rodriguez, 2013; Zipin et al., 2012), fostering inter-subjective ways of knowing (Zipin, 2009, p.324), cultivating relationships for learning, and facilitating an exploration of sociocultural and academic identities amongst students (Cowie et al., 2011; Hogg, 2011). With respect to the last benefit, Cowie et al. (2011) drew on Maori students FoK in the science classroom, which resulted in a sense of legitimation and encouraged them to develop learner identities in a subject hegemonically viewed as exterior to their cultural identities. As such, applying FoK for curricula use is argued to lead to better educational outcomes for students disadvantaged by the system through ideologies of deficiency which are sustained by whiteness (Amanti, 2005; Zipin et al., 2012, Zamudio et al., 2011).

However, research cautions that the effectiveness of a FoK approach is dependent on (a) the knowledge and familiarity of individual teachers to connect the classroom to wider family/ community experiences (Hedges et al., 2011; Moll et al., 1992), (b) the effectiveness of teacher-pupil relationships and trust (Zipin, 2013), and (c) the building of supportive student-to-student relationships (Chesworth, 2016). Furthermore, Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) describe the FoK process as one of knowledge 'conversion' and 'activation' which requires students to principally recognise and accept their own FoK as being academically valid, in addition to teachers. This may be challenging for students who are typically not well represented within school knowledge. For example, Alexander et al. (2015) discusses the need for 'external validation' amongst BME students in History, as students may be wrestling with competing

narratives. This emphasises the importance of developing spaces for counter-story telling (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002a).

In addition, FoK is noted to be methodologically dependent on households which may project narrow norms as to what constitutes a household (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). To counter the reliance on households, Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) broaden the scope of FoK to encapsulate the social worlds students construct independently of families/households from which they equally derive meaning from. Similarly, other researchers have noted the relevance of pop culture and digital media as an extended site of learning and community, as well as students lived experiences that relate to the wider political, historical and social conditions they are embedded within (Amanti, 2005; Chesworth, 2016; Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014). As such researchers have developed the concept of 'funds of identity' to extend the pedagogical reach of FoK (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014).In response, student participants in FoK research have been interviewed, but also been part of pedagogical spaces which have seen them creating art, artefacts and displays, making identity or relational maps, or engaging in play (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019; Jovés et al., 2015; Zipin, 2013; Subuero et al., 2018; Chesworth, 2016).

However, the act of recognition and the inclusion of students' sociocultural worlds without potentially reinscribing perceptions of 'cultural difference' requires further development also within the field. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) argue FoK has typically over emphasised recognition, and not so much issues of power and class. For example, Zipin (2009) acknowledges that 'light' or positive FoK are typically explored in schools, with a reluctance to explore 'darker' or controversial FoK drawn from students lived experiences that are indicative of racism, inequality and discrimination. Zipin (2009) stresses that these realities should not be seen as difficult or dark when measured against institutional normalities. Rodriguez (2013) however provides the most challenging critique of FoK, arguing it remains 'silent' on the racialised effects of schooling. However, Rodriguez (2013, p.88) believes CRT can be used to extend the critical lens of FoK and work in 'theoretical dialogue' to counter deeply embedded cultural deficit perspectives, whilst bringing together intersectional concerns across critical pedagogy and race. As yet, there is no work which has sought to conduct research in schools which integrates FoK and critical race perspectives to praxis (Zamudio et al., 2011). The opportunity FoK presents in terms of practical approaches to generating counter-knowledge and pedagogical space, could equally be mitigated by superficial interpretations that may reinscribe 'difference' and minimise critical thinking – similar to the fate of multicultural approaches in education (Grinage, 2020).

Given the limited research in this space and the need for us in the academic community to develop new approaches to *doing* research that provides a space and voice for students, putting FoK and CRT in a dialogue could provide a way forward in terms of producing counter-knowledge (Zamudio et al., 2011). Hylton (2012) notes that whilst there is no one size fits all approach to CRT research methodology, the underlying principle is the commitment to social action and the use of participatory methodologies - which could therefore include FoK provided its analysis remains focused on the principles outlined by Yosso (2002) which are; an acknowledgement of inequality in curricular structures (e.g. race, classism, sexism), and the need to challenge deficit assumptions, and colour-blind discourses (e.g. objectivity, meritocracy). As such, adopting a FoK approach grounded in CRT, may offer a methodological way of 'walking the walk' by providing a critical framework that can explore the power hierarchy

between 'social' and 'academic' knowledge, challenge dominant curricular structures and assumptions behind objective, academic knowledge, but also develop counter-knowledge and stories in response to structural racism (Hylton, 2012).

2.10   Conclusion

The first area this literature review highlighted was the problematic nature of policies such as British values and their entanglement in a nationalist, assimilationist policy history, which poses a threat to race equality and social justice. Existing research has reported widely on the perspectives of teachers and trainee teachers on British values, as well as the threats posed by the policy in instituting a narrow concept of citizenship and 'belonging' and the governmentality and inequality that surrounds it. However, less research has been conducted that explores students' perceptions of British values. How are British values understood within the context of student's day-to-day lives? To what extent are these threats and potential exclusionary narratives perceived by students, and if not, why not? What wider messages do students receive that may influence how British values is received and interpreted?

The second area this literature review discussed related to institutional and structural inequality across the education system, which are upheld by post-racial discourses of equality and meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Sian et al., 2013; Yosso, 2002). Such issues noted include; the shortcomings of teacher education and training towards developing racial literacy, the constraints of the education system due to performative accountability cultures, the narrow scope of the national curriculum, and approaches to diversity in the curriculum which may reinforce perceptions of cultural difference and 'otherness' (Amanti, 2005; Rudolph et al., 2018). In response to these issues, I evaluated the perspectives of multiculturalism, postcolonialism and CRT. I decided that whilst there are numerous overlaps in perspective, CRT offers a more critical analytical framework relevant to, and increasingly applied, to the practical realities of English schools. Moreover, its approach is overtly anti-racist and expresses greater concern in exploring structural inequalities that are embedded within formal structures, such as the curriculum.

Following this, I focused specifically on the curriculum, by exploring the structural and racial inequalities imbued in notions of 'academic' or 'powerful' knowledge that is currently emphasised in curriculum policy and schools' standards in England, and expressed by social realists within curriculum studies. I discussed literature which critiques the concept of powerful knowledge specifically and drew on the perspectives of critical pedagogy to consider issues of norms, values and power in dominant curricula practice. I also considered the limitations of critical pedagogy in addressing race inequality specifically and drew inspiration from what limited literature exists in bridging the theories of CRT and critical pedagogy. I explored Yosso's (2005) concept of CCW approaches, focusing specifically on familial or household capital as expressed through Funds of Knowledge. I consider FoK as one potential way of diversifying knowledge, avoiding group essentialism, and bringing together the analytical insights of both CRT and critical pedagogy in a framework that could be applied to a participatory research inquiry. FoK is just one approach I have chosen to explore because it is under-researched in the English school context but has also been noted by Rodriguez (2013) as an approach that could benefit from greater theoretical dialogue with CRT.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Through the complex issues raised by the literature review, I have decided to explore three intersecting issues, which are: students' understanding of British values, knowledge in the curriculum, and approaches towards changes in practice that are informed by the principles of critical pedagogy and CRT. For this I have identified two research questions to guide this study to help ensure the research is question-led, rather than methods-led (White, 2009, p.89). The first question is focused on students understanding of British values, followed by a broader research question which focuses on ways we could address institutionalised forms of inequality through the curriculum and what knowledge is valorised. My research questions are:

1. *How do students understand British values, both as a concept and its purpose?*

2. What spaces are there in the curriculum for counter-knowledge?

In this chapter I begin by outlining my approach to the methodology of this study. I explain the different aspects of the research design, arguing why two in-depth case studies of one primary and one secondary class were appropriate. I discuss how a participatory research approach and multiple qualitative methods were applied in practice. I outline a number of ethical considerations raised by this study, with a particular focus on power and consent. This is followed by a reflective account of my positionality and examples of different situations throughout the research process which heightened my awareness of my experiences and social location as a 'BME' or 'racial other' (Bradbury, 2014; Gillborn, 2006b).

3.1   Research Approach

In this section, I discuss the two principle approaches to this research, which are: a case study approach, followed by my definition of participatory research. But first, it is necessary to explain the overall logic behind my methodological approach and critically appraise the decisions I have taken to ensure there is transparency in this research (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). This research study is located under an interpretivist ontology, which believes knowledge does not exist objectively for the researcher to excavate. Rather all knowledge is relationally constructed through the interactions and perceptions of individuals. As such, 'research knowledge' is developed through the subjective interpretations made by a researcher (Baumfield et al., 2013; Wellington, 2000). When considering epistemology, this study is interested in not just ways of knowing, but rather the wider "systems of knowing" that perpetuate certain ideas, values and ways of being over others (Ladson-Billings, 2000). With that aside, the most important function of methodology according to Leonardo (2013, p.600) is to 'justify the purpose' of the research and where race research is concerned, it must come 'with a politics of either intervening in racism or becoming spectators of it.' Engaging in more transformative race research means adopting methodological approaches which embrace participatory methods, is anti-essentialist, interdisciplinary, and seeks to develop counter knowledge/stories (Hylton, 2012; Solórzano and Yosso, 2001).

As my aim is to intervene and develop an understanding of what small scale changes can take place within the confines of the school curriculum system, this has led me to draw on a range

of qualitative and participatory approaches, as opposed to say, taking a purely ethnographic approach. Therefore, my approach to this research was based on using multiple qualitative strategies towards data collection, some of which could be described as participatory. I also adopted a case study approach towards organising the research (Yin, 2008). The case studies consist of one primary school and one secondary school. The aim of such a research design was to ensure multiple data collection techniques could be feasibly carried out in each case study, which would help bring together multiple levels of rich insight to bear on my research problem (Mason, 2011). Thomson and Hall (2017) emphasise that as schools are complex institutions, there needs to be more than one way of generating data to understand them. A multi-strategy approach also retains a sense of pragmatism in the research process which is needed to adapt to a dynamic education policy and classroom context (Johnson et al., 2007).

It is for these reasons, I adopted a multi-strategy, case study approach as it can accommodate the multiple levels of inquiry this research is interested in - from macro policy and community perspectives, to the micro school context, the experiences of teachers, and the knowledge of and interests of students (Woolley, 2009). This flexibility also means I could marry together my research questions which are focused on explanation as well as exploration (Bryman, 2006). I now discuss what a case study and participatory approach looked like in practice for this research.

3.1.1 Case Study Rationale

The first reason I adopted a case study approach to organise the research was because it can bring a variety of data collection or sources of information together, as they are typically driven by research inquiries interested in making sense of multiple perspectives or experiences (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Case studies can facilitate an in-depth investigation into social phenomena, whilst remaining situated within its context and the real-time experiences and perceptions of participants (Yin, 2018). The second reason I adopted a case study approach is because its focus on a particular research site can facilitate the time and space to build meaningful and ethical research relationships with participants (Thomson and Hall, 2017). Developing a rapport and familiarity with students was important as the interview and curriculum development work required students to feel comfortable enough to research and present knowledge related to their socio-cultural worlds in the classroom. Familiarity was also important in minimising the potential risk of particularly younger students in providing 'agreeable' answers when spoken to, based on what they might perceive the "new adult" in the classroom wants to hear (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013). The third reason I used a case study approach was based on practical considerations related to carrying out a doctoral study. I was conscious of the feasibility of carrying out research which ambitiously sought to use multiple methods including collaborative curriculum development activities, within the timescales of a PhD, the requirement to produce a thesis, and the structure of academic school year which would include the more 'relaxed' summer months of the school year occupied with trips, events and sports days.

There are some disadvantages to a case study approach however which are important to recognise. These largely relate to their wider applicability, or relevance, beyond the situated, contextualised nature of a case study school (Tight, 2017). However, whilst case studies may be contextually situated and bounded, they are not necessarily 'tightly' bounded to their

context (Thomson and Hall, 2017). Rather case study schools can act as windows that facilitate an understanding of wider systems, policy enactments, and educational issues that stretch beyond the individual school under study. For example, issues related to the curriculum and social justice in education are not bounded issues as all schools in England are expected to adhere to some, or all of the national curriculum. Rather, case studies can illuminate wider patterns, challenges and opportunities, within a framework that is both manageable and can elicit rich data. As Schostak (2002, p.23) argues, a case is rather a 'spotlight' giving the illusion that the school selected is singular, but all research regardless of strategy adopted is bounded; something is cut, reduced or lost in the process of all research.

3.1.2 Case Study Selection and Access

The case studies selected for this research consisted of one primary school and one secondary school in a post-industrial city, in the north of England:

- Primary school: I worked with one Key Stage 2 (Year 4) class, with students aged between 8-9 years old.
- Secondary school: I worked with one Key Stage 3 History (Year 8) class, with students aged between 12-13 years old.

Both schools were state-maintained schools (as opposed to being private, fee-paying or selective entry). The purpose of selecting two different schools providing different levels of education, was to explore how the problems identified by this study 'look' in two different contexts, each with their own pressures, policy requirements and learner considerations (Ball et al., 2012). These two cases are by no means comparable, however there is potential for it to highlight wider issues that may stretch between cases (Tight, 2017).

The process of gaining access to a secondary school began in June 2018, whereas access to a primary school began in September 2018. The primary school was confirmed in October 2018, whereas the secondary school was approached in December 2018 but officially confirmed by the Headteacher and history department in March 2019. Gaining access to schools to carry out collaborative research is challenging. The time constraints and pressures teachers face meant the time available to engage in discussions about the research study and explain what participation would consist of, was limited. This challenge was frequently reiterated to me by veteran social worker *Anne,* who I was in contact with about this research as they worked across a number of schools in the case study area. Support from this study's collaborative partner in gaining access to primary and secondary schools was central in overcoming this potential challenge of recruitment. My collaborative partner was an education charity in the case study area focused on issues connected to social justice and promoting global learning. The organisation had a positive reputation for engagement and collaborative working with schools and teachers across the case study area, and therefore was a trusted contact for knowledge of and access to potential participants. The two case study schools I worked with are described below. Each school and its staff have been assigned pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants as per the ethical requirements of this study.

With regard to recruiting a primary school case study, a list of schools in the geographical area which my collaborative partner had a professional connection to, was drawn up in September 2018. The criteria for selection was that schools would be receptive towards engaging with the project, based on the past professional experiences of staff from the partner organisation. Five schools were emailed information about the project, with a summary information poster attached (*see* appendix 1). The poster was focused on 'selling' the potential benefits of participation based on *Anne's* seasoned advice. One primary school expressed an interest and contacted me directly in October 2018. Deputy headteacher *Andrea*, at *Brook Valley Primary School* contacted me and arranged a meeting at the school soon after. Brook Valley Primary School was a smaller than average primary school, serving a predominantly disadvantaged catchment area along central measures of Pupil Premium and SEND. Of the Year 4 class I worked with for example, 13/30 students were identified as PP whilst 20/30 students were described as having English as an Additional Language (EAL) and/or SEND. The majority of students were of colour, and despite the school being connected to a Church of England foundation, the majority religion of the school was Islam. I reasoned *Brook Valley* was a suitable and feasible place in which to develop the research as it served a large range of students from different ethnic, class, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, many students families were described as 'recently arrived'.

I was first provided a tour of the school and had the opportunity to meet some students, once *Andrea* confirmed the school was interested in participating. *Andrea* was my gatekeeper for the research initially, although her interest in the research towards the end of my time was difficult to capture (Brindley and Bowker, 2013). I discussed with *Andrea* that History and Geography may be more feasible subject areas to situate the curriculum research around, based on what I believe those subjects can offer in terms of opportunities for critical learning, as well as being potentially richer areas from which to draw on students FoK. Moreover, these were subject areas that I as a researcher felt more capable to offer support on based on my academic background. *Andrea* suggested (and assumed) a *'young'* Year 4 teacher *Hannah* would be *'keen'* and interested in taking part, and was recently also given responsibility for updating the entire school's History and Geography resources. *Andrea* also discussed that the school wanted to run an after-school 'newsletter club' for the Year 4 and Year 5 students who were 'less sporty'. I offered to help run the club on the day I might be observing lessons. Part of my willingness to do so, was so I had the opportunity to get to know some of the Year 4 students better for the purposes of interviews, but to also provide something more immediate for the school's benefit in a show of gratitude.

Andrea suggested a date in October 2018 which she could personally provide cover for the Year 4 class so *Hannah* and I could have a planning meeting to develop the curriculum. *Hannah* was early into her teaching career and had been working at *Brook Valley* for less than a year when we first met. I felt some apprehension upon first meeting *Hannah* as she expressed quite clearly not to know what she *'had been asked to do'* – which highlighted that this was *Andrea's* decision and not one of *Hannah's* own volition. Throughout my time in the school, I witnessed moments of friction between *Andrea* and *Hannah*. It suggested there were underlying communication issues, in addition to *Hannah* feeling as though her time both in and out of school hours was often encroached upon by last minute management decisions. Regardless of this institutional-cultural constraint, *Hannah* and I established a research

relationship and I was confident she was happy to take part, as in her own words she enjoyed being *'creative'* and making *'exciting'* resources for her students.

3.1.2.2 Case Study Secondary: Moorside High School

With a secondary school, I anticipated greater difficulty in gaining participation given the nature of a subject based curriculum and the greater examination pressures secondary teachers face (Ball, 2003). Therefore, having an introduction via a trusted known person was important towards securing a research site. My criteria was to gain access to a school which had a reputation for being receptive towards research, based on my partner organisation's professional experience. Through the process, I did reject working with one secondary school before approaching *Moorside High School*. The first secondary school I gained access to was via community social worker, *Anne,* who discussed the research with a teacher colleague, *Alice. Alice* was keen to take part in the research as they were undertaking a review of the schools cross-curricular programme of Citizenship/Religious Education (R.E). The school also served a diverse catchment area. I met with *Alice* at the school in July 2018 to discuss the project. However, it soon became apparent that *Alice* had identified a different teacher, *Lucy*, to undertake the curriculum development work with me. *Lucy* was a newly qualified teacher, both new to the school and local area but also the cross-curricular Citizenship/R.E programme. *Lucy* spent her working week teaching Performing Arts. Communication with *Lucy* was limited and resource development responsibility fell solely to me, as opposed to being the collaborative process I had hoped for, given that I do not have the expertise of a secondary teacher.

Whilst I could have continued in this research relationship, I decided that mutual participation and collaboration was wholly necessary to this study. As a result, I approached an alternative teacher, *Paul* at a different secondary school in the geographical area. *Paul* was recommended to me by a parent governor who had an interest in my research. From this governor, I was informed of the schools 'typical' catchment area. Although the school was located in one of the wealthiest areas of the case study geographical area, there was some diversity in terms of the socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds of students, including students who are Looked After Care. Anecdotally, it was suggested by the governor that *Moorside High School* would benefit from the research as there could be a tendency for some staff and students to see the school as 'two communities' - White-British typically middle-class, and the other a broad 'BME'/Muslim group, as opposed to one collective. Moreover, the schools most recent Ofsted inspection report in 2013 noted that attainment outcomes for BME and Pupil Premium students were lower across the school. As such, I felt this could be an interesting research site in addition to *Paul's* professional experience.

Paul was a History teacher, with nearly 30 years' experience at Moorside High School. *Paul* was also known by my partner organisation because of his active engagement in matters related to social justice and the local community. It was suggested that support from myself and the opportunity to be part of this research would benefit *Paul* personally and professionally, as he was passionate about such work and sought to find allies. *Paul* and I met at his home and talked through the aims of the project, which he put forward to the head of the History department, *Mike*. I was invited by *Paul* to observe two Key Stage 3 History lessons and attend a departmental meeting to discuss the research with *Mike* and other departmental

colleagues. They were receptive to the project and confirmed their interest to participate and suggested updating the Key Stage 3 'Britain Since 1945-2000' unit would be most welcome. This was ideal given my research interest in understandings around Britishness and British values. The unit was timetabled to take place in the summer term for Year 8. *Paul* and I discussed which Year 8 class out of his three would be 'best' to work with practically to minimise disruption to *Paul's* other lessons as the school observed a strict policy of escorting visitors to and from the school entrance. The Year 8 class *Paul* selected was from his perspective a good representation of the diversity of the wider school population in terms of socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as students with additional needs. The Year 8 class received two hours of History lessons, every week and the unit was expected to be taught over 6 weeks.

3.1.3   Reflections on Research Relationships

Paul and *Hannah* were polar opposites in many ways - aside from their ethnicity, gender, political values and interests, teaching different levels of education - they were also at very different stages in their career. *Paul* had been a History teacher for 35 years, whereas *Hannah* was just into her second year as a newly qualified teacher. Although, spending time with *Hannah* and *Paul* throughout the research process, I observed how similarly large their workloads were and the impact wider, often 'hidden' responsibilities had on their workloads. Managing behavioural issues, speaking to parents, marking, being on duty around the school grounds, managing external visitors, booking rooms, resolving students' queries, meeting parents, preparing for internal observations, talking to students who approached them for a chat, attending staff meetings - were just some of their daily responsibilities. Both *Hannah* and *Paul* rarely expressed how busy they were, but it was clear their workloads impacted the time available to create, revise or research external resources to use as part of the curriculum.

> *Hannah: 'I have one afternoon a week (laughing)...that's the time you get allocated for planning...but I end up havin' to sort somethin' else out usually!'*

There were similarities in how *Paul* and *Hannah* preferred to work, such as their approach to curriculum development. Both *Hannah* and *Paul's* workloads influenced the way they subsequently invested their energy as curriculum resources were predominantly created and developed outside of working hours. *Paul* and *Hannah* expressed a preference to create their own resources and were reluctant to use any created by a 'third party' outside of the school.

> Paul: '*I mean I have used other materials and I love and **have** worked collaboratively and that's exciting...but often I like to look myself and find out, and sometimes I might do something one year and then change it completely the next, just to change my approach*'

> Hannah: '*I prefer to make my own, I like to use my own imagination from that and try to link it cross curricularly to different things...and see where I can get my social, moral and cultural things into it*'

In *Paul's* case, having enough time to create and adapt resources was the limiting factor, but also having the time to think through different, less traditional styles of teaching in History (such as the use of drama and music). *Paul* had ideas and the intention to adapt and diversify

the perspectives in the curriculum, however things did not materialise as often as he would have liked.

> Paul: '*Oh with all my good intentions! It's the time factor. Y'know, the time to properly think through, even to have a couple of hours to think "okay, what might this look like?" and then you [Aunam] just pulled something together that made it easy for me to just go in, read it and go "yeah, okay, this is what we talked about" and then in some cases you did some further research and then boom! Let's go with this!*'

Paul's passion for History and his regular search for diverse, lesser-known stories stemmed beyond the classroom. Therefore, despite *Paul's* workload and caring responsibilities outside of school, he was enthusiastic about working collaboratively on the project as it meant being able to translate ideas into teaching materials much quicker. Although I felt some pressure to justify my involvement with the school, things felt different in this setting as the Head of Department, *Mike*, would routinely check-in. *Paul* had the agency to decide whether he had the time to work with me, before consulting the wider Department. The driver for participating in the research for *Paul* was because of the opportunity to work collaboratively, discuss ideas and reflect at the end of each lesson - one of the central tenets of critical pedagogy.

In contrast, *Hannah* had less agency and less of a driver to participate initially in the research. The process for gaining participation involved speaking to the *Andrea*, the deputy headteacher who suggested *Hannah's* participation. In this sense, I was handed by *Andrea* to *Hannah*, who was anxious on our first meeting - perhaps because this seemed like another 'top-down' thing she had to do. The entire teaching staff at the primary school was white, and generally older. I sat awkwardly in the staff room a few times (before outrightly avoiding it) and observed other teachers during afternoon assemblies. I wondered if *Hannah* had been chosen by *Andrea* to work on a project about race and diversity, as perhaps the others were older, more 'established' and perhaps less likely to be receptive to a change in practice or a professional development opportunity.

I reflected further on this contrast in participation months later. Notes in my research diary illustrated *Hannah's* anxiety and frustration with being asked or told to do things she felt she was perhaps not consulted enough on. For example, one afternoon *Andrea* as deputy head enters the classroom to tell *Hannah* about a Maths lesson observation the following day. Whilst *Andrea* insists this is a reminder and something *Hannah* need not worry about - *Hannah* is visibly annoyed and feels this is news to her. The whole exchange was uncomfortable as students looked on and I even looked down at my shoes when *Andrea* turned towards me. Regardless of the truth of the matter, this was one example of many I observed whereby *Hannah* was upset at further encroachments on her time that were often 'dropped' on her at short notice. I too soon felt encroached upon by *Andrea* who expected me to not only volunteer my time to run the after-school newsletter club (which I was happy to), but to almost feel guilty for not running it one week whilst I was away at a conference, repeatedly saying some following weeks later *'y'know, cause the children missed one.'*

Having enough time and space were key barriers in terms of reflecting and developing the curriculum from a more critical perspective. Heavy workloads with new tasks cropping up each day meant trying to achieve a work-life balance was difficult. Therefore, without either a personal, values led driver (*Paul*), or even a top-down driver (*Hannah*), the impetus to do this

kind of reflective curriculum and pedagogical work would have been very limited. Even where this work was supported by senior leadership, time was still an issue. For example, *Hannah* had to factor in absences she had recently taken from illness. This crept into the time that was originally allocated to us by senior leadership for the curriculum planning as it was now deemed as *'not needed.'* As a result, I felt added pressure in having to 'justify' what I was trying to do with the school. I felt that as my work with the primary school did not necessarily translate into obvious literacy or numeracy gains, I was conscious that the status and therefore *Hannah's* involvement in the research process, would be perceived of lesser value.

3.1.4 Participatory (and Action) Research

Participatory research relates to how research is planned and conducted (Berghold and Thomas, 2012). In educational research, participatory or action research can take on different forms but in principle it differs from solely critical theory driven inquiries because it is focused on 'putting ideas into action...not only talking about them' (McNiff, 2013). One such form of participatory or action research is teachers-as-researchers; teachers leading inquiries as experts into their own classrooms and/or self-evaluating as part of their own personal and professional development (McNiff and Whitehead, 2005). Teachers would first identify an issue, then construct, implement and evaluate an intervention. Another form can be students-as-researchers; students are trained to contribute towards or co-lead a research inquiry (Berry, 1998; Kellet et al., 2004: Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 2006). This can also be described as 'second person' action research whereby an outside researcher leads a collaborative inquiry with students/and or teachers (McNiff, 2013, p.55). It is important to note that action research does not inherently mean it is collaborative, whereas participatory research is more likely to (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). Although, across these different forms of research is a common aim of addressing unjust structural issues with a commitment to enacting a change in practice through action and reflection or *praxis* (Berghold and Thomas, 2012). Freire (1996) argued that the continual reflection of educational professionals on their pedagogy but also on wider social inequalities in society, was a central part in developing students' critical literacy and participation.

With all participatory forms of research, dialogue and ensuring voice to participants is a key principle in addressing issues around power and representation. Since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1990), there has been a growing trend in educational research and schools to elicit 'student voice' (Whitty, 2007). Article 12 of the Convention states that children have a right to expression and the right to make decisions on issues that affect them, which necessarily includes their education (United Nations, 1990). However, there is a risk of a neoliberal co-option of student voice which risks genuine participation and power sharing, through illusory participation (Thomas-Hughes, 2018). Student 'voice' is noted to have been used in performative or opportunistic ways for the personalisation of teaching and learning, or for school improvement, as opposed to upholding a rights-based agenda or developing a sense of citizenship in schools (Fielding, 2004; Thomson and Gunter, 2006; Whitty, 2007). Thomson and Gunter (2006) note three ways in which student participation is solicited in schools which include: 'consulting' students for their perspectives, students helping evaluate the school, or students acting as researchers in which they act as more than sources of data but as active participants.

This study uses participatory research approaches in relation to the curriculum work: implementation (action) and evaluation (reflection), with teachers as co-collaborators. However, it also invites students to become producers of knowledge – although the amount and extent to which students could produce knowledge varied across the secondary and primary school. However, it should be noted that I was not asked to come into schools and do this work. Consequently, I would describe this research as *participatory* - as opposed to participatory action research. Although this study was focused on collaborating with teachers to enact a change in the school curriculum, I had already identified the research problem, research questions and had chosen the theoretical framework guiding the study. What *does* make this study participatory however, is the role of students acting as researchers and providing feedback on the new curriculum units. Students were tasked in both schools to carry out some form of research inquiry into their funds of knowledge and present this knowledge for use in the classroom (Moll et al., 1992; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998). This meant students were engaged in research and were active in producing knowledge for the classroom and for their peers, and also for the benefit of this research study (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008).

This means that teachers, students and myself were working together to co-produce knowledge (Kemmis et al., 2014), although the amount of 'participation' each stakeholder had in the research varied depending on their individual desire to participate (i.e. the extent to which some students conducted more detailed research) and circumstances. Given the requirements for teachers to cover the national curriculum and the additional roles and responsibilities they incurred (e.g. pastoral support, assessments), this meant that student input in any pre-curriculum planning was not feasible within the time constraints of the study. As such, the curriculum intervention was designed by myself and the teacher. We decided what would be feasible within the constraints of time, workloads and student capabilities, but also on our mutual desire to ensure students were still accessing 'core' curriculum knowledge (Llopart et al., 2018).

Regardless, the central aim of the curriculum planning was to create a pedagogical space in the curriculum for students, in which their social knowledge could be 'activated' and brought into the classroom (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011), as a challenge to standard curricula practice and as a way of presenting to students an understanding of different socio-cultural backgrounds as 'interrelated' in terms of knowledge and value (Banks, 2009, p.314). FoK offers a framework for informing student-focused curricular and pedagogical approaches to knowledge production (Moll et al., 1992; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1995). This approach to seeks to challenge what and whose knowledge is represented within the 'official' structure of the school curriculum. Therefore I applied FoK as a practical approach to redistributing and challenging approaches to diversity in curricular practice and the production of knowledge, by drawing on students more 'everyday' sources of knowledge as a scaffold for more conceptual learning (Amanti, 2005). However, I did not adopt the teacher-researcher approach of conducting home visits to students households, as developed by Moll et al's (1992) original research.

This participatory approach meant developing a relationship with teachers based on trust, dialogue and shared decision-making was important. This was not just for the curriculum development work but also in relation to the questions students were asked through surveys, interviews and as part of wider classroom activities (Sigurdardottir and Puroila, 2018). Whilst

this study fostered opportunities for teacher collaborators to 'step-back' and 'reflect', the extent of this was influenced by the constraints of the system such as time, but also the knowledge of individual teachers (Cain and Harris, 2013). Open dialogue was an important aspect of this research as collaboration means being pragmatic and responsive to the views of others, and ensuring that my 'academic' perspective did not prevail as the 'better way of doing things'. Mine and the teachers' skills were different - one was not superior to the other and neither could it be characterised by a dichotomy of practical minded (teacher) and academic minded (researcher) perspectives. In fact, *Paul* was often more research focused and theoretically minded than I, and *Hannah* was often less concerned by any performance pressures which I as the outsider felt more conscious of appearing to 'meet' at times.

3.2   Methods

Interpretivist inquiries offer the flexibility to be pragmatically driven through multiple qualitative approaches. They can bring together numerous 'lines of enquiry' to understand the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the social world and lived experience (Mason, 2011, p.77). In a school context for example, this complexity can be seen in the implicit or 'hidden' values embedded in curriculum policy, but also how policies may be interpreted or mediated by teachers, and how this is experienced by students in practice. Moreover, research informed by CRT is about using multiple strategies in the classroom to challenge mainstream discourses and legitimise the experiences of students' lives (Alemán and Gaytán, 2017). There is no one method in CRT (Hylton, 2012), except for a broader goal of challenging inequality and hegemonic narratives within different aspects of education (Yosso, 2002). In this section, I describe the methods that were used for each case study school and why. The process of data collection for each case study school is outlined in figure 2 below.
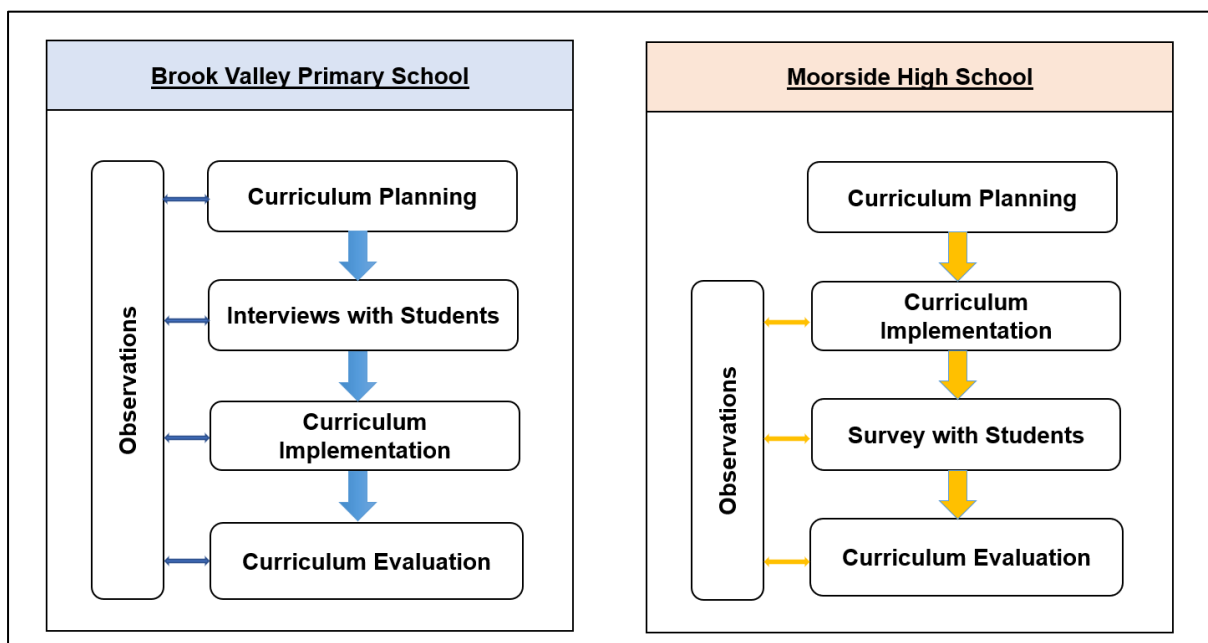

Figure 2: Diagram explaining data collection process across case study schools

As figure 2 illustrates, the methods adopted for both schools were relatively similar as they were guided by the same procedural aims in terms of collaborative curriculum development and some form of evaluation of it. However, there were some differences in the process of how this was ultimately achieved, given the contrasting contexts, resources, and institutional constraints experienced in the case study schools. For example, the bulk of observations that could be done with the Year 8 class at *Moorside High School* had to be during the implementation of the unit itself, meaning there was less time overall for me to get to know students beforehand compared to my experience at *Brook Valley Primary School*. Therefore, as it was practically more challenging to conduct interviews with students at the high school and the only time in which to do this may have been during the curriculum teaching itself, a survey was adopted in place of interviews. I anticipated potential barriers from the outset when designing this research and ensured there was some space to be flexible and pragmatic during data collection. This meant I could respond to the classroom dynamic and context in which I found myself, which could only have been known once immersed in the field.

The data collection period for the entire study (excluding the process of gaining access), took place over a nine-month period, November 2018 – August 2019. The primary school fieldwork was conducted first in November 2018, with the curriculum implementation work occurring between February – March 2019. Data collection in the secondary school followed after, with general school observations first occurring in April 2019, and the curriculum work occurring between June – July 2019. Throughout the process of collecting data, I kept a research diary in which I regularly recorded reflections from my fieldwork experiences (Silverman, 2013). This helped me take account of decisions I made throughout the research process but also helped to expand and contextualise wider themes drawn from the initial data analysis (Richards, 2014).

3.2.1   Curriculum Planning and Development

The curriculum development activities were informed by critical pedagogy and CRT, in the attempt to create pedagogical spaces within the curriculum for students to engage in the production of knowledge, and/or by myself and the teacher creating curricula content which would allow students to become conscious of knowledge/histories 'from below' which may be lesser known or valued by wider society. Cultivating opportunities for student agency was an important aspect of the approach, which is a key principle of critical pedagogy scholarship (Freire, 1996; Berry, 1998; McLaren, 1995). By drawing on the principles of FoK and CCW approaches (which align to critical pedagogy), the aim was to develop a curriculum unit that could engage students in the production of knowledge to deepen/extend their perceptions of what academic knowledge is (Rodriguez, 2013). In addition, the aim was to focus less on cultural 'difference' or group essentialism, but to connect academic knowledge to students lives and sociocultural contexts to make the experience of learning more meaningful.

3.2.1.1 Brook Valley Primary School

Hannah and I had two meetings to plan the curriculum unit - four hours in total. At the first meeting *Hannah* talked through the Geography and History topics for the Year 4 spring term. We considered which curriculum topic could help us better 'activate' the students' funds of

knowledge (Rios-Augillar et al., 2011) but also ensure students were able to cover the 'core' aims of the curriculum content and skills. A Geography unit entitled *'River Deep, Mountain High'* was selected as *Hannah* suggested that since the students are from, or their families are from different places across the world, this could present a richer opportunity to bring in knowledge drawn from student's socio-cultural worlds. Moreover, *Hannah* noted that many of the students rarely left the walls of their homes (with many living in high rise council housing adjacent to the school), and so the idea of having a global theme based on places across the world would be particularly exciting for them. We developed specific learning objectives from the curriculum guidance which was centred on students being able to define and provide examples of different physical and human features. We also created a broader learning objective around understanding socio-cultural diversity across the study of Geography to align with the inquiry/FoK aspect of the unit.

Students had one afternoon of Geography per week. In terms of planning, we decided to spend four lessons (four weeks) worth of teaching on physical and human features, and five lessons (five weeks) focusing on the inquiry aspect of the unit centred on students researching and presenting information on their chosen place. A research booklet was collaboratively produced by myself and *Hannah* containing a checklist of different features students must include as part of their research (physical and human features), and ideas for additional information they may wish to find out, as well as providing guided research questions the students could ask people in their household. Due to the nature of the booklet design by *Hannah,* it is not ethically appropriate to provide a copy of this in the appendix as this would lead the school to be identifiable. However, research booklets contained guided questions such as 'what places are my family connected to?', 'what is the landscape like?', 'what grows in this area?', 'what significant people are from here?'. Students were asked to complete their research booklets or 'fact-find' information by speaking to people in their household and wider networks and were encouraged to bring into school any objects to help them. Encouraging students to pose questions to others throughout the unit was important because as Berry (1998, p.30) argues, 'as soon as children stop asking questions, they are no longer agents of their own learning or action.'

In practice, the students' 'fact-finding' research was translated by them into various forms of work (e.g. pieces of art, poetry, 'fact-files', biographies, noted landmarks, creative writing pieces, recipes, maps), to be displayed onto an A1 sized 'mood-board' which *Hannah* suggested would be a useful method to encourage students to develop their creativity, organisational and decision-making skills. Moreover, *Hannah* felt the visual impact of these boards would be great resources for a classroom display after the unit had finished. *Hannah* also developed a plan for an 'open-afternoon' in which each student could have a 'research stall' in the assembly hall on the final lesson of the unit. At these stalls, students could display their work to others in the class and the parents of students. Letters were sent home to parents/guardians encouraging them to attend and see the work students had produced. Students were encouraged to bring in objects or food they wanted to help with their stall. Whilst I was initially hesitant about the idea of food based on my own negative experiences tied to superficial diversity practices and food (Troyna, 1985), *Hannah* insisted that the students were all *'obsessed'* with food. Which they were.

Based on *Hannah's* idea of the open-afternoon and to ensure students recognised each other as holders of knowledge, I then developed 'fact-finding' booklets for the open afternoon, which

had a series of boxes for writing information or facts, obtained from others in the class which was designed to resemble a passport (Bernal, 2002). Whilst holding these booklets, it was planned that students would walk around and speak to their peers at the open-afternoon and collect information from each other and record any further questions they had (figure 3 illustrates a fact one student quizzed me about). The aim was to promote a sense of collaborative learning amongst students, as opposed to competitiveness, as well as facilitating greater feelings of confidence amongst students of their capabilities (Freire, 1996; Giroux, 2010; Rodriguez, 2013).

The critical inquiry component of this exercise was the active learning each student would be doing by engaging with their peers as the 'expert' who had been responsible for conducting the research by using sources of knowledge drawn from outside 'traditional' school knowledge. As Kincheloe and Steinbeck (1998) note, all too often students-as-researcher models of inquiry often mean they are asked to look at 'official' sources. The authors argue that a more critical and emancipatory approach would be to allow students not only to develop an experience of doing research, but to also let them determine how to source, organise and arrange their research findings and make decisions about what information to include/exclude (Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 1998, p.18)

The second planning meeting with *Hannah* was originally planned to be a full day of researching and making our own 'mood-boards' as an example and guide to help students understand what the research would be in preparation for. Cover had been pre-planned by deputy headteacher, *Andrea*, however on arrival to the school, *Hannah* informed me that the school headteacher now felt a full working day was necessary. *Hannah* was disgruntled but felt she could not make a strong case for more time as she noted her recent absences from work due to illness. *Hannah* and I did not finish our boards in the two hours we had and were completed outside of working hours.

Hannah and I inquired into our household knowledge, remembering stories we were told when we were younger. Mine represented the Punjab province in Pakistan whereas *Hannah's* was based on Scunthorpe, England. I initially suggested I could research Manchester (as my place of birth) however *Hannah* decided that an 'international' place would be better in terms of engaging the imagination of students who may feel a connection to somewhere different. Furthermore, this would mean whilst all students had exposure to two different notions of, in *Hannah's* words *'where we come from'*. Although we were both instrumental in terms of drawing in work from other parts of the curriculum – in my case I included information on Malala Yousafzai who they would later cover the story of for International Women's Day, whereas *Hannah* included information on Victorian history. The boards we each developed are represented in figure 4.
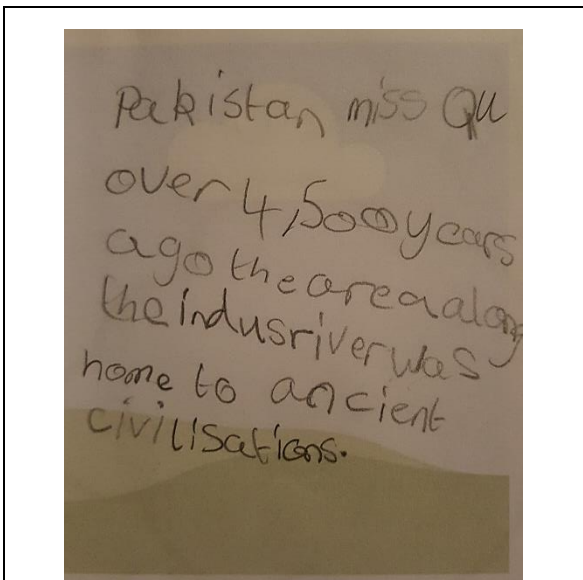
Fig 3: Example of student's 'fact-finding'
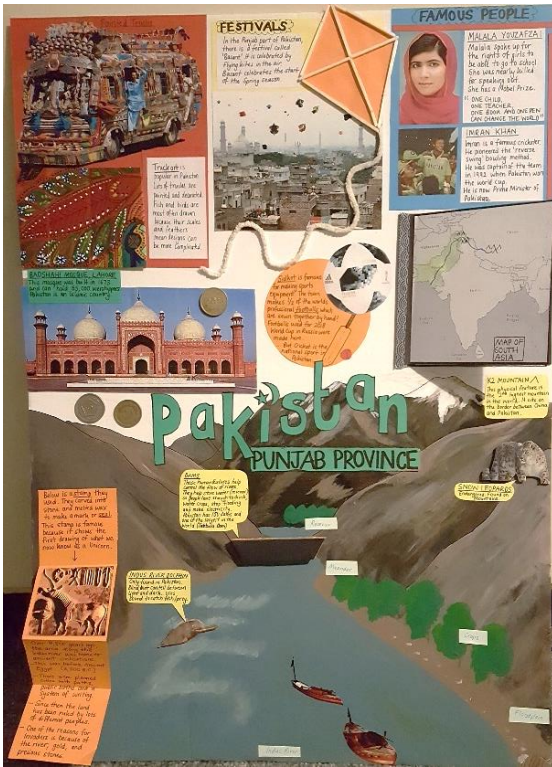
Fig 4: Mood boards created during curriculum development (Left: Aunam; Right: Hannah)

3.2.1.2 Moorside High School

Paul and I spent considerably more time developing the curriculum, over four planning meetings. *Paul* and I knew the History unit for Year 8 we were expecting to work on was entitled 'Britain Since 1945-2000' and drawn from the national curriculum for KS3 History topic: *'challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day.'* The unit would last 6 weeks (11-12 lessons) over the summer term. In terms of developing the main scheme of knowledge for the unit, we each developed a long-list of topics, figures and events across the period and discussed our similarities and differences, and where we could establish some continuity from the unit to other units of study in History. We brainstormed many ideas, but there was a limit to what ground *Paul* and I could feasibly cover in-depth with the secondary unit. For example, we discussed content around Britain's relationship with Northern Ireland, new industries, the phrase Harold Macmillan used: '*we've never had it so good'*, 'Winds of Change', aspects of the Cold War, Suez Crisis, and pop culture. In the end, we decided to cover:

- What makes a significant story in History? Developing a chronological overview of the period
- Post-war Britain and the Welfare State
- Migration
- The British Empire
- Democracy and Protest (with a focus on the Miners' Strikes of 1984-85) *(see appendix 2 for the initial overview of the unit)*

We decided having a thematic thread running through a range of topics was more important than covering a chronology of events across the period, although some chronology is useful. For example, we reasoned that migration in the post-war period was partly a product of Empire and the post-war reconstruction of Britain. In addition, students also had covered some aspects of the British Empire in India in the 19th Century and would therefore have some familiarity with the topic in which to build on. Moreover, covering the topic of migration meant we could also take advantage of the award winning *'Our Migration Story: The Making of Britain'* website of resources funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and developed by the Runnymede Trust, for a group work activity. Furthermore, we felt these were topics that would allow us to represent a variety of different perspectives to students, whilst representing the histories of groups who have been historically marginalised on account of class, race and gender.

Given the wider intention to explore the British value of 'Democracy' specifically with students, our aim was to also represent different historical events in British history, such as the Grunwick Strike and the Miners Strikes, reflecting on the intersecting issues of class, race and gender (Bhopal, 2018). We discussed that the Miners Strikes could be a useful lens through which we could potentially interrogate the alleged British value of Democracy. Furthermore, it represents some social history of working-class communities in Britain, whilst also being of social and political relevance to the case study area. Overall, we hoped to encourage students to consider and reflect on why some stories or events are more known to them or 'significant' than others as part of 'British history'.

Throughout the planning, *Paul* and I were also keen to incorporate broader learning objectives related to the discipline of History that would also be useful for students wishing to study History in Year 9/GCSE level. These History specific skills included: analysing the strengths/weaknesses of sources, identifying what sources could be used to find out what information and encouraging students to question the information they are presented with. Moreover, guidance from the national History curriculum states that students should *'understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.'* (DfE, 2013). *Mike,* the departmental head, spoke of his frustration in teaching GCSE History students who were often silent when it came to answering questions around how to analyse sources. *Mike* was therefore pleased at our decision to expose students to source analysis earlier on in Key Stage 3.

Next, *Paul* and I discussed how to incorporate students funds of knowledge and engage them in a small piece of historical research. *Paul* suggested the idea of a 'significant story' which would involve carrying out a small piece of research linked to Britain in the period 1945-2000, which could be based on the area they live in or stories from their household or people in their community. This would act as the end of unit assessment in which students would be encouraged to share what they have researched with the rest of the class. This was also to highlight to students that there is no fixed narrative of British history either and widen their understanding of what constitutes as a source in the study of History. Based on *Paul's* limited free time during the week, I initially spent more time developing resources such as the PowerPoint, handouts and exercise sheets, based on the themes and framework we had agreed upon. I would develop a loose framework and objectives for each lesson and *Paul* and

I would discuss/amend this at each subsequent meeting, before then developing classroom tasks for each lesson based on a combination of *Paul's* teaching experience and my ideas. Once the materials were developed and we had a loose framework, it was anticipated that *Paul* would continually adjust and make additions as the teaching of the unit progressed, lesson-by-lesson (which was the case).

3.2.2   Classroom Observations

The purpose of classroom observations was to help develop an understanding of each school setting, its context and the students in the class. I kept a continuous log of observations and reflections throughout my fieldwork visits to both schools, focusing on the most significant aspects of the case study and the research questions (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013). I developed a loose framework in which to focus my observations, but also remained flexible enough to capture new lines of potential enquiry.

My framework included noting:
- students' understandings of self-identity, national identity and wider perceptions of the world and Britain's place within it
- teacher/students' questions and responses (Brown and Wragg, 2001)
- students drawing on their funds of knowledge: under what circumstances and how.

Observations were conducted for two reasons. The first reason was based around the need to develop research relationships with participants and be visible (Thomson and Hall, 2017). For the purposes of undertaking participatory research work in schools and later interviewing young children about their sense of identity, developing a good rapport and familiarity was something both I and my teacher collaborators agreed would be necessary. Thomson and Hall (2017) note the benefits of being 'visible' more generally in school-based research. If a researcher spends a substantial amount of time around the school regularly, students and teachers may be more likely to provide answers that are less about what they believe the researcher wants to hear. From an ethical point of view, it is also important to have some familiarity with students to have a better sense of when they may be feeling uncomfortable or upset, and for me to develop a relationship of trust before interviewing (BERA, 2018). Developing familiarity with students was also necessary to help minimise the risk of appearing intrusive or coercing students to take part in an activity/answer questions. However, I also maintained some distance from being seen as a member of staff. This meant I did not discipline a student, unless they were at risk of harming themselves or others, and I often deferred back to their teacher if they asked me a question involving a decision that did not relate to checking knowledge or understanding. Moreover, regular observations within the case study classes were to ensure a more accurate picture of student's behaviours as they may 'act-up' with a new observer around or give less trustworthy responses to any questions asked (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

The second reason for conducting observations was to help develop research relationships with teacher collaborators. Developing a good working relationship with teachers was important for the curriculum development and implementation phases as teachers were being asked to contribute their time and energy. Moreover, myself and the teachers had to discuss ideas, plan and make decisions collaboratively, which necessitated a friendly relationship

based on good communication. Classroom based observations also allowed me to gain a more realistic understanding into learning and teaching in practice and develop some familiarity with my teacher collaborators way of doing things. This was important as I was new to both teaching contexts (Key stage 2 and 3), having previously only worked with older students in further education. Therefore, conducting observations gave me time to observe practical challenges around the curriculum and the school context first-hand.

In the primary school, I observed the Year 4 class for a total of 12 hours, prior to the curriculum implementation, which included observing their Literacy, Geography and Science lessons. This was then followed by three lessons covering core content for the 'River Deep Mountain High,' unit, followed by the inquiry work and the open afternoon which amounted to a further 23 hours. For the secondary school, there were structural issues around the length of time I could observe the class. I observed the class *Paul* had selected for one hour, one week prior to curriculum implementation, and then throughout the 11 lessons of the unit itself. This was a total observation time of 12 hours. The more rigid nature of gaining physical access as a visitor to the secondary school itself (e.g. needing to be collected and escorted throughout the building), *Paul's* back-to-back teaching timetable and the potential disruption this posed to other classes, plus and the structure of the secondary school day divided by subjects, made extended observations of students in the Year 8 class much more challenging to conduct and this will be reflected in the depth of data I have on students perspectives.
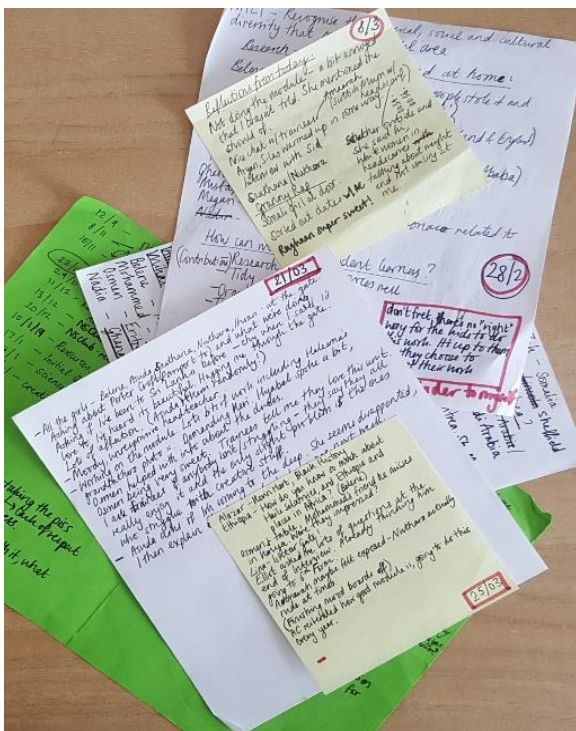
Fig 5: Messy process of research

The messy process of recording notes as a school-based researcher is represented in *figure 5*. These scraps of notes acted as an aide memoir which I would write immediately after the lesson ended, before writing a more detailed account later on as part of my research diary. Often during lessons in both schools, it was not possible to immediately record and make notes on my observations. The nature of being present in the class involved moving around the classroom and supporting different students.

Particularly in the primary school, students were often quite observant of what I was doing in the classroom, and so I made a conscious effort not to appear like I was assessing them and writing specifically about them. As Thomas-Hughes (2018) argues, the research process is complex and messy and as social researchers we need to embrace this 'mess'.

3.2.3 Interviews and Student Surveys

In the primary school, I conducted interviews with six students, including one pilot interview, which I introduce more fully at the start of <u>Chapter 4.</u> I also developed a pre-curriculum unit

survey for students to complete to identify what they knew already about physical and human features (if anything), what places or topics they wanted to know more about the start of the unit, and how well they felt they knew their peers in the class. The intention behind conducting this survey, was to see how this might compare with responses from students in the interviews, and after the curriculum inquiry had finished. The purpose of interviewing however, was to first gain insight into students' understanding of British values and British citizenship as well as students' perspectives on the curriculum in the primary school.

Before entering the field, I had decided to conduct focus group interviews. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2000) argue focus groups may help in encouraging less confident students to speak. However, based on my observations of students in the primary school during group work, paired activities, and the dynamics of the more dominant characters in the classroom, I noticed students talking over each other and thus silencing others in the class. Student voices are classed, raced and gendered, and there is a risk of reinforcing those hierarchies between students in a group interview situation (Whitty and Wisby, 2007). As a result, I chose to conduct individual interviews with students in the primary school. Students were selected based on my observations and conversations with students themselves, as well as guidance from their teacher *Hannah*. Interview questions were also reviewed and adjusted in discussion with *Hannah.* I sought to ensure a diverse representation of student backgrounds (ethnicity, race, religion, gender, assumed 'ability') were incorporated, although because of the nature of articulating verbal responses, *Hannah* did suggest the 10 students labelled as the 'lowers' would have been difficult to interview and were therefore discounted.

The question guide was piloted with a Year 4 student from the class to ensure the appropriateness of the language and the relevance of the questions. After conducting the pilot interview, I transcribed the interview and reflected on the process. From the pilot experience, I concluded that the interview was too long, leading the student to feel slightly agitated/tired by the end. As a result, I shortened the number of questions and decided more visual tools or a mediating artefact may be helpful in unpicking abstract notions of Britishness for young participants (Baumfield et al., 2013). My pilot interviewee, *Ruvin,* noted my skin colour as a marker of 'not being British' so I decided to pursue such racialised notions of Britishness further *(see [section 4.4](#) for further discussion of the interview).* As such, I produced a small image of 16 faces of British people representing different ethnicities. I used this as a tool to discuss their perceptions of Britishness. During interviews with students, I focused more on how they understood their own identity and how notions of 'Britishness' may be present within that, but also how they perceived and positioned *my* identity, based on my pilot interview experience with *Ruvin.* Visual tools offer flexibility to suit a range of young people (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010), and I felt they could elicit talk in a way that is not constrained by the ability to speak alone (Mason, 2002). I also had five cards with one of the five British values written on them. I used these as a tool to help keep students reminded of the task but also getting them to select and order which values they least understood or which ones they understood the most. The use of image elicitation offered some flexibility of approach to draw out students perspectives (Bagnoli, 2009).

In contrast to the primary school, interviews were not feasible to conduct in the secondary school. Therefore, teasing out perceptions of Britishness was very limited in comparison. With the secondary school, although a focus group or individual interviews with students was desirable, it was not possible to conduct them in the time available with the school. *Paul* had

several commitments outside of school as well as a full teaching timetable which meant having to rely on *Paul* to organise the process of gaining consent from parents and students, and schedule them, was becoming a challenge. This was in addition to the schools safeguarding policy which necessitated a member of staff to escort me to the interview room *and* oversee the interviews. In addition, interviews were only possible to arrange during the students' designated History lesson - meaning this would have impacted my ability to observe the implementation of the unit, which I felt was more important to this study.

Furthermore, the time I had to get to know any of the students was much more limited than the primary school. In this sense interviewing students, combined with me being a continuous, observing presence in the classroom before, during and after such an interview might take place, seemed like an encroachment on students space. As an alternative, *Paul* and I collaboratively produced a questionnaire survey (*see* appendix 3) for all students in the class to complete in the penultimate lesson. The survey combined questions that would help evaluate the unit but also questions around British values and their understanding of British History more broadly. Questions contained a mix of short/long responses and open/closed questions to ensure students responded to a range of questions put forward.

3.2.4 Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation

In the primary school, students spent three lessons learning content about different types of physical features e.g., rivers, mountains, and human produced features. This was then followed by a lesson introducing the research inquiry through a presentation of mine and Hannah's 'mood-boards' to the class. Students were then provided with imitation boarding passes encouraging them to brainstorm their place of research interest and providing them with research booklets to work on during the half-term holiday. The students then spent seven lessons producing content for their boards (e.g., maps, artwork, stories) and one entire school morning to complete their boards, ready to present at the open-afternoon that day as part of their 'fact-finding' mission. A total of 29 students produced a mood board, completed an evaluation survey and filled out their 'passport' style research booklets.

In the secondary school, students spent 11 lessons (over six weeks) working through the teacher and researcher generated content of the 'Britain Since 1945-2000' unit. Students were informed from the first lesson and periodically each week about their end of unit task researching a 'significant story.' The final lesson of the unit comprised of student-led presentations of their 'significant story' research with each student in attendance sharing what they had researched and some presenting objects from home, with *Paul* and I asking additional questions and providing feedback. Each student was asked to share their research via the school's online submission portal for homework in addition. A total of 29 students participated in the final session and presented their significant story to the class.

With regard to the evaluation of the curriculum, there were three different aspects, which included:
- Students providing feedback on the unit
- Teacher collaborators reflecting on the process
- My examination of the work students produced and discussions I recorded in my research diary.

Student Evaluation

For the primary school, a short post-unit questionnaire (see appendix 4) was developed by *Hannah* and myself and conducted with students the next morning after the open afternoon. *Hannah* and I explained and talked through each question to ensure students understood what was being asked. The purpose of this was to gain a snapshot into what students had learnt, what they enjoyed the most/least about the research process, what they learnt from their peers and families, and what improvements they would suggest if they were to study this unit again. This was followed by a general class discussion in which some students offered their opinions to the whole class, which I noted in my research diary. Students were also encouraged to note any additional feedback or comments on the back of their questionnaires, of which 12 students did.

For the secondary school, the survey questionnaire that was used in place of student interviews, formed part of the curriculum evaluation also. Questions related to the curriculum included: identifying what events/issues/facts most interested and surprised them, what topics they felt might have been left out of the unit, what questions they have since studying this unit, and a table of nine statements asking them to compare their levels of confidence from the start and the end of the unit in relation to nine different skills/competencies e.g. questioning sources, contributing to group work, making a judgement about an issue/event, questioning facts, writing an extended answer, participating in class discussions.

Teacher Evaluation

One semi-structured interview was conducted with each of my teacher collaborators as part of an evaluation of the curriculum unit. The purpose of interviewing teachers was to gain insight into any challenges around the process of curriculum development more broadly and also identify what opportunities they think there might be in the curriculum for further change. Interviews also sought to gain their professional and personal perspectives on British values as an educational concept. Interviews took place 2-3 weeks following the end of the curriculum implementation to provide teachers with some reflective space to consider what worked well and what would need improving. The opportunity to reflect and 'step-back' (praxis) is a key part of any research seeking a change in practice (McNiff, 2013). Initially I had planned for interviews with teachers to take place before the curriculum development phase as well as the end. However, the time constraints in establishing a research relationship with a school made earlier interviews a challenge. For example, *Hannah's* clear sense of frustration at additional work after-school (which would be the only feasible time to conduct an interview) would have made for a less inviting or receptive interview context. As such, I reasoned that conducting an interview at the end of the unit could be a richer opportunity to debrief and mutually reflect on the outcomes of the unit and add closure to our research relationship in a formal capacity.

With conducting semi-structured interviews, I sought to provide a 'flexible' space allowing teachers to prioritise the issues that mattered and concerned them the most (Mason, 2002, p.62). Semi-structured interviews were also a way to allow teachers to help forge their own story on the process of the research and our aims (Fontana and Frey, 2000), whilst also providing space for teachers to talk about the points of interest to them. I was keen to let the teachers (as the collaborators) lead the interview as much as possible and developed a loose interview guide based on the numerous conversations we had and the issues we raised to each other throughout the research process. I had spent many hours working with and chatting

more generally to both teachers over the course of the fieldwork. Question guides for each teacher were different and varied in scope (*see* appendix 5 for an example interview guide). Whilst this means I was not able to pilot the interview as the questions were unique to the curriculum development journey we had been on, this should not be seen as a limitation, as most of the questions were developed out of being immersed in their working environment and in *Paul's* case – even his family home.

Researcher Evaluation
For both case study schools, my approach to evaluating the process, content and outcomes of the curriculum unit, was to examine the work students produced at the end of the unit, and reflect on my observations throughout the research process. For the primary school, this consisted of examining and photographing each students 'mood-boards' and looking at the facts and questions they had recorded in their passport booklets at the open afternoon (in addition to the post-survey already described as part of the student evaluation). In addition, I also purposively selected nine students at the open afternoon and asked them a few open questions about what they had chosen to represent on their boards, such as: Where did you get this information from? Why did you choose to include this information? Have you learnt anything new that has surprised you? How do you feel about the work you've done? How much do you think you have learnt about yourself/your family? I noted these responses in my research diary.

For the secondary school, I purposively selected eight students from the class, with guidance from *Paul*, to examine the work of. Each student had a folder and exercise book which I collected at the end of the unit to read through. I sought to identify what worked well in terms of student understanding across a range of different abilities and identify what aspects of teaching or instruction could be improved. In addition to this, I also had a copy of each of the students 'significant story' work to reflect on.

3.3   Data Analysis

Analysis pervaded all areas and phases of the research, in order to adjust and develop lines of questioning and to gain a sense of emerging themes that may need further consideration that originally planned (Emerson et al., 2011, p.173). There was an on-going iteration between the different types of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003). For instance, although the majority of the curriculum work had been planned and mapped out by myself and the teachers, we routinely discussed and tweaked elements of the teaching activities based on our observations. When analysing the different sources of data collected, I did not search for anything in particular, but started by open coding and asking questions around the data. I then engaged in more focused coding to craft a story by moving between the events that occurred in the field and comparing this against issues highlighted in existing research in a loop-like pattern (Emerson et al., 2011). The different sources of data I drew on as part of my analysis included: reflections from my research diary, interview transcripts from teachers and students, pre- and post-curriculum surveys with the primary students, surveys with the secondary students, classroom observations, and a review of the classwork produced by students in both schools.

Transcription and Interview Data

All interview data was audio recorded and transcribed by myself. After each interview I made brief notes on my immediate reflections of the interview, for example - the manner and body language of the participant, my thoughts on questions they found difficult to answer and, what questions they asked me before and after the official recording. I incorporated these points into my analysis. With each transcript, I typed out what I and the participant said but also included any long pauses, stutters, changes in pitch and any gestures that were made as these are also important parts of any dialogue (*see* appendix 6 for an example). Teacher participants were encouraged to check through and discuss their transcript with me to ensure my representation of the interview was trustworthy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, neither *Hannah* nor *Paul* followed-up on this, which led me to assume that they would have some confidence in my representation of the conversation.

I analysed interview data using a thematic approach, which seeks to collate and condense rich data into specific codes, then bring this together under wider themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I read through each transcript and highlighted any important points raised. I then re-read and coded each emergent finding. I then grouped these emerging 'codes' into wider themes. Themes were developed iteratively through a review of the existing literature and the extent to which my findings were similar or different. I also contextualised the interview data by comparing each interview against one another to identify wider, traversing themes.

Survey Analysis

Surveys predominantly used open-ended questions to which the responses were largely qualitative. There were some questions however which asked students to rank how they felt about something. The number of respondents in both the primary and the secondary school was 29 however, so the purpose of counting (e.g. the top three skills students in secondary school felt the greatest confidence in), was not in an attempt to justify any findings – but to help identify what had worked well during that curriculum experience, and what areas could benefit from improvement in that context, as well as identifying general themes. The surveys in the secondary school were anonymised as we believed students would be likely to provide more genuine answers, and also ensure it was not perceived by them as a 'test'. However, the surveys used in the primary school were named, which helped me contextualise and cross-check the interviews I had done with the six students, but to also compare and contrast each student's journey from the start of the unit, to the end, in order to build a narrative and story around the research.

Analysis of Curriculum Work

Firstly, the reflections on the curriculum units from students and teachers helped structure my initial analysis of the curriculum work. For the secondary school, I selected a purposive sample of students' work in the form of their work folder, to review. Unlike the survey, in this case I knew the names of students and used my classroom observations to understand more about them. This sample of students was steered by teacher *Paul* and took into account a variation of different socio-cultural backgrounds and assumed students' abilities. For the primary school, I had photographed each of the 29 mood-boards students had made. I reviewed these photographs to examine more generally what places students had chosen to research and what types of knowledge students had chosen to present. I used these boards as a talking point to ask nine students questions at the open afternoon, about what they had researched and their feelings about the process. The responses I received from students were taken into

account when reviewing their particular boards, in order to weave together the number of stories that played out in the classroom (Emerson et al., 2011)

All the findings from the various sources of data were used to help 'expand' each source and ensure my explanations were representative (Richards, 2009, p.35). When creating and structuring the story of my analysis, I went back to the research literature and for each school I visually mapped the main themes and codes that emerged from across my data and identified links and patterns across both case study schools to structure the analysis chapter (*see* appendix 7 for a visual interpretation of data analysis).

3.4   Ethical Considerations

The first aspect of ethics consideration for this project relates to institutional ethics. An ethics application was made and approval was given by the University of Sheffield's ethics reviewers in the School of Education (*see* appendix 8). One comment raised by reviewers was around the potential 'othering' of students if some students are selected to participate and others are not. The application was adjusted to clarify that all students would be participating in the curriculum development work and that any recruitment of students into specific activities, such as interviews, would be discussed in detail with the teacher collaborator. Participant information sheets and consent forms adhered to General Data Protection Regulations (2018). This included asking permission for the re-use of data within a 5-year period. Primary data was only accessible to me as the lead researcher and stored on a managed device which only I had access to. Formal ethics also adhered to guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018), such as ensuring participants right to withdraw, developing trust between participants and the researchers responsibility to share the research with the wider education research community. Ethical criteria from the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) who provided funding for this research, was also taken into consideration. I applied for certification from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and upheld safeguarding and visitor safety protocols for both case study schools.

Pseudonyms are used across all interview transcripts, analysis and this thesis. I met individually with the six students in the primary school that I had interviewed and offered them the choice of choosing their own pseudonym, which they enjoyed and were visibly happy about, with some of them taking a week to think it over (Elton-Chalcraft, 2011). Further care was taken not to include any information on case study schools that could lead to the identification of case study schools and therefore teachers/students. As such, information from any formal documentation describing the school such as Ofsted reports or school website information is not referenced in this thesis. However, at the start of chapter four and chapter five, I have used this information to help set the scene for the reader about the case study school.

Institutional ethics is only a small part of ensuring overall ethical practice however. Ethics is an on-going process of negotiating power too. First, it is important here to acknowledge that I temporarily situated myself in schools for the purposes of my PhD qualification. In this sense, I am privileged to be able to enter and leave schools without being accountable for the outcomes and development of students in any longer term sense. There are ethical implications attached to the power dynamics that transpire between me, the students and

teachers because of this. Bearing the temporary nature of my research position in mind, I felt it was necessary to incorporate a practical, curriculum development aspect to this study, as the curriculum unit produced is, and will remain, the ownership of the schools' to be re-used and applied more widely across the school/department should they desire. I volunteered additional time to review the curriculum unit with teachers, following my data analysis to improve the work further. The aim of such a participatory approach was to also allow students the opportunity to develop their own research skills and thereby ensuring their participation in the research could have some wider benefits that may have some reach beyond my time bound presence in the case study schools. I did not provide any incentives for students and teachers participation in the research as recommended by BERA (2018), but I felt it was important for me to recognise the time and support of the students and teachers. I provided the printing, stationery and art supplies to support the use of creative work in the classroom, which I noticed were low in both schools and was the least I could offer.

The second aspect of an ethical consideration of power, relates to informed consent. One issue flagged by the institutional review process was the order of gaining student consent - which suggested to follow a parent permission before students model. Skelton (2008) argues this model is typical of institutional ethics which can close down participation and the sense of reciprocity children feel in terms of wanting to be 'give back' by participating, as well as assuming that all parents/guardians understand what 'research' is (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). For example, deputy headteacher, *Andrea*, felt that with regard to the high level of EAL amongst parents at *Brook Valley Primary School*, that it may just cause unnecessary confusion or anxiety. Nevertheless, my order of gaining consent was revised to follow the parent then students order of consent. Although my ethics application had included parental consent for the curriculum development work - schools maintained that this would not be necessary as teachers took responsibility for the curriculum. I was unable to gain consent from one student at the primary school for an interview, who was of Muslim heritage. The student was curious about taking part and asked me questions about it weeks after, but was unbale to have the form signed by a parent. Verbal consent was considered in place of written consent, in the form of me approaching and talking to her parents in the school playground.

However I rejected this as an option as I did not have a prior relationship with parents, or a real status within the school, and did not want to pressure them. I was sensitive to the fact that families from a recently arrived and/or BME background may not be trustful of people from institutions approaching them, and essentially asking them for information. Although teacher *Hannah* could have asked for consent where needed, *Hannah* also mentioned that parents who lacked familiarity with English would often nod and smile politely and agree so as to not offend. I thought of my own Mum in this scenario, and as such I did not feel that this would qualify as 'informed' consent. This speaks to a wider issue which relates to the ethno-centrism of ethical guidelines which do not take into account social and cultural differences between people and expects that people should be able to understand the purpose of social research studies such as this (Shelton, 2008).

Luckily, there were enough parents of a range of students at *Brook Valley Primary School* who could be asked for consent for individual interviews. I spoke to students first to ask them if they would be happy to take part in a research activity with me. Once they had confirmed this, parents of students were given an information letter and consent form to sign but I also produced age-appropriate consent forms for the students themselves which I talked through

an hour before the interview might take place so they had time to prepare any questions or change their mind form (Wiles et al., 2005). Consent forms provided the option to agree or disagree for each statement. Statements included consent for audio recording, the use of anonymised data and permission for future use of data by the researcher only (*see* appendix 9). Consent forms for student participants included visual faces to aid and check their understanding of what was being asked of them - this consisted of a smiling face as acceptance and a frowning face as disagreement. I also included a confused face to represent being unsure, so I could query whether this was a result of not understanding what was being asked or whether they did genuinely disagree. Flewitt (2005, p.556) argues that young children have the competence to give consent but suggests that instead of informed consent, the notion of 'provisional consent' is more apt as research is on-going and often unpredictable in terms of unexpected issues arising. In practice, this meant being aware of and sensitive to body language and reminding students of their right to refuse to answer any question. It also meant I was conscious to hold interviews in spaces around the school that were familiar to students and the door was kept wide open (Alderson and Morrow, 2011).

3.5   Researcher Positionality

Research inquiries cannot be value-free because social phenomena cannot be observed objectively, outside of the positionality of a researcher (Sikes, 2004). Positionality relates to the political beliefs, subjective experiences and social background of a researcher. However, this should not render interpretivist research as less trustworthy than approaches which claim 'objectivity' as all research is value-laden from the outset by the very research questions and problems posed by the researcher (Greenbank, 2003). Such research however can be 'value-critical' through researcher reflexivity (Figueroa, 2000). Reflexivity is an active process of self-scrutiny, with an understanding of power relations throughout the process of conducting research and an adjustment of research practices accordingly (Miles and Huberman, 2002). Reflexive practices are necessary to minimise negative consequences to participants, in the design of the research, the representation of data, and the conduct of myself as a researcher (Pillow, 2003). Some may see this attention to researcher subjectivity as self-indulgent (Kemmis, 1995), but as Pillow (2003) argues, we must seek to make the practice of reflexivity visible to ensure there is greater trust in the research. As such, reflexivity can be used as an ongoing 'tool' to critically reflect on the process of research and the data gathered (Pillow, 2003, p.176). To do this, I draw on my research diary, and reflect on the potential impact of my identity (or rather other people's perceptions of it), as well as aspects of my own lived experience.

Throughout this study I am confident in saying that my physical appearance has impacted the responses I have received, compared to say what a white male researcher may have gathered for example. This does not privilege my research findings however, it just makes them different (Gunaratnam, 2003). For example, it felt apparent that my presence as a South Asian female in the case study primary classroom was a rarity for the students to experience amongst the all-White teaching staff. Students of colour who were described as being 'challenging' in terms of behaviour were receptive towards me in a short space of time, frequently asking me questions instead of the staff assigned to support them. Although this could also be attributed to my status as a non-teacher in the classroom. However, my research diary observations often noted the tendency of the young female students of colour to watch and mirror my body

language and physical actions, whilst regularly meeting me at the gate each week and hugging me before I had made it to the reception desk to sign-in. I felt this was in contrast to the minority of white students in the classroom to whom I appeared to be just another adult. Initially, they often did not make eye contact or attempt to speak to me unless they wanted to pass a message on to the teacher.

However, it was interesting to note a gradual shift and increased warmth towards me as they enjoyed the new curriculum unit that their teacher, *Hannah,* repeatedly told them was a direct product of my work with the school. In the Year 4 class, my identity helped to build a sense of rapport amongst students of colour as they began to hear information about what I knew and what I had done in life. For example, *Aida* who described herself as Ethiopian would often say, *'how come you know so much about Africa! nobody else does'.* I frequently had conversations that were related to students' sense of identity and their families. There were routinely six students (which were all described as being 'lower ability'), who would enthusiastically tell me about aspects of their heritage and family life, including giving me a written recipe from home for an Eritrean bread called *H'mbasha*.

My physical presence also influenced how I chose to present my research to members of staff, particularly in the case study primary school. I did not, for instance, make much direct reference to issues of structural racism directly, as I felt this would affect how I may be perceived by the all-White British teaching staff and school management as seeking to 'find fault' in white people, and therefore in them as individuals (Jesuvadian and Wright, 2014). This was not an ideal situation, but the design of this research relied on having a good research relationship with *Hannah*. What I had anticipated was validated to me when I informed *Hannah* I would be away one week to deliver a conference presentation about race in Higher Education. *Hannah* replied: *'oh, I find all that stuff boring, it just goes over my head that.'* However, although *Hannah* may have expressed this view, her approach to the students, her participation and time in seeing the project through and her effort to ensure the unit of learning we produced would be a key part of the Year 4 curriculum henceforth, would suggest otherwise.

This was in direct contrast to the case study secondary school. *Paul,* identified as a person of colour, with a profound professional and personal interest in anti-racism and social justice. Being able to discuss issues such as the culturally selective nature of the curriculum was easier, welcome and more comfortable. Throughout the course of working with *Paul* I realised that throughout my academic life I had never been taught by a person of colour. As such, I underestimated the impact of *Paul's* mere presence as a teacher in the school amongst the majority white school staff (which has been consistently so since *Paul* first started working at the school 25 years ago).

My status as a minority ethnic researcher is important to highlight beyond my immediate relationships with participants. As a minority ethnic researcher from an economically disadvantaged background (if we use the measure of Free Schools Meals eligibility and length of time), I am in a minority. Based on my own frustration with the persistent labelling of students as 'disadvantaged', I decided to draw on the perspectives of CRT and critical pedagogy in this research to reconceptualise what we term as 'disadvantage' and what sources of cultural capital are valorised society. Specifically in relation to FoK research, Rodriguez (2013, p.103) notes that teacher-researchers and university collaborators using a funds of knowledge

approach, often come from 'middle-class backgrounds, often minimally exposed to diverse populations in their non-school personal lives, working with populations who are predominantly low income or of colour, often immigrants.' As such Rodriguez (2013) argues that with research on Funds of Knowledge, it is important to examine the positionality of researchers contributing to the field, particularly as the whole purpose of CCW approaches are to promote greater equity in representation and challenge dominant power relationships that reproduces certain perspectives and knowledge over others. Moreover, if one has rarely had to consider their race/ethnicity or experiences attached to being a minority - to what extent can the research adequately be attune to the subtler ways these experiences manifest in daily life? As Tuhiwai-Smith (2012, p.8) notes, research and academia has historically been regulated with an 'underlying code' of imperialism and colonialism and this is reflected in the representations and constructions that are selected and reproduced about 'others', based on white middle class cultural capital and language. I point to the field of Social Realism within curriculum studies that insistently believes in academic objectivity, yet its researchers are typically white and male and well established in academia.

3.6   Reflections on Doing Race-Related Research

Research on issues around race and ethnicity can be difficult to manage when entering collaborative relationships with people, because it relies on them having some racial literacy or at least an awareness or desire to develop further knowledge in this area. My experiences in both the primary and secondary school provide an interesting point of contrast. In this section I will discuss some aspects of trying to conduct race-related research.

Given the very visible nature of me being a person of colour, the extent to which *Hannah* at *Brook Valley Primary School*, believed I was interested in 'more than just race' was difficult to know. For fear of being seen as a person of colour seeking to 'find fault', I maintained that this research was interested in understanding and learning from *'best practice'* (Jesvudian and Wright, 2014). However, for *Hannah,* the concept of a culturally laden and selective curriculum was completely new to her and not something she was initially able to accept. I understood this in the context of whiteness where the need for white people to consider their ethnicity is a rare day-to-day occurrence (Pearce, 2005). There were glimpses of defensiveness from *Hannah* initially, as there was an assumption that the multiculturalism/transnationalism that comprised the school meant that the culturally selective scope of the curriculum or racism for example, would not be an issue to consider here (DiAngelo, 2018). Moreover, when I asked *Hannah* about diversity in the curriculum, R.E was used a recurring example as evidence of diverse practice as Maylor (2010) found in her research also.

What was of great interest to me about this case study as the research progressed however, was the embedded assumptions amongst staff at the school about its practice. The assumption was that since the school served a richly diverse multicultural population, its institutional practices and curriculum would reflect that diversity and students inherently knew how to 'get along' with each other (Maylor, 2010). My time at the school indicated that this was not necessarily the case. For example, *Hannah* insisted on several occasions that 'we're *pretty good here as the children are from all over.'* Even at our first meeting, *Hannah* suggested that my research would have been *'better-off'* in a place where there is less diversity (which meant majority white, and working class) as '*they need it.*' *Hannah's* understanding of race I

interpreted early on as being 'colour-blind' and this influenced how I explained the aims and purpose of the research, taking a much softer approach to minimise the perception from *Hannah* that I may be labelling her practice as 'racist' (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

The comments I noted in section 3.5 made my *Hannah* about stuff around race being 'boring', I later interpreted as a lack of understanding of the language and experience of race, or perhaps a belief that children in primary school are too young for issues such as these to affect them, or that it was not necessary for her to engage with these issues in such a visibly multicultural context. As Lander (2014a; 2016) argues teacher training around race and ethnicity has been erased and therefore teachers are not equipped with the skills to teach in a multicultural reality. With this in mind, I asked Hannah about any teacher training she may have received in understanding race/ethnicity, teaching diverse students or developing general cultural competencies - Hannah said she had one *'multicultural school placement'* for a week in Leicester as part of her PGCE training. One week is doubtful any meaningful knowledge could have been imparted.

During parts of the individual interview, I could feel a sense of anxiousness from *Hannah* at my lines of questioning around diversity in the curriculum. Although *Hannah* celebrated the cultural diversity of the school, she did not necessarily have the tools to engage with diversity in less non-performative, celebratory way. For *Hannah*, because the students were *'from all over'* it meant discussing racism would not be expected or necessary. *Hannah* was visibly stressed and unsure in how to speak to the class about racism when the issue had to be approached (*see* section 4.3 for further discussion of this event). She excused students behaviour to me by saying *'they don't know what they're doing,'* but as Bryan's (2012) young participants noted *'you have to teach people not to be a racist.'*

Although *Hannah* and I had a good working relationship, this was in stark contrast to my experience of working with *Paul* with whom I did not have to edit my thoughts or aims. *Paul* generally reflected more on issues around the curriculum as his social justice values meant he was actively thinking about marginalised voices and making links with activists and performers who he often tried to bring into the school. Despite his efforts to make connections between the school and his work outside of school, *Paul* discussed examples of microaggressions he experienced from some (white) school staff who perhaps did not really buy-in to what he was trying to achieve at times. *Paul* directly used the term *'microaggression'* when speaking to me. *Paul* spoke generally of the resilience people of colour and racialised minorities had to amass in order to keep pushing against the tide and challenge people constructively. One morning, I was taken to an all-staff briefing and felt immediately uncomfortable - invisible yet hypervisible - as some staff watched me but nobody said hello, even those that had met me before, except for one support teacher who was a Muslim woman (Lander and Santoro, 2017). I saw for myself first-hand what *Paul* had meant regarding staff diversity when I asked him about it. In the time Paul had worked at the school - nearly three decades, very little had changed.

3.7   Conclusion

In the chapter I have sought to outline and evaluate my approach towards producing knowledge for this thesis (Schostak, 2002). Adopting a multi-strategy, collaborative approach

to this research was my way of 'unlocking' the complexity between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, education policy, and students experiences of concepts such as British values (Croninger and Valli, 2009, p.542). Although I took the necessary steps to prepare and plan the various aspects of my research design, embedding a sense of pragmatism in the research was an overarching principle for me. It allowed the space to be responsive and adaptive to the real-time events of the research relationships, and the needs of my student participants. As my research is analytically guided by CRT, I have sought to be transparent about, and critically acknowledge my positionality as a researcher of colour throughout this thesis. This has an important relationship to the analysis and insights I present in the analysis chapters which now follow.

Chapter 4: Analysis - Brook Valley Primary School

For the purposes of contextualising this analysis chapter, I will provide some brief insight into Brook Valley Primary School. As providing links to official documentation would reveal the identity of the school, I note that I am drawing on information retrieved from Ofsted reports and the school's website. First, Brook Valley Primary School is a smaller than average sized academy school, with around 200 students organised into one class per year group. Graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in its most recent inspection report (two years prior to my contact with school), the school serves a predominantly 'disadvantaged' catchment area based on Pupil Premium measures (students eligible for Free School Meals and those looked after by the local authority). The school serves a majority BME population, and the proportion of students with a disability, special educational needs, and/or English as an additional language is well-above the national average. The academy aims to serve the local community by providing an education within the context of Christian belief and practice as a Church of England foundation and academy school, although the majority religion represented in the school is Islam.

In this chapter, I present a range of themes from the data gathered with the Year 4 students and their teacher, *Hannah*. These themes traverse the general interests of this research which are; students sense of identity and interpretations of national identity in the context of British values, students experiences of the wider curriculum, as well as the outcomes of the curriculum development work, and a reflection on the value of social knowledge for curricular use. The data drawn on in this chapter includes interviews with students and their teacher, survey responses, classroom observations, the work the students produced in class, and general conversations with students throughout my fieldwork. The analysis is integrated with direct quotes from the students and *Hannah*. All participants chose their own pseudonym and took great pleasure in doing so. The students I most refer to are; *Georgia, Ruvin, Max, Carlos, Stephanie* and *Pelé*. These six students were those I had interviewed individually. Of the 6 participants, only *Georgia* could be described as White-British, but this reflected the diversity of the class itself.

Whilst *Ruvin, Carlos* and *Georgia* were labelled colloquially by their teacher *Hannah* as the 'highers' – considered more 'academically' able - *Max, Pelé* and *Stephanie* were considered somewhere either 'lower-middle' or 'middle' ability, but it is interesting to note that all these students behaved in the way schooling traditionally rewards (Bradbury, 2014). They participated even if they were not sure of an answer, they held up their hands, they offered to do additional chores in the class, and they generally knew how to look as though they were getting on with the work. But I also draw on conversations with students outside of this narrow scope of 'ability' and 'behaviour' that the process of interviewing is predicated on. For example, I talk about *Osama, Aida, Younis,* and *Mohsin* who were 'lower' ability students with English as an additional language and/or SEND. I provide more details about all individual students where relevant throughout this analysis, and draw on wider observation notes in class. Direct quotes are not intended to single out students in any critical way, but rather used a basis to reflect on wider socio-cultural and political issues that shape contemporary educational experiences.

4.1   Students Understanding of Values

When conducting interviews with *Georgia, Ruvin, Max, Carlos, Stephanie* and *Pelé*, I sought to find out what they knew about the term 'British values'; whether this was a concept they understood, had been taught about in school enough to recall, or if they were unfamiliar with the term what their immediate thoughts about it were. All students, expect *Carlos* felt unaware of 'British' values, but instead drew on their wider knowledge of what a 'value' means. A value was largely understood as something *'special'* or *'important'* that related to an individual's behaviour. *Carlos* was the only student confident of his awareness of British values, based on his regular attendance at an after-school club which featured a large display on the wall. Unprompted on the subject, *Carlos* mentioned the values of 'respect' and 'democracy.' *Carlos* and *Georgia* felt familiar with the term democracy, based on knowledge acquired from home. *Georgia* explained that she heard *'this stuff'* being talked about at home and referred to Brexit as a recurring topic in the household expressed in relation to democracy. However, all students felt they understood the meaning of 'respect' and 'tolerance' based on the schools' own value-led ethos which was visible around the school building:

> *Pelé: '...like downstairs we have like values like respect, like its things that you do…'*

> *Stephanie: 'I don't know how to explain it [British values]...but is it like our school values like respect?'*

The school did place importance on students learning the language around values - with 'weekly values' displayed on the classroom door, (although in practice, this rarely changed by the week). There was a prominent display feature in the school assembly/dining hall, which all students interviewed were quick to mention. Without being able to specifically define what a value was, the conversations with students demonstrated their understanding of the relationship between values and behaviour. This is unlike British values which has been criticised for having little relevance to behaviour, if not contradictory sentiments as Weymss (2006) argues in relation to tolerance and respect, and instead is representative of neoliberal 'performative agnostics' as opposed to values (Stronach and Frankham, 2020). Instead, students were confidently able to provide examples when asked, without hesitation, of values which related practically to how people should treat and behave towards one another. Examples included *'compassion' 'kindness' 'forgiveness' 'respect'* and *'equal rights'*. The students often referred to 'poor' or 'homeless' people as those who receive the least respect in society and emphasised the need to *'treat each other good'*. On the relationship between homelessness and respect for example, *Georgia* explained:

> *Georgia: '...you don't know the reason why they're homeless (.) but like the government can't afford to give them a home but they should still give them food and things to live on.'*

Georgia spoke of knowledge from her parents that helped her interpret what it might mean to be treated with mutual respect. Using a law court scenario, *Georgia* describes how '*it used to be held outside, but now they are shown more respect and holding it inside so it's not embarrassing for them.'* Georgia's example relates to the English use of stocks to humiliate those accused of committing a crime. She demonstrates a nuanced understanding of respect by referencing those who may stand accused as worthy of some degree of respect.

Alternatively, *Pelé* described people caught in wars as an example of not being treated with respect, because *'they just carry-on fighting'* without listening to the people. *Pelé* had mentioned war on a number of occasions to me in person and in his survey. He also posed a question at the end of the unit wanting to know: '*Have [sic] Ethiopia been in a war with Somalia?'* As an avid football fan, *Pelé* asked me whether Argentina had ever been in a war. I explained that Argentina had probably been in several wars in its history but the only one I knew of was a war for independence against the Spanish empire. *Pelé* raised his eyebrows, and continued to ask further questions such as *'but how did Spain get over there?'* I also briefly mentioned the Falklands war between Britain and Argentina. *Pelé* was keen to know who 'won':

> Aunam: *'Britain, I guess.'*
> Pelé: Yes! [draws an upturned fist towards himself]
> Aunam: *'But I don't really know that much about it or what happened after either though'*
> Pelé: *'How do you know about it then?'*
> Aunam: *'Hmmm...because people say the 'win' helped a Prime Minister win another election'*

Pelé's almost patriotic happiness at the 'win' was surprising to me, but could suggest that *Pelé* does feel a sense of connection to a feeling of Britishness. *Pelé* then mentions India and Pakistan - which at the time of interviewing were in a renewed flare of conflict over the disputed territory and special status of Kashmir (Khan, 2019). It was not clear why *Pelé* was so curious about war as he became too shy to explain why. *Pelé* described his heritage to me as Angolan and Congolese, and as such he may have been conscious of war based on the civil war and conflict that comprises the post-colonial history and political present of both states (Burke, 2018; Cooper, 2001; Spears, 2010). In a similar vein, *Carlos* contextualised his understanding of democracy based on his family/cultural background. When asked about democracy, *Carlos* said:

> Carlos: *'...it's like votes and like when people vote for someone and whoever gets the most votes wins...my mum and dad watch some things about their country on the news a lot'*

Carlos described his background with pride as *Ethiopian* and indicates his source of knowledge on democracy actually stems from his parents at home, as opposed to the performative nature of British values teaching described at the after-school club he attended, where they *'haven't really learnt about it, there's just this wall.'* Ethiopia has and continues to experience a long history of conflict and dissent around fair elections and minority-ethnic rights within its federal system (Reid, 2020). Similarly, *Osama* who described himself as Eritrean, routinely spoke to me about a '*very naughty'* government, accompanied with a maternal-esque wagging of his finger and hand on hip, which I assumed was something he had picked up from home, given the difficult history of Eritrea and its totalitarian state. Many refugees from Eritrea have claimed asylum in the geographical case study area of this research study. However, since 2014 the ability for refugees from Eritrea to claim asylum in the UK is increasingly difficult, with further barriers around family reunion (Gentlemen, 2018: UNHCR, 2018).

I interpreted *Carlos, Osama* and *Pelé's* background in the context of my own where news channels and loud phone conversations were, and continue to be, a key feature of my family home in relation to the political affairs of Pakistan. Zipin (2009) has described such sources

which relate to more difficult histories as 'dark funds of knowledge' which educators can often shy away from for being too challenging or negative for the classroom. But there is evidence to suggest that these 'darker' sources of knowledge form a part of their (mine included) identities and experiences – in addition to be being interesting sources of global political knowledge. Unlike these three students however, I internalised a sense of shame at being from somewhere 'different.' *Carlos* for example was confident and comfortable in his sense of African identity and throughout the interview and my time knowing him, it was apparent that the language *(Amharic)* and knowledge he gained from home was valued by him, as well as being a source of knowledge capital. Similarly, *Osama,* who was described by *Hannah* as a *'handful'* and streamed as part of the *'lowers'* (lower ability group in the class), was supportive and helpful to other students who chose to research Eritrea for their research inquiry. He routinely updated me on what he had learnt or knew already and often moved around the classroom during the curriculum work as a soundboard for other students' ideas. *Osama's* behaviour surpassed the expectations of the teaching and support staff, which through my observations I felt was derived from a sense of pride and interest invested into the curriculum work - which in turn, validated his sense of identity and knowledge.

The alternative values students offered as examples to illustrate their understanding of values (e.g. compassion, kindness, respect), demonstrated a more practical understanding of values which relate to behaviours, unlike British values. It was clear the students I interviewed were unfamiliar with the concept of British values, although students are taught about it in school and have had assemblies specifically on it. This would suggest the concept may have just been less memorable or of interest to them. However, despite the concept being largely unknown to students, they drew on either knowledge from home and/or separate values education from within the school to try and interpret what 'British values' might mean in practice. It is important to recognise the values education that occurs within homes and the general ethos of schools, as British values is noted to be a response to a fear that the 'primary socialisation institutions' of a child's (family, community) do not produce the right kind of citizens (McGhee and Zhang, 2017, p.943). This is particularly directed to those from a minority ethnic background and fears of contagion to ideas that Muslim households are perceived to be more susceptible to (O'Donnell, 2016).

4.2   Why British Values?

The students I interviewed did not express any outright acceptance or rejection of British values. They generally accepted it as a concept without understanding its purpose, although *Georgia* did think aloud on hearing the topic and posed that it might relate to a wider sense of British citizenship.

> *Georgia: 'I dunno, but if like...you're going to be a British citizen, you might need to know the British values.'*

In some way, *Georgia* has internalised the political discourse around citizenship requirements for those seeking permanent residency. Part of that requirement is knowing and pledging an oath to uphold fundamental British values (Dillon and Smith, 2019). However, she and *Ruvin,* did also question the notion of 'British' values:

> *Aunam: 'What do you think might make these values British?'*

> *Ruvin: 'I don't think they are, I think they should be for all around the world...that everybody should do this...no I don't think they should be British, they should be for all people'.*

> *Georgia: 'Yeah...but like...but you could follow the British values from a different country and not be British or want to be British'.*

Both students question the specificity of the values to Britain and draw on the idea of it being a universal concept. This is one academic criticism the students perceptively pick up, which argues that British values are not unique to Britain and undermines more universal human rights values (Struthers, 2017). Global human rights values are understood to emphasise the commonality and equality of all, however, Santos (2009, p.4) argues that human rights-based discourse represents a hegemonic 'western understanding of the world' derived from colonialism which perpetuates cognitive injustice and the denial of racism (Sian et al., 2013). Moreover, human rights does not necessarily mean that injustice and inequality will be discussed either. Neither are criticisms teacher *Hannah* makes however. *Hannah* was unaware of the provenance of British values as an extension of the Prevent agenda, but remembers it forming part of her PGCE teacher training qualification.

> *Hannah: 'they told us what they [British values] were but we didn't really get a background to it and we never had to an assignment or anything like that….we were told that you're meant to have a British values display up in your classroom...which at my last school I had to, but here...it's not been - we've not been told we need to have the British values display up.'*

The training described by *Hannah* suggested a performative, passive mode of teaching British values, as documented in existing research (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2017; Pells, 2017). Although *Brook Valley* is rated 'outstanding' and the promotion of British values is part of the top-grade inspection criteria of Ofsted (2016), the 'evidence' of teaching British values beyond the occasional school assembly and the student school council was limited. Given the limited awareness students had of 'British' values, it may be that the Christian ethos of the school may have absolved the school from the same level of scrutiny or expectation Islamic faith schools are likely to experience in England (Sian et al., 2013; Vincent, 2018). Such school contexts are argued to be seen as more damaging to cohesion than other faiths (Meer, 2007), and possible sites for projecting anti-Western values (Sian et al., 2013). Therefore, although the majority religion amongst the students in Brook Valley was in fact Islam, not Christianity, perhaps the Christian ethos may have off-set the need to be seen to upholding British values and the more relaxed approach *Hannah* described of the school management team towards Prevent and British values overall.

Hannah's criticism of British values was not of the labelling of such values as 'British,' or the duty placed on teachers to promote British values, or the context of the policy itself as part of Prevent (which Hannah remained silent on). Instead, her criticism was directed towards the language not being *'child friendly'* but also that it said less about how we might socialise as a community. *Hannah* felt her role as a primary educator was about shaping young minds, promoting a sense of collectiveness and British values was just an extension of that responsibility to shape young minds. *Hannah* on the topic of whether teachers should promote British values said:

> *Hannah: 'I think it's important that they [students] understand what's going on around them...so definitely I think so yes [teachers should promote]...and not just British Values, I think making children more well-rounded people and understanding where they live and what makes a kind person…''*

As such, the link between British values and Prevent was not considered as problematic in any way to *Hannah*. This may relate to lack of understanding on race equality and diversity in relation to policy (Lander, 2016), but it may also reflect the overall governmentality of embedding policies such as British values as part of teacher training, standards and SMSC to appear less controversial (Farrell and Lander, 2018). Instead, *Hannah* maintained that British values should be embedded across the whole curriculum; advice also given by Ofsted's Chief Inspector an overdue four years following the introduction of British values (Spielman, 2018).

The overall perspective *Hannah* takes on the issue is somewhat limited in criticism compared to wider issues discussed in academic research, such as the entrenched racialisation of British citizenship (Smith, 2016), and the surveillance of students (O'Donell, 2016; Sian et al., 2013). However, what *Hannah* notes is still an important criticism regarding the complexity in defining what British values mean to young students as noted in existing research (Lander, 2016; Mansfield, 2019). For example, the students did not understand what 'rule of law' or 'individual liberty' meant and the addition of *'mutual'* to 'mutual respect' made them subsequently question whether they even knew what respect meant. This is without even considering the more principal concern that 'British values' are not values in a behavioural sense, but rather procedural values.

4.3   Equal and Celebrated…But Different.

It has been widely discussed that British values risks being conflated with a British or English national identity (Race, 2020), but also that it embodies and risks projecting a potentially narrow, racialised version of national identity and belonging to students (Habib, 2017; Smith, 2016). As such, I was interested in understanding how students understood Britishness in general. In terms of defining British identity, students focused largely on their own interests which were mostly linked to food and sports. *Georgia,* expressed that she would tell people about Britain and its *'four corners.' Georgia's* awareness of multiple countries comprising Britain came as part of her FoK research inquiry into Northern Ireland where her family are from. Whilst this also evidences the common confusion made between 'United Kingdom' and the rhetoric of 'Great Britain' – credit to *Georgia* for developing an awareness beyond a typically England-centric view of Britain. *Stephanie* however, described Britain as a place which is '*supposed to be fair*.' The concept of fairness has been used as a stereotype by politicians such as Gordon Brown and Theresa May to describe Britishness (Brown, 2006; Home Office, 2015). I cannot say why or what *Stephanie* meant by the hesitant adjective *'supposed'* – I did not follow-up the response at the time as I was more focused on her feeling comfortable, as opposed to repeatedly questioning her, as this was said early on in the interview. *Stephanie* was initially very shy in the interview, often looking to the floor or shrugging her shoulders after a response (this was until she expressed her dismay at the curriculum, *see* section 4.5*)*.

Carlos's understanding of Britishness, leads him to first pose a question to me, followed by his own answer:

> *Carlos: 'Is it the fact that I'm from Ethiopia...like doesn't it mean that if you were born in England but the rest of your family is from out of the UK, you...yeah you could be British?*
>
> *Carlos: 'Because the world - because different people can be from different places in the world but when they come to Britain they can be British.'*

Carlos suggests we can describe Britain as the 'world.' The sentiment expressed here is one of inclusivity; an all-encompassing national identity that is primarily about residence, and not about visible or cultural differences. The idea of us all '*being the same but different*' or *'equal but different,'* were beliefs expressed by teacher *Hannah*, and student *Ruvin*. According to *Hannah, Carlos* and *Ruvin* anyone can *'achieve'* Britishness if they wanted to or were born here. As Britishness is a fluid concept with a multicultural history, its lack of defining clarity can leave it open to a positive, all-encompassing notion of citizenship. However, a CRT perspective would argue this celebratory assumption of everybody being equal or the 'rainbow nation' can conceal the realities of social and racial inequality, and ultimately curb teaching and learning around such issues in schools, and devalue the imperative to do so (Chetty, 2014; Gillborn, 2008; Troyna, 1985). Moreover, an equality narrative is deemed part of a Western ideology rooted in individualism and objectivity, and to therefore have a belief contrary to this, is perceived to be biased (DiAngelo, 2018).

A celebratory multicultural education was reflected to some extent, in the school's resources for Black History Month, which consisted of work by each year group profiling African-American musicians such as Drake and Stevie Wonder, and Black sports stars such as Usain Bolt, Lewis Hamilton and Kyle Walker. While it is likely students would have enjoyed this work and may have felt represented or aspirational (particularly where the football players were concerned), the focus was predominantly on Blackness through a US and celebrity narrative, and somewhat separate from History. Such practices are noted to reinscribe whiteness (Warmington, 2020), or follow a 'post-racial' ahistorical narrative that fails to connect the ideology of racism from the past to the structural racism of the present (Bell, 1992; Van de Mieroop, 2016). I asked *Hannah* how she set about developing the Black History Month resources for the school which she was tasked to do. She firmly noted not using any outside resources, and developed her own idea to create a museum of famous Black people. It was clear *Hannah* was nervous about me asking the question.

Although certainly well intentioned, the key criticism of multicultural approaches such as this, is its problematic focus on celebration and cultural difference, as opposed to developing a richer historical understanding (Tryona, 1987). Such practices become default as they do not threaten Whiteness; they provide un-complicated solutions or 'feel-good' quick fixes instead of addressing root causes or ideologies (Andreotti et al., 2018). Chetty (2014, p.11) argues the focus on cultural difference 'may enrich the experience of the White majority, as in the case of Hip-Hop music or Indian 'curry'' but also ensures it 'may be consumed without troubling continuing inequalities.' This finding illustrates how celebrities, role models or examples of 'Black exceptionalism' are used as default approaches in delivering Black history or teaching 'diversity' in education. The risk is that such an approach may contribute to the perception of a post-racial society, whilst sending a message to white students of a more integrated, progressive society (Mueller, 2011).

There was limited exposure to Black British history or even Black global history. Moreover, none of the figures represented Black Muslims either, despite a large number of students in the school being so. Six students specifically mentioned Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King as important people in their initial survey, which may suggest that Black history (or at least more modern history), does resonate with students. Alexander et al. (2015) emphasise that diversity in History is of benefit to all students, not just BME students. However, the space for diversity within the national and school curriculum is limited. The core curriculum for Key Stage 2 History focuses on the Tudors, Victorians, Romans and Anglo-Saxons as part of the wider aim for students to develop a chronological understanding of British history (DfE, 2013). Yet, there is some space to integrate diversity and Black history into the fabric of the core curriculum, for example looking at the Black Tudors and therefore simultaneously counteracting wider discourses around people of colour as recently arrived or ahistorical and therefore 'other' to Britain (Kauffman, 2018). Developing an understanding of historical complexity and the interconnectedness of historical narratives is a central part in working towards social justice (Andreotti et al., 2018).

Whilst the focus of wider anti-racism work in education is focused on struggles for equality in response to white society, there is perhaps less attention directed to the racism that occurs within multicultural contexts outside of white society (DuGay, 1996). During my time at the school, *Hannah* had to discuss issues of racism noted by staff on several occasions during break times by students from the Year 4 class. Staff had reported that students were frequently choosing not to, or refusing to play with or talk to certain people because they were (ethnically/culturally) different. The build-up of anxiety *Hannah* had throughout that afternoon was palpable. She mentioned several times that she had *'something not very nice'* to talk to the class about at the end of the day and had sought advice from senior management on the best way to speak to them about it. Yet, *Hannah* was unable to tell me directly what this was exactly until the last moment. Whilst the reactions of students were difficult to gauge, there were four students of colour in particular that repeatedly asked questions or posed comments which sought to minimise the label of racism attached to the behaviours *Hannah* was describing. An exasperated *Hannah* emphasised that racism was a crime and could be reported to the police to which *Osama* replied:

> *Osama: 'Miss, like you'd go to prison for it?...Why would police get involved miss, isn't police for like serious things though'*

I felt a level of sadness in particular at *Osama's* minimisation of racism. As a young man who will grow up in a majority white society, he will very likely be positioned as both Black and Muslim, and open to further disadvantage on account of social class. However, for *Osama* at this stage of his life - his home, his estate and his school meant he had perhaps not experienced what it means to be a racial minority. His school life was in stark contrast to mine where my name alone was a shameful experience – being forced to devise an 'anglicised' pronunciation and dreading getting up to collect certificates as other students would laugh hysterically. At Brook Valley, the students were particularly good at names including mine, as the majority spoke another language within their home, whilst *Hannah* resorted to call me *'Miss Q'* after very few tries to pronounce my actual name.

Often, the assumption is made that students of colour will understand diversity better (Maylor, 2016), but what this finding emphasises it that anti-racist education in all schools is important,

regardless of whether they have majority BME or white populations. Even *Hannah* had initially said to me that white-majority schools on the other side of the geographical case study area would have been more worthwhile for my research. Incidents of racism in schools, including primary schools, is growing (Andrews, 2017), and existing research has indicated that young children can develop racist beliefs or stereotypes from home, whether they are conscious of it being 'racist' or not (Bryan, 2012; Elton-Chalcraft, 2011; Welply, 2018). Although these research studies note racist views from within white households, from my research, there was evidence of young students of colour in the primary school who had been participating in othering students in the playground. Given *Hannah's* fear and discomfort in having to even address such an issue with the class, emphasises the need for teachers to be trained and feel confident in having conversations around racism (Lander, 2014a). This is not solely for the benefit of changing student behaviours, but to acknowledge the wider social and political context students are embedded within. However, such training should avoid the trap of focusing on overt racism, and instead help to build a greater understanding amongst students of the political and social inequalities that are reproduced by more subtler forms of racism (Teach First, 2020), particularly as research has shown that students can fall into post-racial norms of thinking that racism in British society does not exist altogether (Andreouli et al., 2016).

4.4   Britishness as Whiteness

A significant theme that emerged from the data related to implicit understandings of *who* is perceived to be British. Students predominantly linked their perceptions of Britishness to whiteness, but notably, as the antithesis of being Muslim. This was despite the majority of my interviewees being people of colour. During discussions with students, I used my own visible appearance and a mediating artefact which consisted of a grid of 16 faces of British people from 'visibly different' backgrounds. What resulted from students, was in contrast to the inclusive catch-all criteria of Britishness, as discussed in the previous sub-section. When the students were asked whether they thought *I* was British, they were hesitant. They became immediately shy or grinned as though they were about to say but something they perhaps are not supposed to. They had all known me for just over four months at the time of conducting interviews and the curriculum unit was at its half-way point. I had spoken many times to the students I interviewed; I had helped them with their classwork, worked with some of them as part of the after-school newsletter club, whilst others helped me outside of the lesson to make props for their class' performance at the schools 'Battle of the Bands' Christmas show. I have good reason therefore, to assume that the students were comfortable in speaking to me and were less likely to say things they think I would want to hear. The context I have described here is to foreground what was subsequently said both *to* me, and *about* me.

I proved to be a living, breathing example of the contradictory or veiled nature of what Britishness is beyond the inclusive rhetoric of following British values or being born in Britain. Students across the class were keen to know where I came from. For all the students I interviewed, my identity was somewhat confusing because although I '*kinda'* sounded British, I did not look it. In fact, two of the students were conscious of sounding racist when they expressed their thoughts about me.

> Georgia: *'I'm not trying to be racist or anything…(.)*

> *Aunam: 'I'm just interested in what you think'*
> *Georgia: 'But...it's cause...you know how people with that skin colour...I think they're from like India or like from Asia.'*

Georgia said she was *'shocked'* to learn that I was of Pakistani heritage, she assumed I would be Indian. I am not sure if this shock is linked to a negative perception or particular stereotype of Pakistani people. I explained that India and Pakistan have a shared history and culture, that had only changed in recent history once the British left in 1947. *Georgia* then asks me '*well...like do you have that thingy...like visa or something to get into England?*" This was almost similar to *Ruvin*, who found it somewhat difficult to accept that I was British, born in England, eventually conceding that I was *'half'* at best. This was confusing and unexpected for me, particularly as *Ruvin* confidently described himself as British.

> *Aunam: 'So, anyone can be British if they want to be…but you didn't think that I could be?'*
> *Ruvin: 'Errr no'*
> *Aunam: 'Why's that?'*
> *Ruvin: 'Because...it's cause you're not like...cause you're not...like I don't really wanna say cause it's a bit racist…[.]...because normal people...well like people in Asia they have lots of sunlight like on [gestures up and down his arms] your skin's a bit burnt, whereas here we're normally pale in Britain.'*

Earlier on in the pilot interview I conducted with *Ruvin,* he described his idea of Britishness of us all being '*equal but different*' but that anybody can be British. He repeatedly said that being British is the same as being Indian. *Ruvin*, whose parents migrated from India when he was 4 years old, was proud and comfortable with his Indian heritage. For instance, he often said random words to me in Hindi, admired Indian actors, and also chose a distinctly Indian pseudonym himself. Yet, *Ruvin* maintained that I was not British, only Pakistani, and felt that people in the street would perceive me the same as he did. However, *Ruvin's* almost 'scientific' explanation of race and its link to nationality via sunlight exposure, applied to me and not himself. By its own logic, this was particularly surprising for me given that I was a 'paler' complexion than *Ruvin*. The following week I found myself being conscious of the slightly darker shade of skin make-up I wear whilst getting ready to go to the school, and being reminded of how I once thought by being lighter skinned I could 'blend into the background' at school. As a result of my pilot interview with *Ruvin*, I chose to explore these perceptions of 'visible difference' further with the students through the mediating artefact. As *Georgia* too mentioned my skin colour, it seemed that physical appearance or rather, whiteness, is the hegemonic aspect of Britishness, beyond the rhetoric of shared citizenship or indeed British values (Smith, 2016). Students found it difficult to place me, leading *Pelé* to even describe me as *'a bit of a puzzle.'* My voice and accent eventually changed the perceptions of the remaining students I interviewed (except *Georgia* and *Ruvin*). I had incrementally 'earnt' Britishness through my speech.

Nonetheless, students suggested the images in the mediating artefact that (visibly) represented Islam - identified through items of clothing such as a men's taqiyah, women's hijab, or hair wrap - as un-British.

> *Carlos: '[points to man wearing taqiyah] Because he's like representing his country, like wearing the clothes, wearing the things and like...and this one! [points to woman*

wearing hair wrap]...because, like British people, we don't wear things like that, like colourful thingies.'

In this quote, it is interesting to note that *Carlos* positions himself as British through the use of the word *'we,'* much in the way *Ruvin* said *'we're normally paler'* in contrast to myself. The colourful *'thingy' Carlos* refers to is a multi-coloured head scarf wrapped around only the hair of a woman. *Max* also identifies these two images as non-British, but neither point to the woman wearing a hijab. *Stephanie* also decisively points to the man wearing a taqiyah, but also identifies the woman wearing a hijab as being 'non-British' as does *Pelé*, but neither identify the hair wrap as such, as *Carlos* did. When I asked *Stephanie* why one hair covering was different to other, she replied:

Stephanie: 'Because not many people wear headscarves...and she's different!'

It was surprising *Stephanie* had said this as her mother wore a hijab. *Stephanie's* mother was white-Scottish and had converted to Islam since splitting from *Stephanie's* father, of Black-Caribbean heritage. The apprehension *Stephanie* seemed to have about her multiple identities was apparent throughout my time of being in the school and was increasingly noticed by *Hannah* and the PGCE placement students who joined the Year 4 class briefly. Whilst I acknowledge this is often a stereotype around mixed-race students being 'confused' about their identity or having fragmented homes (Fuller, 2013), I see this more as representative of the nature of identity making that occurs from within our lived experiences, emotions, and cultural histories – or what Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) describe as 'funds of identity'. The disconnect between what *Stephanie* says, may illustrate the temporal, competing ideas that occur when thoughts and ideas are spoken yet simultaneously bounded within the wider context in which they are said (Bakhtin, 1981). In this case, both a family context and a wider context where Islam is inherently positioned as 'other' in the context of Britishness, which are bounded within the sense that *Stephanie* is making.

This conflict *Stephanie* had, or perhaps a lack of confidence to express aspects of her identity was particularly apparent when she was part of a group working with me to create stage props for their Christmas 'Battle of the Bands' performance. This included painting cardboard cut-outs of palm trees, which necessarily meant mixing the colour brown in poster paint for the trunks. As two of the other students set to work on making the 'best brown' colour in slight competition, *Stephanie* watched the results and shouted *'Ewww! It looks like poo!'* She then drew a fist towards the colour in the mixing tray, laughing, and said *'Eww, I'm like poo'* to which the other five students excitedly giggled at. I felt I had to intervene to challenge this as something about *Stephanie's* comments and body language projected a sense of self-loathing to me. I presented my hand next to *Stephanie's* and said *'well, we're pretty similar and I know that I'm not poo*!' Some of the other students joined in drawing hands next to ours to which one student reaffirmed *'yeah, we're not poo!' Stephanie* notably smiled, then gradually looked away. However, when conversations about families later ensued, *Stephanie* candidly said *'I'm brown because I have a Black dad.'* It is interesting to note that the blackness of her father was the result, or rather the cause, of her 'brown-ness' - as opposed to the whiteness of her mother. The impact of the relationship between *Stephanie's* parents is probable in her saying this, but it also implicitly positions whiteness as the norm or standpoint of difference (hooks, 1990).

Similarly, *Pelé* and *Georgia* also pointed to the male and female figures most visibly Muslim as being non-British. However, *Georgia* dialogically repositioned her own choices:

> *Georgia: 'But you could easily be British by having like...a British passport or their mum or dad being British so...I don't know about him [points to male Muslim figure]...cause he's wearing these things, these clothes...he looks like he's from a different country, I don't know why...I dunno he just looks different...but then you could easily be British and not look like it'*

Georgia was the only White-British student I interviewed and yet the only one to critically challenge her initial ideas along the lines of 'looking British' (i.e., white/non-Muslim). It is interesting to note the wider context of these discussions with students - notably the school and Year 4 class was majority Muslim, with 1 in 5 of the girls in the class alone wearing a hijab. Yet, there were a number of recurring examples from students during this research, which reflects dominant constructions and political discourse around Britishness and more pertinently, *who* can credibly be described as British. What these discussions with students highlight, is the language of 'race' and 'nation' in Britain continues to be articulated together (Gilroy, 1992). What Gilroy highlighted in 1980s Britain, is still of relevance to today's context - although, policy and public discourse has increasingly racialised Muslims as being particularly culturally and socially problematic in the context of Britishness (Miah, 2017; DCLG, 2016). What this finding emphasises, is the implicit ways in which racial 'otherness' and inequalities are filtered through and impressed on to students, which influence their overall perceptions of Britishness, despite even their own racially diverse family and school contexts.

4.5   Navigating Multiple Identities

An important theme that emerged from the data was around how students of mixed race/ heritage, understood and navigated their sense of identity and the relationship this has to the curriculum. I focus specially on *Stephanie* and *Max* as two students who were keen to locate their individual sense of place between different cultures. Whilst this is not to say that we all have complex internal and external aspects to our identity that we perpetually navigate (Jenkins, 2014). However mixed heritage students can often be left out of policy and discussions around diversity, and their subsequent identity and curricular needs are not adequately addressed (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017). The key difference between *Stephanie* and *Max* was perhaps the circumstances and therefore drivers in wanting to explore what their multiples identities meant for them. But despite possible differences in motivation, it was evident that exploring their own sense of self via the curriculum was an important and meaningful experience for them.

Max described himself as half-Turkish and half-British. He chose to focus his research inquiry on Bodrum, Turkey. *Max's* Dad lived in Bodrum whilst he, his younger brother and mother lived in England. Part of *Max's* motivation for choosing Bodrum over what he described as his 'English/Irish/Spanish' heritage was to feel closer to his Dad and use the research inquiry as a vehicle to speak to his Dad and learn more about the place where he was living. It was somewhat apparent that being part of a transnational family had an emotional effect, which *Max* tries to hold back by alternating between speaking both very quickly and v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y in parts of our conversation:

> *Aunam: 'So how come you decided to research Bodrum in the end?'*

> Max: 'Because-he's-living-in-it-now...cause he moved up an' stuff and-I-don't-like-it...I don't (.) he's been living there for quite a long time, I don't (.)...so he's been tellin me stuff about it and I wanted to get some news from 'im'

Max laughed and became very shy when I asked him what his Dad thought of his decision to conduct research on Bodrum. He explained that his Dad was really happy about his choice, had given him some information and had even posted some artefacts in the mail to help him decorate his mood-board. Yet despite this, *Max* said:

> Max: 'Some people say that I'm from Turkey but it kind of umm...it feels okay and it doesn't feel okay, but it feels good to be half-Turkish.'

Later in the conversation, *Max* describes a time as early as Year 1 in which he was made to feel different. He describes it as *'not feeling good'* when people would describe him as being *'full Turkish.'* It was not until his friend that he was *'sticking together'* with reassured him that he was 'half-and-half' that he felt better. For *Max*, there was a jarring element to his dual identity being externally placed or labelled as just Turkish. Although *Max* was keen to know more and have a link to his Turkish sense of identity, there was an understanding that there were other aspects of his identity which were also important. When students were asked for feedback on the new curriculum unit, *Max* confidently suggested:

> Max: 'Next time, we could split the board in half and do one country on one half and another one we want on the other half.'

Max wrote in his feedback questionnaire that he *'loved'* the new curriculum unit. His favourite part of the unit was when his peers and their parents enthusiastically consumed the Turkish food and drink he had voluntarily brought in to display next to his mood-board. *Max* displayed a sense of pride throughout the curriculum work and ensured everybody in the class knew that two of the seven wonders of the world were located in Turkey.[3] The curriculum work facilitated *Max* with an opportunity to decide which aspects of his identity (or places) he wanted to explore, whilst also knowing that this one place is not the full story of his identity either - which has already undergone some negotiation in response to other people's perceptions of him and the family context of his Dad living away.

Stephanie enthusiastically chose to research Jamaica because it was a place connected to part of her identity that she was keen to know more about. However, *Stephanie* found it difficult to confidently embrace this choice and thus outwardly accept it as part of her identity in some way - although it was clear that knowing more about blackness was something important and necessary. *Stephanie* was the least talkative as an interviewee. During class, her head was mostly bowed down and she often relied on *Max,* who she sat next to, for support during lessons. *Stephanie* said she felt *'not good'* about studying History and Geography in school but became increasingly lively in the interview when describing her frustration and boredom with a repetitive R.E. curriculum and the scope of the History curriculum.

> Stephanie: 'It's always the same things that we do, and the same things that we learn about and then have to do the other thing again and again...we keep learning about Muslims and Christians, we don't do anyone other than those religions'

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[3] *The Temple of Artemis* at Ephesus (near Izmir), and *The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus* (in Bodrum), Turkey

Aunam: 'So what kind of stuff do you want to learn about instead?'
*Stephanie: 'By like asking other people what kind of religious things they do, and like for History, you could look at different histories, different kind of **peo**-ple'*
Aunam: 'What might those different histories and different kinds of people be?'
*Stephanie: '[sits up, voice gets louder] Because we've only done history 'bout the Romans, always the Romans, and we haven't done it about people, like **actually** people, like **real** people near now!'*

I inferred what *Stephanie* meant by different religions, was most likely Rastafarianism as she often asked me questions about this, as well as the names of Bob Marley records. I repeat back to *Stephanie* that more modern History was what she might enjoy more. *Stephanie* agrees and goes on to suggest *'different people'* '*like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King.'* It was clear that *Stephanie* wanted to know more about Black history and agreed when I asked her this directly. This contrasted with *Georgia* for example (a white-British student), who specifically wanted to know more about the Royal Family who she said she respected, the Victorians (again) despite having already studied it in school, and the Tudors. For *Georgia,* her interests mirrored that of a white, hegemonic Historical narrative focused on Britain – which reflects the status-quo curriculum anyway.

This was clearly in contrast to what *Stephanie* desired, who wanted a more modern as well as diverse History curriculum. The chronological linearity of the primary History curriculum in which modern History is largely absent, is highlighted by Alexander et al. (2015, p.13) who argue that understanding time can be challenging for young students. Moreover, I would argue that building an early interest amongst primary students in subjects such as History is particularly important as academic identities do develop early and many will stop studying History from the age 14 unless they enjoy it. Unlike the professional opinion of Simon Schama and Niall Ferguson, this current iteration of the national curriculum was in fact the 'boring' version for *Stephanie* (Uberoi and Modood, 2013).

As part of understanding mixedness, was also exploring Blackness too, as *Stephanie* cited Bob Marley, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks as influential figures, as Joseph-Salisbury (2017) similarly found in his research with black mixed-race male students. Yet *Stephanie* had not told her mother that she was doing a research task on Jamaica. The impact of her complex parental situation meant *Stephanie* had a lot of questions about her blackness that she felt unable to field or explore at home. This was apparent when *Stephanie* skirted the reason why she chose to look at Jamaica, and in her survey had written: *'my mum is from Scotland and my dad is from Caribbean/Guyana'* - which perhaps after some reflection, she rigorously crossed out the mention of her Dad on the sheet of paper in pencil (although this still remained visible to the eye). Moreover, *Stephanie* was the only student to respond with a firm and brief *'no'* to one of the final survey questions which asked students if they had learnt something new about themselves.

However, regardless of the family context, the curriculum work offered *Stephanie* the opportunity to explore different aspects of her identity which she was interested in and felt some connection to, but had not had the space, freedom, or confidence to explore openly – and which the school curriculum had been failing on. The impact of having such an opportunity was evident to myself and *Hannah* as an often-reluctant *Stephanie* was happy, engaged and worked independently when conducting research and making her mood board. What *Stephanie* and *Max's* case both illustrate is the important relationship the curriculum has on

students' developing a positive understanding of their identity and making sense of their wider socio-cultural context outside of school. What was interesting in both cases, it that they chose to explore the minoritized aspects of their identity, showing that the direction of travel need not be towards whiteness, and that curricular interventions bear an important relationship to positive identity development and attitudes towards learning.

4.6   Bringing 'Outside' Knowledge In(to the Classroom)

The title of this subsection refers to Young's (2008) call to 'bring knowledge back in,' principally 'powerful' knowledge which is knowledge rooted within academic disciplines and extends beyond the experiences of students. Although this is principally directed at students labelled as 'disadvantaged', who allegedly lack the cultural capital or 'congruence' middle-class students have between their home and school lives and access to knowledge (Weelahan, 2010). Yet, contrary to the social realist position that creates a false dichotomy between 'social' and 'academic' knowledge (with academic knowledge being the preferred knowledge to bring back in form the alleged cold), the social knowledge students brought into the classroom, can in fact be both 'rich', 'powerful' or 'academic'. Through the participatory approaches used in this research through the curriculum inquiry, two of the most significant findings from this relates to (1) the types and diversity of knowledge students gathered through their research inquiries, and (2) the social and emotional impact of gathering knowledge connected to students' funds of knowledge, and the process of also sharing that knowledge with others in a classroom context. I discuss the social and emotional impacts further in section 4.8 and 4.9, but in this section I focus on an important outcome of the curriculum work, namely that it created a space for diverse knowledge currently 'outside' the scope of the Key Stage 2 national curriculum, and it was knowledge that could also be labelled as 'academic' or 'disciplinary' knowledge.

There were moments of surprise and wonder for some students at the information they had found out, but also the information gathered by their peers in the class, which they were able to share as the expert with each other in the final lesson. Unlike performative multicultural approaches, the focus was on *all* students researching and sharing information, as opposed to being told what they ought to know about a particular group or place either by *Hannah* or myself. Each student shared their learning in a manner that was cooperative, not competitive as they moved around the class to quiz each other for information (Apple, 1996; Rodriguez, 2013). In this way each student had something to contribute towards their peers' learning, whilst simultaneously avoiding a homogenised representation of people and places, particularly as there were several students researching the same place in some cases, who had chosen to represent different aspects (Noble and Watkins, 2014).

Moreover, the knowledge gathered by students went beyond the Eurocentrism of traditional school curricular knowledge. In doing so, this also provided a broader insight for some students into what Geographical and Historical knowledge can be, outside of the confines of a limited national curriculum and what schools might traditionally represent such subjects as (Cowie et al., 2011). For instance, the resources *Hannah* had developed to first introduce the concept of 'physical' and 'human' features, reflected places only in Europe, North America and Australia.

Students demonstrated some skills and knowledge typically associated with the subject of Geography such as atlas reading, producing maps and identifying physical and human features associated with their choice of place – the latter point being the initial 'core knowledge' aim of the curriculum unit *Hannah* and I re-developed. But in addition, the research students had conducted and the conversations some students had with their families, elicited knowledge that went beyond what myself or *Hannah* knew, and reflected an early understanding of complex historical and political events, for example:

Geography/Politics

• Students of Iraqi and Somali heritage made clear distinctions between their identity and sense of place within the states.
    o One student carried out research on Somaliland noting the civil war which led to its self-declaration as an autonomous state (although this is not yet recognised by the international community), while the second student conducted their research on Somalia.
    o Similarly, two students researching Iraq, also noted their place as Kurdistan and represented the two flags the state has to distinguish between Kurdistan and Iraq.
• One student described Ukraine's independence from the USSR in 1991, with his own definition of communism.

History

• *Aida* and *Carlos* note how the Obelisk was moved from Ethiopia during Italian occupation
• *Marjani* talked about the capital city of Eritrea, Asmara having Italian looking buildings because of colonialism.
• Students looking at Iraq and Pakistan presented information on the ancient civilisations of Babylon and the Indus Valley. Both students said they found out about it from asking their parents for information, and were noticeably proud of that fact.
    o *Meryem* drew images and wrote information on King Hammurabi (known for creating some of the world's first legal codes of civil order).
    o *Seher* drew a picture of the Ishtar Gate (the architectural entrance into the city of Babylon).
• *Jake* noted the chemist Joseph Priestly from Leeds who inadvertently invented fizzy drinks, and also the Temple Mill building in Leeds which is famous for having an Egyptian architectural style, which Jake linked to Egypt for being *'famous for mixing seeds too'* (Hannah and I later found out the 'seeds' connection related to the milling of flax seeds).

I was personally struck by the Ishtar Gate *Seher* had drawn on her 'mood board' as I only knew of this when I was 18 on a trip to Berlin as what remains of the gate is on display in The Pergamon Museum there (*see* figure 6). Similarly, I happened to come across Hammurabi's codes *Meryem* described whilst on a trip to Paris. The codes are housed in another European museum, The Louvre. When I explain this to both of them, it seems as though they are both impressed that aspects of their heritage are connected to Europe, but also somewhat

confused as to how the architectural remains have moved from one place to the other. I note this interaction as illustrative of the potential 'social' knowledge has in instilling a level of curiosity, an academic interest to know more and ask further questions.

Developing an interest and sense of wonder amongst students is a central part of critical pedagogical practice (Berry, 1998). There is every chance that the 'everyday knowledge' *Meryem* and *Seher* have drawn on as part of their research, which was validated through the inquiry process, could now be a basis for them to develop further interests in History.

Fig 6: Example of Student Mood Board

Some these examples, such as students noting Italy's colonisation of Ethiopia, could be described as 'dark funds of knowledge' (Zipin, 2009), as they are issues connected to students lives but also to historical legacies of racial/ethnic inequality and oppression. While students may not be aware of such legacies, or at least in any detail *yet* – they provide a necessary counter to the absence and perhaps reluctance teachers may have in exploring such issues that might make themselves uncomfortable, but which are an inescapable part of students identities. For example, primary teachers are noted to be predominantly influenced by their own subjective memory of studying Humanities subjects, because they have limited time to develop the necessary subject expertise, if they do not have it already. (Martin and Catling, 2011). This is made further problematic as the curriculum experienced within higher education and teacher education is noted as being Eurocentric in its scope, with on-going debates around the culturally narrow selection of knowledge and perspectives that dominate higher education curricula and epistemology (Arday, 2020; Rudolph et al., 2018).

At the end of the unit, Hannah and I asked students to note any questions they had in response to the information they gathered from their peers. These were questions students had, based on the insights they had acquired from their 'fact-finding' mission. Being able to formulate questions and have the confidence to pose them is an important aspect of critical learning (Dei and Doyle Wood, 2006). Half of the class wrote at least one question they had, some of which were particularly interesting as initial starting points into much more complex histories, such as:

- When was Scotland a country? *(nationalism, devolution)*

- Are there any mosques in India? *(contentious issue given the rise of Hindu nationalism)*
- Why do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day in England? *(Migration histories)*
- Which continent is Iraq in? *(Whilst it is Asia, it is also described as 'part of the Arab world, or the 'Middle East – both arguably Western geographical constructs')*
- Who discovered coffee in Ethiopia*? (history, empire and globalisation)*

By facilitating the opportunity for students to draw on sources of knowledge traditionally outside of school, the results of the curriculum work highlighted the academic benefits of a curricular space that can draw out alternative sources of knowledge, beyond information presented by a teacher. Informed by critical pedagogy and the incorporation of students lived experiences through a FoK framework, new knowledge was produced and shared by students, that validated who they were and what they were interested in. The outcomes of the curriculum intervention suggest that social knowledge has academic value and potential beyond how it is reductively characterised as simply 'everyday' knowledge.

I accept that with an approach like this, it is difficult to know what the outcomes may be in another context remain as it depends on individual students. However, the point I want to emphasise is that the pursuit of social knowledge in itself has intrinsic value and carries meaning. Social realists argue social knowledge is only useful if it helps acquire objective, academic knowledge (Young, 2013; Muller, 2000). In this case, through their social knowledge, students developed knowledge outside of even the scope of academic disciplines within higher education and secondary school. The knowledge students produced simultaneously covered more 'technical' aspects of the core curriculum in terms of specific content and skills. More importantly, students were gathering knowledge outside the scope of a Eurocentric, national and school curriculum, and therefore resisting hegemonic structures.

4.7   Colonial Legacies and Stereotypes

Despite the diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds within the school population, there were a number of examples related to the resources used in the school, which did not reflect the reality of this diversity, particularly with regard to race and class. There were examples in the school that appeared to have what could be described as charity preconceptions of Africa specifically. Just as Borowski (2012) found during research with school aged children there was a general idea of the African continent as being primitive, poor and in need of aid. *Stephanie*, for example described Africa as a place where *'people hunt for food,'* and following a school council meeting led by two students from each year group, the outcome of the meeting was to raise money for charity to *'send to Africa.'* I then began to look more closely at the picture and story books around the school and found very little that reflected the diverse reality of the school, beyond outdated stereotypes. Some books about Africa that I managed to find depicted people from the continent as pastoral hunter-gatherers with traditional lives, or were fact books on animals (*see* fig 7 below for examples).
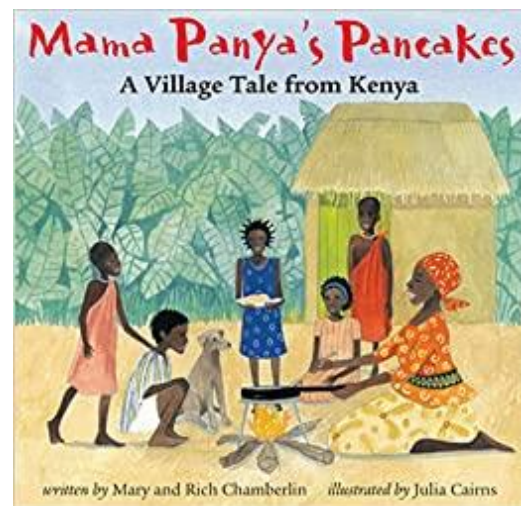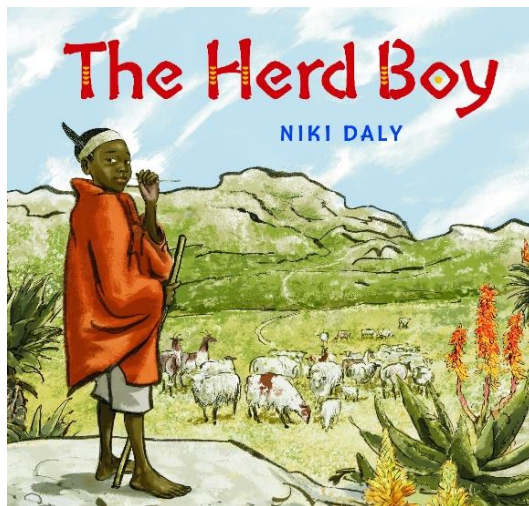
Fig 7: Books on 'Africa' at the school

The selection of books across the school presented a similar, singular story with the irony being the depiction of 'others' in Africa and the far-removed nature of these representations, from the reality of students of African heritage across the school (Layne and Alemanji, 2015). Such orientalising constructions of 'global others' is an issue that has received growing criticism in the media in response to events such as BBC's Comic Relief and the use of white celebrities as 'white saviours' to visits and launch charity appeals for a homogenised black Africa (Waterson, 2020b). Yet it was nonetheless surprising to observe in a classroom and diverse school of which at least ⅓ of all children have an African background, that some students' perceptions and indeed the classroom resources on Africa, presented an essentialist notion of Africa as 'traditional' or outside of modernity. This highlights how Africa is often homogenised as a singular entity and thought of as a place of humanist guilt and impoverishment (Ferguson, 2006).

During my time with the Year 4 class there were moments of anger for the students from African backgrounds as they began to learn about aspects of colonialism through the inquiry/research process. Following the half-term break, *Hannah* asks if anybody would like to share some of the information they had gathered over the holidays. Many students stood-up and volunteered, one of which was *Aida*. *Aida* initially described herself as being from the geographical case study area, but this had changed over the course of the curriculum work, leading her to now describe herself as Ethiopian. *Aida* at one point assertively stands up and talks about the ancient tower of Axum or the Obelisk. She describes how '*the white people stole it from us, but then we took it back'* before sitting down rather triumphantly. *Aida's* reference to 'white people' is to Italian colonisation. The tower was moved to Rome by Mussolini in 1937 during the occupation of Abyssinia, and did not return to Ethiopia until nearly 70 years later. This was a fact that *Carlos* too had researched. By the end of the curriculum work, *Aida* told me she was proud of herself and that her parents were proud of her too. This parental pride was evident at the open afternoon which *Aida's* mother attended. *Aida* felt she had learnt a great deal in having conversations with her parents and if given more time, said she would have included a more information in her final work.

The most surprising fact *Aida* noted however came from a short aspect of 'core knowledge' teaching I delivered to the class on physical features. Having known the class had studied Ancient Egypt and were familiar with the River Nile as it forms a large aspect of the civilisation's

historical narrative, I demonstrated and showed some documentary material on the source of the Blue Nile which starts in Ethiopia. The Blue Nile travels through Sudan and then merges into the River Nile. I purposefully included this knowing several students were of Ethiopian heritage. *Aida's* surprise, as she described it, was that '*they make it sound like it's just in Egypt.*' By '*they*' I inferred to mean the hegemonic narrative and focus of the curriculum they had covered in school. What is lesser known more broadly in the grand historical narrative on Ancient Egypt, are the ancient histories of neighbouring Sudan. Known as 'Kush' Sudan was home to the Ancient Nubian civilisation along the Nile Valley, known as the "Black Pharaohs" (Draper, 2008). However, its history and numerous pyramids are lesser known in dominant global history discourse, as its African people were thought to have been 'too black' by European archaeologists, Egyptologists and Historians in the 19th and 20th century, to have developed a civilisation as sophisticated as that of a 'lighter skinned' Egypt (Scared Rivers with Simon Reeve, 2014; The Rise of the Black Pharaohs, 2014).

Inadvertently learning about colonialism was common across the class given the range of African and Asian states the students' socio-cultural backgrounds reflected, which have either been colonised by Britain, France, Belgium and/or Italy. *Adwoa* for example, who described herself as Ghanaian had brought in a 10-page booklet she had made at home with the help of her parents on Ghana. Some of this included information on Ghana's first post-colonial leader Kwame Nkrumah, noting how the country was once ruled by the British. The majority of this initial research did not end up on her final mood-board to share with others, but the booklet provided an opportunity for me to talk through what she had found out. I ask *Adwoa* if she knew why Ghana had once been named the Gold Coast. When I explain that it was actually because of its gold supply and demand, *Adwoa* is wide eyed in what appears to be a mixture of pride and shock. An exasperated *Younis*, sat in the seat next to *Adwoa* subsequently shouts:

> '*I'm SICK of all these white people!*'

Four of the students plus *Adwoa* (all of African heritage) sat on the surrounding nest of tables immediately shout '*YEAH!*' in agreement. I queried *Younis* for further explanation.

> *Younis: 'Africa used to be rich and full of stuff and then the white people came and stole everything and now Africa has nothing...it's not fair.'*

I ask *Younis* where he got his information from and he said his older friend had told him about it. Whilst this perspective has some alignment with a charity narrative of a helpless, poverty stricken African continent - which masks the reality of wealth and metropolitanism that does exist in African states - the students in this instance are being exposed to the historical effects of racial inequality. Although the students do not yet fully understand the mechanics of how colonialism took root in Africa, there is a sense of injustice amongst the students, as well as frustration. In this case, being unafraid to asking difficult questions and being curious to know more, was stimulated directly because of the social knowledge connected to students backgrounds. In a sense, their social backgrounds give them what W.E Du Bois described as a 'double consciousness', in which they were gaining initial insights into racial exclusion and injustice and a way of seeing the world that most of the British society do not see (Meer, 2019).

4.8   Student 'Ability' and Engagement

What was particularly noteworthy during the course of the research was the difference in some students' engagement and effort throughout the unit compared to when I had observed them in prior lessons, which included Science, Literacy, R.E and Maths. These students in particular were termed colloquially as the 'lowers' – which also meant students had either a SEND, and/or emotional or behavioural difficulties. Moreover, all of these students were of colour. Each third of the classroom was physically organised in nests of tables reflecting students' academic ability. Whilst this was also for practical reasons for the teaching assistant to direct her focus and minimise potential disruption to other students, I did however find this unsettling as an outsider. It was clear students knew which 'group' they and their peers fell into. However, the 'lower ability' students were the students who appeared to be the most visibly engaged in the curriculum work, compared to other lessons.

One such student, *Marjani*, started to open up in confidence and speak to her peers and myself voluntarily. Typically, *Marjani* needed the full support of a teaching assistant and rarely said more than a handful of words in class per day. *Marjani's* mother came to the open-afternoon and said thank you to me for helping *Marjani* as she felt her improved confidence, interest in, and the final work produced had done them both proud. These students, who typically required more learning and teaching support relative to other students, worked independently without the need of a member of staff to hover over, encourage them or prompt them to remain on task. The change in their attitude to learning had surprised *Hannah*.

> *Hannah: 'Well...some of the children in the class who don't really put so much effort into their work in normal lessons, erm...their attitude towards learning improved greatly to be honest from that...it really captured their interest so that really surprised me with some of them...when you looked at their work, it was a shock! [mutual laughing] and you were like 'ohhh!''*

The reason for mine and *Hannah's* encouraging laughter was in relation to *Younis* and *Mohsin*. Both struggled to participate in class and complete the minimum work required during lesson time. Whilst *Younis* struggled to work through his emotions and easily entered into arguments with other students, *Mohsin* was often distracted. Yet, during the curriculum work both students were focused and engaged, and proactively asked for the help of staff when they felt they needed it. *Mohsin*, who at one point I had watched for 20 minutes struggle to copy the word 'Canada' correctly from a textbook in front of him (only to later spell 'Kanader') - was now copying out words such as 'Minaret' and 'Euphrates' alongside providing regular research updates such as: *'Miss, did you know about Britain's war in Iraq?.'* In conversation with *Hannah,* I decided to award *Mohsin* with a small gift for his effort and enthusiasm. He beamed with a combination of shock and delight, whilst the wider class looked on and clapped for him with supportive pride almost. When I award *Mohsin* his prize, he smiles from ear to ear and disbelievingly says *'for me!?'*. Afterwards, *Hannah* remarks to me

> *Hannah: 'Awww look at him, he's buzzin! He'll have never won anything before in school, so that would be really special for him.'*

Perhaps one reason for this positive impact on some students' engagement and attitude compared to 'regular' lessons, was that there was no fixed framework as to what knowledge *Hannah* and I were looking for or expecting students to display. Bar the core knowledge criteria

to present a clear understanding of physical and human features, students had free choice to be creative and work from their interests. This subsequently meant students were not being streamed from the outset based on institutionalised norms of ability, development or processes of teaching. In fact, the 'higher ability' students were most surprising from my perspective as the level of detail and creativity they had put into the work was comparatively less. For example, with one higher ability student, *Laura,* both *Hannah* and I had to encourage her to research information about the Peak District rather than just presenting images of herself there. For other 'higher ability' students the presentation of the work was neat, well organised and demonstrated impressive witing skills, but in some cases they were less visual or creative in display. This was despite working at a quicker pace and having had more time than other students in the class to work on it.

Another reason for this change it attitude towards learning, was perhaps because of the sense of agency students experienced. While the students set about working, *Hannah* often remarked that she felt like a *'spare part'* because she was generally not needed by the students – apart from the handful of students who need assistance on laptops or cutting out shapes. I asked students in their final evaluation survey what they perceived, if anything, was different about the curriculum intervention and the way they studied this topic, compared to how they usually do in class. The majority of students remarked:

> *'We were all doing something different'*
> *'We were in charge'*
> *'We were free'*
> *'We were independent'*

It was clear how much the students enjoyed the pedagogical space and *process* of learning. They had the independence and the (mostly) free choice to explore aspects of their identity, in a way that still covered 'core' knowledge requirements of the national curriculum. Each student worked independently, drawing on their social, cultural, household, and individual experiences and interests. (i.e., their FoK). By the end of the unit, each student expressed confidence in their ability to define and provide examples of human and physical features, which at the start of the unit previously, only one student was able to define both concepts successfully. From *Hannah's* professional assessment of the final work students produced, she noted students had developed greater competencies in fact-finding, selecting, organising and presenting information. However, the most noteworthy outcome of the curriculum intervention for *Hannah* was the level of participation and enthusiasm from all students.

> *Hannah: they were really excited about it, and SO proud of their work they achieved and wanted to show what they'd done...and did loads at home, even over the holidays. It was lovely, they just loved it!*

I received similar feedback from the PGCE placement students who had spent more intensive time throughout the week with the class, as opposed to my one afternoon a week. By providing students with the agency and opportunity to represent aspects of themselves and their histories through the mood board as an expressive vehicle, they became more invested in the process of learning. Students subsequently expressed a clear sense of pride about their own sociocultural backgrounds. Perhaps this was because students and their households were being recognised as holders of knowledge and being provided external validity (Amanti, 2005; Bernal, 2002). This particularly important amongst students from BME backgrounds who can

received mixed messages about what is to be valued in society and subject to distorted textbooks (Alexander et al., 2015; Yosso, 2002).

4.9   Hearts and Minds

At our first initial meeting, Hannah insisted on several occasions that 'we're *[the school] pretty good here as the children are from all over,'* suggesting that my research would have been *'better-off'* in schools where there is less ethnic diversity as '*they need it.*' I felt I would have to tread carefully and take a softer approach in how I framed the research, in order to develop the good working relationship needed for the collaborative aspect of the research to progress (Kemmis et al., 2014). However, as the research drew to a close with the 'open-afternoon', I was relieved at how pleased *Hannah* was with the intervention she may have initially felt lukewarm towards. *Hannah* frequently commented on how good the new curriculum unit was. As its implementation progressed, it motivated her to have several conversations with senior management about the research and insisted the curriculum work needed to be a necessary part of the Year 4 curriculum henceforth. *Hannah's* commitment to keeping the new curriculum unit in the future was a particular successful outcome for me. The shadow or hidden text behind *Hannah's* attitude initially, was perhaps that as a multicultural school, race and ethnicity were less of a curricula concern, or even that the understanding and existing practices of staff would already be adequate given the multicultural population of the school ((Rudolph et al., 2018; Maylor, 2010). From *Hannah's* reflections a few weeks after the curriculum work had finished, I felt I had won her round and provided a space for her to reflect on the wider purpose of schools.

> *Hannah: It's just emphasised how...how schools need to promote a sense of belonging in the classroom and understanding children and understanding where they come from and taking the time to understand things about them...and building a rapport with other children because it's a massive part of being a teacher and it just reinforces that and it just shows you the benefit of doing so - and the pride of the children! When they were going round collecting information from each other, they were **so** interested in each other and oh, it was lovely!'*

As part of social justice in education, it is deemed necessary for professionals to reflect on the wider purpose of education and knowledge (Giroux, 2010). However, outcome driven methods and a performance culture are argued to have eroded teacher agency (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2015). Priestly et al. (2012) stress that agency is not akin to autonomy, but instead relates to the responses made by individuals and the space to develop and reflect over time. Moreover, we should not assume that agency alone is positive, as it interacts with the beliefs and values of individual teachers (Priestly et al., 2012). For example, at the start of the research relationship *Hannah* was initially uncomfortable about the idea of a culturally selective curriculum. Perhaps she might have felt under scrutiny by me as a person of colour (Jesvudian and Wright, 2014), although 'culturally selective curriculum' was a watered down, shadow text for racial inequality. It would be unrealistic to assume that *Hannah* had dramatically changed from her initial reluctant position to one of high racial literacy in just five months (Pearce, 2005). However, change is incremental. At the very least, *Hannah* had moved from a place of avoidance to one of greater reflection. I had engineered an opportunity for *Hannah* to step back and reflect on the wider purpose of education with regard to socialisation and pedagogy, following the action of making a change in the curriculum (Biesta, 2015).

What the experience does emphasise is that alternative ways of framing issues around diversity and race in education are essential given the wider policy context of limited training on issues around race/ethnicity in teacher education. If teachers continue to be exposed to very little knowledge and training (through their personal or academic life, and then their PGCE or School Direct training), to what extent can we expect teachers to examine what they teach from a more critical *'why'* perspective in relation to social justice? As Harris and Clarke (2011) note in their research with student teachers, they became more understanding of the need to teach diverse topics, once they had engaged with the purpose of the curriculum and understood how to place and address diversity within their subject area.

In addition to the knowledge gains of students and their engagement with the unit, there was a noticeable level of respect and solidarity in the class which *Hannah* felt the curriculum experience had facilitated. This was not just between students, but between the students and *Hannah* also. Interviewing *Hannah* several weeks after I had left the school, she reflected on the curriculum work:

> *Hannah: I've learnt so much about everybody's backgrounds and it's been really amazing to see how proud they all are of who they are...and it's lovely, it's definitely brought us all together as a class a lot more I think.*
> *Aunam: Really! Do you reckon?*
> *Hannah: Yeah I think we have to be honest, they've all been a lot kinder to each other since they've done it! And I think it would have brought out a lot of confidence in everybody, I think that did.'*

From the final evaluation surveys, students noted they most enjoyed learning information about themselves and their families – previously untapped sources of knowledge (Bernal, 2002; Zipin, 2013). All students wanted to know more about their heritage or the places where their families had either migrated from, or had lived before. Around half of the students also commented that they enjoyed learning about each other in the class. This was also evident to *Hannah* as she described how respectful the students had been towards each other during the lessons, at the open-afternoon but also thereafter. Students also noted that they enjoyed the process of being the researcher and presenting knowledge to other people, with some realising:

> *'In this unit, I realised that we don't have to be all doing the same thing to learn'*

In *Hannah's* case, the impact of the curriculum work meant she was keen to take the work with her on to other schools, because of the solidarity she believed the work facilitated in the class. But in addition to the solidarity and sense of belonging the curriculum work facilitated, *Hannah* also felt the process had emphasised the capabilities of young students:

> *Hannah: sometimes we [teachers] underestimate how much they [students] can do by themselves and how independent they actually are*

No student disliked the unit with comments similarly ranging from:

> *'I loved it'*
> *'It's the best thing that we've done in school ever,'*
> *'I didn't like it when it ended,',*
> *'I enjoy it because it was fun.'*

As *Hannah* said, the unit captured their 'interest' and this was evident in their enthusiasm during the lessons, which was noted by the trainee PGCE students also. It was also apparent each afternoon as I entered the school grounds to crowds of the Year 4 students around my legs, asking me questions about the lesson or vying to tell me things related to their research. It was interesting to also note a gradual shift in two particular students' warmth towards me as they started to get to grips with and enjoy the new curriculum unit that *Hannah,* repeatedly told them was a direct product of my work with the school. Prior to the introduction of the unit, I often felt they avoided looking at me directly or did not respond when I asked them questions.

When I return to the school some weeks after the curriculum work to interview *Hannah*, I find that she is anxious and *'dreading'* telling me the bad news she has. Observing *Hannah's* state, I was immediately worried. She tells me that the caretaker had taken the work out of the classroom and binned all the students' mood-boards. 29 colourful A1 sized boards with pictures, photos and 3D objects attached to them. *Hannah* was very angry. I felt an urge to laugh in a simultaneously nervous and confused manner. I wondered whether the caretaker would have taken the initiative to bin 32 exercise books from the classroom. Apparently, he had not done anything like that before. I interpreted this at the time as an extension of the hierarchy placed on traditional textbooks and what may appear as an 'official' educational resource or present as evidence of 'learning' (Apple, 1996). However, when I discuss this with three friends of colour they mutually felt there was something more sinister at play. I am still undecided about this. *Hannah* and I both feel gutted for the students who were understandably upset, Luckily, Hannah had taken photos of each student standing with their work which she was hoping to print and frame for each of them to take home.

4.10   Conclusion

What the insights gathered from my research at *Brook Valley Primary School* suggest is that students have an understanding of what values are, as they receive a broader values education from within school but also from their family contexts. This is without having to align to a prescriptive identity marker such as British values, which is problematic as 'British' is implicitly understood by students as whiteness, or at least, as the antithesis of being Muslim, even amongst students of colour. To add to this, my findings support what has been highlighted in existing literature of the racism that occurs within primary schools including multicultural school contexts (Gayle, 2020; Welply, 2020), in addition to superficial practices towards diversity in the curriculum. I have highlighted the lens of whiteness Black History Month is filtered through, and the resources in the school that risk perpetuating singular stories of a poor, homogenous Africa. What my data emphasises in response, it that there is an important relationship between the National and school curriculum - what students receive - and how they subsequently understand themselves, others and the wider world. So what is clearly necessary therefore are counter stories and approaches to the curriculum that aim to increase a greater understanding of diversity, creative, and critical thinking. The hope of such approaches is in that students want to ask *why* and *how*, but also start to see their peers and the people around them as sources of knowledge too.

For some students having the space to make sense of multiple identities and the process of gaining external validation was an enriching experience, both in terms of gaining confidence and self-knowledge, but also as a means of increasing participation and engagement. What

the insights gathered from my research at the school suggest, is the overarching value and importance of what is termed as social or 'everyday' knowledge and its (a) curricula value and academic potential, and (b) its role in increasing the diversity of knowledge and students have access to. Moreover, this is knowledge which does not become solely dependent on the specific knowledge and subjectivities of individual teachers. Whilst *Hannah* may not have understood the purpose or value of the research initially, she would not be alone in this either given that teacher education relation to race and social justice is limited (Lander, 2014a). In light of these constraints, it is important to create spaces for participatory action and reflection, as seeing the outcome of the curricula intervention, ultimately altered *Hannah's* initial beliefs and perceptions and facilitated a wider reflection on the purpose of schools and the importance of strengthening social solidarity in the context of a classroom.

I acknowledge *Brook Valley Primary School* is a single school reflecting a microcosm of superdiversity, and so the outcomes and impact discussed in this chapter are unique to just this class of students. However, what the data suggests, is that all students including those perceived as being less 'academic' or 'capable' as independent learners, were more likely to be interested in and engaged with a curriculum that drew on pedagogical approaches that sought to mobilise their social knowledge of FoK for curricular use. Social knowledge has the potential to disrupt the Eurocentric, dull curriculum students typically experience by producing counter-knowledge or stories that reflect students social and historical realities, but also stretch the imagination as to what 'academic', allegedly 'powerful knowledge' subjects such as History and Geography can be and not just what the national curriculum says it is (Cowie et al., 2011). For some students, this was learning a darker truth about colonialism, for others it was feeling as though spaces and places connected to them and their family histories had external validity in the context of an 'official' classroom environment (Alexander et al., 2015).

Chapter 5: Analysis - Moorside High School

In this chapter I present the main themes and insights gathered from my research with the Year 8 History class and their teacher *Paul*, at *Moorside High School*. The sources of data I draw on include; classroom observations, interviews and discussions with *Paul*, survey responses, general conversations with students through the course of the fieldwork and also the work students produced in class. From this, I reflect on students understanding of British values in greater detail than compared to the primary school students. I was able to capture comparatively richer data on this topic given the research was set around a British history unit of study, but also 29 students completed a survey which had questions on British values. I also discuss students experiences of the wider History curriculum, as well as the outcomes of the new curriculum intervention *Paul* and I had collaboratively developed. I reflect on how History is perceived as a subject, but also consider the broader historical narratives that permeate the national curriculum and subsequently influences how students perceive Britain and its relationship to the wider world.

As providing links to official documentation would reveal the identity of the school, I draw on information retrieved from Ofsted reports and the school's website to provide some contextual information on the school to ground this analysis. *Moorside High School* is a larger-than-average secondary school of around 1,600 pupils, with a particular focus on the arts. Rated as 'Good' in its last Ofsted inspection five years before my fieldwork took place, the school serves a growing number of BME students but still remains majority White-British and affluent. The teaching staff at the school is also majority white. The school has a much lower proportion of students labelled as SEND and Pupil Premium than found nationally. During conversations with *Paul*, the school ethos was described as one that promoted individualism and self-expression but also inclusivity. *Paul* agrees there can be a tension but remained hopeful and optimistic that it is possible to achieve the right balance between the two ideas. From speaking to students outside of the case study class who were the children of parents I knew, they described a tendency amongst some school students to socially diverge along lines of ethnicity/religion. One student of mixed-race heritage described a situation to me in which she was made to feel by her peers that she had was 'one or the other'.

5.1   Students' Understanding of British Values

The majority of students judging from their survey responses felt confident they understood British values and had some familiarity with the concept either through PSHE in the school, or from their primary schools. Yet, the majority of students were unable to define what a 'value' in itself meant in practice or provide an example of a value was, where a definition was not possible (as the primary school students did). Most students that participated in the survey commonly understood a value to be something related to a vague general sense of 'worth' or was just intrinsically a *'good thing.'* Students for instance, were unable to describe why or in what way a value might be important. There were two students in the class who described the purpose in having values, as:

> *'Something to follow to be good members of a community'*

> *'Something that is part of you that makes you a good person'*

However, the majority of students described values as being similar to rules, or regulations to follow, or a descriptor of something:

> *'An action or responsibility that someone follows everyday in their daily lives, that helps them to live or do things better or more controlled'*

> *'Something that makes something what it is'*

> *'Something which relates to the worth of something'*

> *'Something that makes it unique from other things,'*

Other students, perhaps having been more consciously aware of my research interest in British values, defined a value in the context of a nation:

> *'Something a country or person has that is a good thing about them.'*

> *'Something that the country focuses on and has achieved.'*

Some students did offer examples of values they thought were important and missing from the list of British values, which included; *'being good towards the environment and animals'*, *'equality'* and *'embracing other people's opinions and being open-minded.'* However, this was a small minority (only 3/29 students), with most students stating that either the list of British values were 'good' and covered everything. Given this broader understanding of values amongst students, it seemed the additional pre-fix of 'British' would suggest to students that British values are prescriptive of something one has to follow and/or describes what being a British citizen means. Either way, the lack of clarity around what values are may be a considerable factor in explaining why students were subsequently less critical of British values or generally unable think of alternative values.

What was also unfamiliar to many students, was the specific meaning of some of the individual British values. Furthermore, the ambiguity of how British values applies to the context of day-to-day life, served for some confusion amongst the students. *Paul* and I had anticipated that rule of law or individual liberty may have been less widely understood amongst students. Indeed, some students did highlight individual liberty as being *'too vague'* and one they understood the least:

> *'Does it mean you are free to do anything you want? Or does it mean that you shouldn't be confined by other people?'*

This tension between concepts promoting individualism but set within the context of national values, was reflected in one student's response to the value of individual liberty:

> *'...it means that I can do what I want and not be told what to do.'*

However, to mine and *Paul's* surprise, more students (12/29) expressed that they were specifically unsure what tolerance meant. They were either unsure how tolerance fitted in with the other British values or what it actually means to practice tolerance. Research by Weymss (2006) has specifically criticised tolerance as a British value, highlighting its incompatibility

with the notion of mutual respect since tolerance does not necessarily denote respect. Rather, tolerance is used to regulate aversion of the 'other.' Moreover, the 'failure of multiculturalism' was attributed to an environment of excessive tolerance according to David Cameron at the Munich Security Conference (PMO, 2011). From Cameron's logic it is unclear why tolerance forms part of the 'muscularly liberal' British values. Although, as Joppke (2014) argues, the emphasis on tolerance is more of a rhetorical tool directed towards Muslims to reinforce perceptions of alleged cultural incompatibility.

Overall, students understanding of British values were interpreted by students in the vein of 'muscular liberalism' (PMO, 2011), which emphasises the relationship between the state and the individual, as opposed to fostering a sense of public responsibility or activism (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Unlike the primary school students who were either more exposed or receptive towards a values education, the secondary students here appeared to have been socialised out of it in contrast. This highlights a potential issue between how students understand values more generally and their subsequent interpretations of British values, its purpose and subsequent level of criticality towards it.

5.2   Understanding Democracy

Paul and I aimed to embed British values teaching in some form across the curriculum unit. Ofsted advice and guidance on British values has increasingly suggested an embedded curriculum-based approach, emphasising History as opportune subject area to cover British values (Spielman, 2018). We decided that students being able to define democracy beyond simply electoral voting would be a beneficial aim. To do this, we were keen to contextualise and broaden students' understanding of democracy by highlighting examples from within British History which could be described as non-democratic. For example, *Paul* described events related to British imperial actions such as the Bengal Famine for students to reflect on. We also both decided to include topics such as the treatment of Black transport workers in Bristol in the 1950s/60s, and the 1980s Miners Strikes. Such topics covered aspects of British political and social history, as well as being examples of more local history which Harris and Reynolds (2014) note as being particularly positive in relation to students' enjoyment of the subject. Our source materials included: audio-visual footage focusing on what is commonly dubbed the Battle of Orgreave in 1984, newspaper articles published during the strikes in both in support and opposition, and images of different coalition groups in support of striking miners.

Despite these examples throughout the unit, most students continued to equate democracy with elections and voting. Most students' understanding of democracy was focused around party politics, as opposed to an evolving process of challenge, or having the right and means to express opposition. Here is a summary of typical responses from students:

> *'Democracy is where citizens vote for a political party.'*

> *'Democracy is a fair voting system.'*

> *'A democracy is where people of the public vote for something they want. This is a political system'*

'I think democracy means it's a system of the government where we vote who we want to be whatever.'

Students in the school participate in 'school votes' which mirror general elections/referenda and have a voice through a formal student-led school council. *Paul* firmly believed that the student voice is respected in the school, which he described as being a product of the schools senior leadership team and proactive approach.

*Paul: '...there is room for discussions to occur, so the Student Council is a very active body and strong body, students have a voice and a say - and staff have a voice and say. **All** staff.'*

A large number of students also participated in the Climate Strikes in 2018 with the schools permission as an exercise in their civic voice beyond 'formal' processes. Yet this, and the examples throughout the curriculum unit, was not reflected in the definitions and explanations students' later wrote about democracy by the end of the unit. Since evaluating the responses from students in the survey and from reading their exercise books, *Paul* and I discussed and subsequently adapted the materials to make the link between civil rights and democracy as an on-going process, more explicit. Given the celebratory, performative approach in how British values has been interpreted or risks being taught in schools (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2017; Pells, 2017; Race, 2020), *Paul* and I were keen to ensure that students had some understanding of protest and dissent as being a central part of democracy and citizenship. Currently, such a perspective on British values teaching is not expressed in official government guidance, nor have schools adopted a more critical approach to teaching British values (Vincent, 2019). The focus and examples noted in official guidance (DfE 2014a: 2014b: 2014c) is instead on students understanding the advantages and disadvantages of democracy in comparison to other states. The purpose of such an approach would suggest implicitly embedding a sense of superiority in British democracy as a finished product by comparing democratic systems to non-democratic (and therefore 'extreme') counter examples.

5.3   Criticism of British values

Students were asked in their surveys for their perspective on the wider significance or reason *for* British values. Responses typically correlated British values with a necessary or desirable requirement for residence or legal citizenship. That said, there was a small number (4/29) of students who were critical of the 'British' aspect of the British values in some form, although this indicated a conflation somewhat between values and national identity.

'A lot of people think it is what makes you British, but I don't think it should only be to make you British'

'I think it's wrong for them to be represented as British.'

'I don't think children should be taught how to be British using these values because children should not think you HAVE to have these values to be British or that British people have these values.'

'I don't think this [British Values] is what makes me British. I think the only thing that makes me British is the language I speak and that I was raised here.'

For these students British values did not fully encapsulate what being British meant for them. There were a handful of other students that were critical of British values to some extent. However they were not critical of the concept itself, but rather that they did not feel represented by the value of democracy specifically as they were not yet old enough to vote. In general, *Paul* described students' understanding and perceptions of British values as being largely passive and performative. Mainly, this was just additional content that students are required to learn in school.

> *Paul: 'It was a-nother topic on the curriculum. It's not seen as something that pervades a number of areas or parts of their lives.'*

Paul argues British values are more fleetingly acknowledged by students rather than acting as a set of values to seriously acknowledge, embody or even interrogate. *Paul* did not believe it should be the job of any school to promote British values, and extended his criticism of the policy by arguing that it appeared to be an attempt by the state *'to commodify and coerce people's behaviour into certain directions'* on issues which should be decided by the people. *Paul's* perspective on the issue was prior to me outlining the policy history of British values in relation to the Prevent strategy. Although the origin of the policy was unknown to *Paul* prior to the interview, *Paul* describes it as a process of governmental 'creep' and highlights the danger in values that are nationalistic in focus, as it risks creating exclusion. *Paul* did however favour the idea of promoting what he described as more universal values in place of British values - citing *'dignity, justice, decency, fairness'* as values towards building an inclusive society.

Whilst there was some criticism of British values as a concept as discussed earlier in relation to democracy, there was no sizable rejection of British values from students. Rather, they were experienced as values that were interpreted as (a) another thing they as students in school had to learn about, (b) as residents of the country they needed to know of (at least rhetorically), or (c) those who may be 'newer' to the country needed to know of – suggesting they were values inherent to them already. This highlights the problematic nature of the state loosely defining a set of values and embedding this into the apparatus of education, particularly when this is not tempered through a broader values education in school. It may be reasonable to expect that secondary schools would be less required or expected to impart values education compared to primary schools, given the nature of a subject based curriculum. However, it does raise the question as to why more social and emotional aspects of learning seems to dissipate or depreciate in value as students move from primary into secondary education.

5.4   British Values as 'Everyday Bordering'

Leading on from the passive acceptance of British values, the majority of students felt that teachers should teach about British values because it related to learning the "codes" to being a British citizen. Thus, most students did not see anything problematic or exclusionary about British values as a concept. Survey responses to questions asking whether students saw any problems with British values; whether they felt included in the values, and whether teachers should teach about them, yielded responses such as:

> *'No because we are in Britain, so we should learn about our country and their rules.'*

> *'Yes because everybody has to follow the law.'*

> *'Yes [I feel included] because it includes everyone who has a British citizenship or passport.'*

> *'No, because if people are going to stay here and live in Britain they would need to know about the values.'*

These responses suggest that students were more likely to view British values as a set of nationalistic rules and regulations to adhere to, rather than principles to guide how we relate towards others more generally. This is not surprising given students' general interpretation of values which were seen as (extrinsic) rules, not (intrinsic) beliefs. Combined with students' general understanding of values, it is therefore reasonable that students would understand the concept as being a mode of citizenship, in a legal or documented sense. However, the example response above stating '*if people are going to stay here'* could be seen in the context of 'everyday bordering' (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). This is a racialised discourse which has seeped into society's front-line institutions such as the NHS and schools, to regulate diversity. The student's response uses a conditional *'if'* and *'they'* which appears to liken knowledge of the British values as a test of citizenship or legitimacy to remain.

There were further examples of students using the detached term *'they'* in reference to migration, which is discussed in greater detail in [section 5.5](#) to follow. Everyday bordering describes how this anti-pluralist discourse is used day-to-day to police not only national borders but increasingly internal borders and *who* has the legitimate right to remain. All of which is marred with 'common-sense' populist discourses on the dangers of 'too much' diversity/immigration (Kundnani, 2014). The racialised system of everyday bordering is reflected in the 'hostile environment' celebrated by the Home Office at the launch at the Immigration Act 2014, which has falsely targeted the legal citizenship of those racialised as 'other' and therefore less desirable as an immigrant (Jones et al., 2017). Some examples of this include the on-going 'Windrush Scandal' of deportations and false offences (Gentleman, 2020), to the 'Go Home' vans purposefully parked in areas of greater ethnic diversity; a phrase echoing the racist abuse endured by racialised minorities (Jones et al., 2017).

The subtle impact of an increasingly racialised discourse around British citizenship was somewhat evident in one students' problematization of Muslims, but also in the reluctant distancing some students of colour exhibited during teaching on the topic of migration. Students had been learning about the British withdrawal from India and exploring the question: *'Why did Britain leave India in 1947?'* The following lesson, *Paul* asks the class for a short recap of what they had learnt in the previous lesson. No student rushed to answer. Eventually Paul picks *Rosie*, and asks her for a reason why Britain left India. After a long pause, *Rosie* replies:

> *Rosie: '...because of the Muslims'.*
> *Paul: 'What do you mean by that?'*
> *Rosie: 'That the British couldn't control 'em'*

This response was in spite of a large part of the teaching looking at a range of historically debated factors such as: the change to a Labour government in 1945 leading to a shift in national priority towards post-war reconstruction and the welfare state, the effort of Indian troops in WWII, Britain developing closer ties to the US, events such as the Bengal famine and Indian 'nationalist' protests for independence. Yet, *Rosie* highlights 'Muslims' and 'control'

as a factor that neither *Paul* or I had framed the actions of the Muslim League as such. What *Rosie's* comment is indicative of perhaps is the 'Muslim problematic' (Miah, 2017) - a discursive logic that upholds an increasingly racialised state in which Muslims are pathologized as a threat to liberal 'Western' values (Sian et al., 2013) or constructed as inherently 'difficult.'

In the context of an institutionalised racial state, perhaps this too impacted the behaviour of some students of colour within the class during the teaching of migration - specifically when groups were assigned to research and present information on case studies drawn from the *Our Migration Story* school resources. The group tasked with looking at Caribbean immigrants to London for the transport industry, had two students of colour present. *Paul* asked them for more details about the nature of the story. Both students of colour were reluctant to talk about the story compared to their willingness to answer other questions posed by *Paul*. *Paul* asked the group if they could name cities other than London *'perhaps somewhere closer to home'* where we would find immigrants from the Caribbean *'or even Pakistan during this period'* (based on the case study a previous group in class had presented). They remained silent. After a pregnant pause, one student of Pakistani heritage suggests, *'Manchester.' Paul* was attempting to encourage the students to draw a parallel with the geographical case study area and its own migration history. However, I sensed that the students of colour may have seemed embarrassed at potentially being linked to the word 'immigrant' - despite having immigrant parents and the demographic reality of the geographical area. I interpreted their silence to some degree through my own likely reaction at that age to disassociate. I would have stayed quiet to prevent potential challenges around my British credentials in some way by being linked to the word 'immigrant.'

There is evidence here that suggests that how students understand the role of British values is inextricably tied to wider policy and populist discourses, which reflect anti-immigration rhetoric and an increasingly racialized state. While the students may not be conscious of the parallels in how they think with institutionalised racism, it again highlights the dangers of promoting nation based 'British values' in such a context. For instance, former Prime Minister David Cameron on the subject of British values remarked also that, 'we are making sure new immigrants can speak English, because it will be more difficult for **them** to understand these values, and the history of our institutions, if **they** can't speak our language [emphasis added].' (Cameron, 2014).

5.5   The Colonial Underpinnings of Britishness

From classroom observations and responses to survey questions, there were examples of a sense of British superiority embedded in how students interpreted Historical events and some aspects of the Geography curriculum. This either reflected the historical reality of a British culture and history seeped in colonialism, or echoed that of a colonial mindset in British superiority on a global scale. Students were asked in their survey what historical people/events/facts they most associated with Britain, given the context of the research taking place within History. Students repeatedly mentioned: *bad weather, fish and chips, music, Brexit, the monarchy, tea* and the *English language*. The latter example in this list in particular reflects a common conflation of Britishness with Englishness. Tea is a common stereotype associated globally with Britain and one of the main stereotypes often depicted on display

boards on British values are cups of tea (Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2019). Tea blending companies such as the 'English Tea Shop' or 'Yorkshire Tea' have branded themselves as British tea, which David Olusoga describes as 'linguistic tricks' which white-wash and disconnect it from reality (Southbank Centre, 2018). The colonial history and popularisation of tea into British life which is rooted in British neoliberal imperialism and the creation of plantations in South Africa and South Asia more specifically, is less conventionally known or acknowledged (Rappaport, 2017). In the nineteenth century, The East India Company monopolised the global production of tea and its trade across parts of Asia, whilst the British government popularised tea drinking amongst the British public knowing the Company could earn greater income from the tax generated on sales (History Extra, 2019; Rappaport, 2017).

Two students mentioned *'chicken tikka masala'* as something they most associated with Britain. I found this surprising to read from students in 2019. When I had been in school and later studied History and Politics at undergraduate level, this food item was a notable reference point both in academic literature on national identity (Modood, 2005; Buettner, 2008), and popular discourse around multiculturalism in the early 2000s. The late Robin Cook heralded it as Britain's national dish (Cook, 2001). The combination of 'Eastern' flavours adapted to suit a Western palette was cited as a marker of progress in British race relations and the cultural adaptability of post-imperial Britishness. However, these symbols associated with a 'celebratory multiculturalism' were criticised as a smokescreen for the structural reality of racism and exclusion that underlies British citizenship (Parker, 2000). For Robin Cook there was at least a surface level political optimism in multiculturalism, in the context of devolution and re-galvanised opposition to immigration and the European Union (Uberoi and Modood, 2013). Two decades later there is an active rejection of multiculturalism in mainstream political discourse as governments have continued to intervene to define the national-cultural identity - interventions which Parekh (2000) warned against if multiculturalism were to thrive. Still, I was surprised to read that even two students had linked Chicken Tikka Masala to Britishness now. If the surveys had not been anonymous, I would have followed-up the reason why students had chosen this (as well as other responses students noted). Instead, *Paul* and I had kept the questionnaire anonymous, so students did not feel like it was a test or that we were looking for particular answers.

Meanwhile, beyond what could be described as surface-level or symbolic ideas of Britishness or national identity, there were many examples students mentioned both in the surveys and throughout the teaching of the curriculum unit, which could be interpreted as a sense of national pride or even a belief in Britain's superiority in the world. This included *'winning wars'* to Britain being *'wealthy'* and *'powerful'* compared to other states. As the teaching of the curriculum unit progressed, there were scattered comments that reflected an internalised narrative of Britain being inherently better or more desirable than other places. For example, during the topic of Migration (1948-2004) and teaching of different 'push-pull' factors related to migration in the immediate post-war period, some students (white-British) made the following comments in both their written work and verbally when *Paul* presented them with the question, *'why did Britain experience migration after 1945'*:

> *'Because Britain has a lot of money and better education so they'd wanna come here.'*

> *'Because they're poorer and Britain is better.'*

> *'People wanted to migrate to Britain as it is quite rich and there is good education and free health care service.'*

> *'I'm surprised the government gave them passports to be honest, I thought people wouldn't want them here.'*

This was in spite of information provided during lessons on: the post-war Labour government welfare reforms and the need for workers; Britain owing the largest amount of international debt than any other state in 1945; food rationing continuing into 1947; and information about the British Empire and the invitation extended to people from former colonies to migrate. It could be argued that these comments are reflective of current populist, right-wing discourses around immigration to Britain. These comments made by students reflects a deeply embedded notion of Britain as a wealthy, great power in a global context and inherently accepted as fact. In reality, Britain's income inequality is the largest of any other state in Western Europe (OECD [no date]).

However, the comparison of Britain as superior to other states was subtly persistent in how students interpreted historical events. On the task set by *Paul* to write down the reasons why Britain withdrew from India, one student wrote:

> *'Another reason Britain was stealing food of India. This meant lots of people died of starvation in India. India is a poorer country than Britain so it was hard for India.'*

The student in this example is referring to the Bengal Famine 1943 in which revised historical accounts note Churchill's complicity in the death of millions in the Bengal region. Crops were stockpiled and redirected towards Britain, Europe or to the White-British living in India, whilst transport large enough to acquire imports from neighbouring Burma were destroyed, in addition to colonial practices of rural land grabbing and reserving such land solely for export business (Mukerjee, 2011). In this sense, the rural population of Bengal were made 'poorer' by British actions, whilst Britain had amassed greater wealth out of the resources of India. Although the student in the example notes the unfair act of 'stealing', it is held together with an underlying belief that Britain is richer and would have been able to fare somewhat better than India had under the same circumstances. As part of building a critical race curriculum Yosso (2002, p.98) argues that we must challenge such 'dominant social and cultural assumptions regarding culture and intelligence, language and capability' which is impacting students' perceptions of Britain and the wider world.

The nature of these responses and wider class discussions with *Paul* also reflected what students had been learning in their Geography lessons about 'global development' - or rather learning how to classify the world. When *Paul* asked the class what information they could use to find out if a country was *'better than another,'* students quickly recalled a range of indicators such as life expectancy, Gross National Income and population density. Students across the class responded particularly quickly and eagerly to that particular question from *Paul*. Perhaps geographical ways of thinking appear as more 'objective' academic information to students, and therefore easier to have more definitive right/wrong answers compared to History which relies on interpretation. However, Geography knowledge on global development in this case, is perpetuating ahistorical thinking behind why some countries are wealthier and therefore perceived to be 'better' than others. It is representing a single story of progress and

development, which has negative implications for developing a critical understanding of global issues (Andreotti et al., 2018).

This is made further problematic given the nature of a subject based curriculum which means Geography and History are often seen as a 'one-or-the-other' choice or pathway. As secondary students are primed to consider which subjects they want to continue on to GCSE level by Year 9, this means students in Year 8 are already considering which subjects to 'drop' or switch-off from, in preparation for what Paul terms the *'pre-GCSE'* phase. It was evident in a number of students survey responses when asking them if they were considering studying History next year, of this battle between the subjects.

> *'Because Geography is more about stuff that happens across the world'*
>
> *'Geography is less work.'*
>
> *'I'm better at Geography than History so no'*
>
> *'You have to remember lots of dates'*
>
> *'It's a harder subject'*

Some students' level of comfort or enjoyment of Geography was noticeable at their *'oohs'* and enthused studying of an A4 sheet of paper of four world maps depicting different moments in time and the corresponding scale of the British Empire. It was clear from more informal discussions with students that their perceived sense of ability in a respective subject and its assessment methods, influenced students' subject interests and choices (Ofqual, 2017). For example, History was thought to have too much writing in comparison to Geography, with some students suggesting it was more difficult as a result. Perhaps this sense of comparative ease with Geography was based on it having more 'objective' or 'right' answers. For a handful of students, even though they liked both History and Geography - they would still choose Geography. This means Key Stage 3 would be the last time some students ever study History (Mansfield, 2019).

Students' perceptions as to what subjects are about and who they are for, is somewhat shaped by the scope of the national curriculum and therefore what students have been narrowly steered to think the subject is. With History, the lack of diversity in the curriculum in including lesser known stories related to class, race and the wider world, combined with assessment methods that rely heavily on writing - is argued to have decreased students' interest in the subject. These school experiences of History are argued to impact the disciple of History which is noted as having remained persistently white and affluent (Atkinson et al., 2018). Critical race theorists emphasise the need for interdisciplinary thinking, analysis and methods in order to challenges dominant cultural assumptions (Hlyton, 2012; Yosso, 2002). However, the opportunity to develop interdisciplinary knowledge and teaching, between History and Geography in this case, is limited. In policy, interdisciplinarity has been overly associated with competency-based learning, branded as a policy failure of New Labour which had 'dumbed' students down of 'academic' knowledge according to Conservative politicians (Willamson, 2020; Gibb, 2015, DfE, 2016).

5.6   'Britain's not like that now'

Students' perceptions of British history indicated a teleological view of the British story. Students implicitly understood the British narrative as being one of progress. Moreover, the specific events and people students noted at the start of the unit, were those associated with a culturally white Britain. This shows that students prior knowledge is often derived from collective memory and historical cultures (Weinburg et al., 2007). At the start of the Unit, students were asked in groups to discuss and write down what they knew already of the period 1945-2000. Responses included: *England winning the World Cup in 1966, David Bowie, The Beatles* and the *death of Princess Diana.* Other responses included a general progression towards *'more equality'* but also more specifically *'the legalisation of gay marriage'* - although gay marriage had only been legalised in 2013 and not in the period of history under study. This was perhaps indicative of students more general perceptions of Britain as being inherently 'progressive' throughout History. For example, some students found it particularly surprising to know that free secondary education and healthcare had not always been the case.

There were further examples of students' surprise after being presented with new information that sat in contrast with what their image and perceptions of Britain are now. Around ⅓ of students were specifically surprised when asked in the survey, of the treatment of people of colour and people from working class backgrounds. They had been learning aspects of British social history which were unknown to them previously - all of which were purposefully incorporated by *Paul* and I as part of developing an intersectional perspective of social categories of oppression (Hylton, 2012). Examples included the Bristol Bus Boycott 1963, Grunwick Strike led by South Asian women in the 1970s, the murder of Stephen Lawrence 1993, the Miners Strikes in the 1980s and the coalitions in support of strike action e.g. women's groups, Asian youth movement, and Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners.

> *'Discrimination in law against LGBT and Blacks because England likes to be polite and you'd think they'd promote equality to all'*

> *'I'm surprised how they [migrants] were treated when they got here.'*

> *'East african asian picket line, I'd never heard about it before.'*

> *'The Battle of Orgreave because so many people showed up, 5000 miners and 5000 policemen - why would you send that many?'*

> *'When I found out that health care wasn't free before 1948, it surprised me because I thought it was always free.'*

> *'I'm surprised Churchill didn't win the election in 1945 given he was the one who won the war.'*

The last quote regarding the Conservative electoral defeat in 1945 was echoed by several other students. There was perhaps a sense of surprise that the legacy of 'winning of a war' would not be enough to win another election, or perhaps an assumption that Churchill would have been more liked by the British voters at that time. It not surprising that students would think this however, given the national story, emotional and symbolic pride attached to Churchill. When Churchill's legacy faces historical scrutiny, such debates are reduced to being

cancel culture 'myths of the old hard left' (Johnson, 2019). Still, it was unclear even after being presented with new information which surprised students, to what extent this altered their overall understanding of Britain as an inherently fair and equal society. For some students these examples just seemed a bit 'out of character.'

> *'Miners strike because it was very unfair and different to what would have happened now.'*

> *'I think the issue of the boy [Stephen Lawrence] getting killed because of his race while he was waiting at the bus stop is surprising due to it doesn't seem like it would ever happen in Britain.'*

> *'[I am surprised by] how black people were discriminated against so much because it's changed so much over time up to today.'*

These students expressed that such events were surprising to them because Britain is not typically 'like' this for them. The examples presented here indicate an assumption amongst students that Britain is inherently a place of 'fair play' and equality - a sentiment expressed by David Cameron in relation to British values (Cameron, 2014). It may be that because the focus of the curriculum on issues around race and racism are predominantly focused on US history, there is less awareness of the legacies of slavery, imperialism and racism in the British context (Traille, 2007). Students at the school typically cover the US Civil Rights struggle at Key Stage 3. With regard to issues around wider socio-economic inequalities, students typically cover periods which seem far removed from contemporary Britain, e.g. squalor and public health in industrial Britain, or the Poor Law system of Victorian England. Hawkey (2015, p.6) argues that 'class has slipped from the focus in history classrooms and may even, perhaps, be regarded as a controversial subject to raise' now. *Paul* does not singularly raise class as a controversial issue but raises it as one intersectional issue including race, that in combination results in a curriculum that lacks critical perspective and diversity.

> *Paul: 'I would say stories around the issue of anything to do with power so issues where race, class, gender, disability...those stories are just not given enough credence, they're not put **into** the mix of the actual curriculum, they're sometimes put on as an aside or you have a special week or month'*

The curriculum currently from *Paul's* perspective is limited in social history and when it comes to digging deeper around issues of power. *Paul* insisted that the curriculum needs to be going beyond surface level approaches to diversity to help students think more critically about historical issues. *Paul* describes how he likes to research and integrate different or *'atypical voices'* to put into the curriculum because:

> *Paul: 'I think it's something that's really really important...because too often, the History narrative has been told by certain people in a particular way.'*

The perspectives of the students and the level of surprise they expressed in response to examples of racism, strikes, Churchill's electoral defeat and the treatment of migrants, provides some insight into particular hegemonic, Historical narratives students are likely to be exposed to. What this experience suggests is that greater knowledge of times when Britain has acted contrary to its own alleged values are necessary to highlight, to create a deeper, more critical understanding of British history (and contemporary society) but also of social

inequality. At present, many students were unaware of even the more 'abberant' forms of racism post-racial equality discourse relies on (Warmington, 2020), from which to even begin developing a more nuanced understanding of the ideology and structures that uphold racism and social inequality.

5.7   A 'joined-up' History

A key aim *Paul* and I were conscious of when developing the curriculum unit, was to include content that could help facilitate a more 'joined-up' historical understanding amongst students. Given the nature of a subject based curriculum and the chronological compartmentalisation of History into periods of time, our aim was to demonstrate relationships between different historical events and draw parallels between a 'then' and 'now'. We aimed to contextualise 'British' history in the period 1945-2000 as a story of global interactions, to encourage students to think beyond the confines of just the nation-state. Our joined-up approach influenced our decisions in three ways, through (1) the content selected for the unit, (2) the disciplinary skills we hoped students would advance, and (3) the types of activities and assessments developed. There was some impact on students which appeared to be a combination of the three decisions we had taken. This was notably through the links students drew between what they had learnt in the unit and what they subsequently chose to research as part of their 'significant stories' assessment. In addition, more than half of the students in the class also self-reported greater levels of confidence in some critical thinking skills, which included: questioning audio-visual sources and making judgements about an event/issue or fact.

In terms of content, the aim was to draw on topics students already had some knowledge of through the school curriculum, so students had the opportunity to develop a more longitudinal perspective. For example, this meant including teaching on the British Empire in India as *Paul* had previously developed a Year 7 unit of work on the 1857 Indian Mutiny against the East India Company. *Paul* had developed this unit of work driven by his own interest in the topic and was confident that students had responded particularly positively to it. I noticed this myself from how more forthcoming students were in recapping what they had learnt last year from the unit specifically, compared to what they had been learning about in the lesson just last week. I was surprised by one student in particular who was often absent, refused to work during the lesson (or when he managed to write, would often do so in large black marker pen), willingly put up his hand and offered his understanding of the 1857 Mutiny. It later became clear during the significant stories exercise, that military history was a keen interest of this students based on his grandfather's service during World War II.

Similarly with regard to content, *Paul* and I sought to draw a link between the creation of the welfare state in the post-war period, and the situation in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher - which saw the set-up of community food banks to support striking miners denied benefit claims, thus creating their own parallel welfare state (Everybody in the Place, 2019). However, this was a much more subtle and smaller link, which had little impact on students. *Paul* felt the students struggled with the topic of welfare reforms in general, feeling as though students were perhaps too far removed from the importance of the topic.

> *Paul: 'There was no sense that...that transformation in the 50s, 60s had - and has a continuing effect on us today...and the same way that these things were then pruned in the early 80s and further still...so there's no sense that any of this could go away!'*

In some ways, the concept of Britain without welfare support was perhaps an alien one. As discussed earlier, many students prior to the unit had thought free healthcare and education had always been the case in Britain. Similarly, an industrial or manufacturing Britain (albeit diminished) in the 1980s may have been just as far removed from the lived context and known worlds of students within what has become a service economy. It is interesting to note that had this research been done in a school in a different space within the case-study area, it might have produced a different response and level of awareness in relation to the Miners Strikes specifically. Regardless, as *Paul* described it, the students were on a 'journey' - namely that they were starting to learn (and also unlearn as I saw it) and be exposed to History as both a body and form of knowledge - its contents, concepts and methods.

> *Paul: 'I'm just thinking through the Year 9s and the Year 10s that I'm teaching now, and there is a big leap between Key Stage 3 and as they go into Key Stage 4...slightly smaller groups –'*
> *Aunam: 'Do they start knuckling down because it's their GCSEs soon –'*
> *Paul: 'Knuckling down, absolutely. But they're beginning then to really pick up the pace...in terms of being more willing to be critical of the resources and materials in front of them.'*

Paul describes a greater willingness amongst students as they progress through secondary school to be critical and ask questions, than students are in Key Stage 3. *Paul* and I had discussed this early on and therefore attempted integrate critical thinking skills associated with History throughout the unit, particularly source analysis. This was intended to familiarise students with source work, particularly for those wanting to study History further. Source materials (video, audio, images, written documents) were integrated through the unit, to encourage students to pose questions and reflect on what information a source can provide about situation or event, it limitations and why.

In the survey we presented students with nine skills associated with the study of History, in which to self-assess their levels of confidence before and after the unit (whether they felt *more, less* or *about the same*). The top four skills students felt they had gained greater confidence in were:
- *questioning sources* (15/29)
- *making a judgement about an issue/event* (18/29)
- *producing a timeline* (18/29)
- *contributing to group work* (15/29)

The skills students had gained the least confidence in or felt roughly the same were, *participating in class discussions* (23/29), *writing an extended answer* (24/29), and *questioning facts such as figures and charts* (18/29). Although, it is necessary to highlight that I cannot know and compare these levels of confidence with how students may have received the teaching of an previous version of the unit. However, it is somewhat evident that students may have found it easier to question images or written accounts, than questioning statistical or seemingly 'objective' data which may have been more challenging. This does raise an interdisciplinary opportunity for further research into the relationship between Maths and

History in terms of developing critical thinking skills, given embedding mathematical skills across all subject areas is a priority within the national curriculum (DfE, 2013, p.9).

In addition to cognitive or competency based skills, *Paul* and I aimed to bridge the unit of work to students' lives and interests through the 'significant stories' assessment which aimed to draw on students FoK. After the short presentation delivered by each student, *Paul* and I would offer comments, ask follow-up questions or use the story to build on that knowledge. The stories shared included:

- One student spoke of his grandfather's service in the allied war effort in North Africa against the Italian military, providing an story about cigarette rations and trading luxury items between personnel. The student said: *'I chose this story because we've been doing stuff around the Empire.'* Similarly, another student spoke of his great grandfather's role as a British army engineer, stationed in India at the time of independence in 1947. *Paul* talked more broadly about rations, military regiment records and how professional Historians use archival records to develop stories.

- One student described her mother's migration story to Britain from Armenia via Russia, Germany and France in the context of the Cold War.

- One student chose to research Ghana's independence from British colonial rule in 1957. *Paul* asked why they chose to research this. They responded by saying that it was similar to India and important because it was the first country in Africa to gain independence from Britain. In the students written work, he drew on knowledge drawn from his sociocultural background which he described as 'East African/Indian' to add depth to his response on Britain's withdrawal from India:

  > *'In 1947 India gained Independence and there was Partition (Pakistan and India), but there were some others Britain left peacefully or violently such as Kenya.'*

- One student described his grandfather's involvement in the miners strikes in South Yorkshire, whilst another student talked about his Polish Grandfather being ousted from his senior labour role in France because of his support for trade unions, which is why he migrated to Britain eventually. Although the student did not say why he chose this story, I wondered if this was a result of the teaching around trade unions in relation to the Miners Strikes and Migration stories such as the Grunwick Strike.

What the small research exercise suggested, was that some students were making connections between the knowledge they had gained through the unit, with similar themes drawn from their personal histories and lives (Rodriguez, 2013). In addition to consolidation, 'new' knowledge was being presented by students to their peers and *Paul*, that was predicated on 'inter-subjective ways of knowing' (Zipin, 2009, p.324). By 'new' knowledge, I refer to historical knowledge outside of the scope of the secondary curriculum, although some stories predated the 1945-2000 time period under study, as was specified by *Paul* and I (I discuss possible explanations for this in to follow). *Paul* described himself as a *'kid in a sweet shop'* at the end of the lesson, both touched and impressed by what the students had presented, and by how much more he felt he had got to know his students in that one lesson alone.

Reflecting on the curriculum development process with *Paul*, it was apparent that adopting a FoK framework to the entire design and implementation of a curriculum unit was not going to

be feasible in the way Moll et al. (1992) and Zipin (2013) have done, or even the approach I developed with *Hannah* at *Brook Valley Primary School*. Part of this was a real lack of insight into students' lives from which to then consider what might be meaningful to explore through the curriculum. Another barrier to creating greater opportunities for students to produce knowledge was the need for students to have access to some narrative or mutual understanding of some British history across the period 1945-2000. What knowledge was presented by some students through the 'significant stories' FoK exercise however, was perhaps a product of the diversity in the topics and voices that were integrated throughout the teaching of the unit instead, which some students subsequently applied to their own lives. Either way, this was a small task but is also meant students were carrying out social research or 'doing' History in that practical way Historians themselves would and research projects at the Runnymede Trust have emphasised the benefits of (see 'Banglastories' and 'Telling community histories')

5.8   But What *is* History?

The pieces of research students conducted through the 'significant stories' assessment, also reflected what the students understood, or perceived History as a discipline to be. Based on the range of stories students presented, it appeared that the majority of students' perceptions of History were largely about war and men. A large majority of the class chose to look at stories related to fathers and grandfathers. *Paul* and I discussed why this may have been the tendency amongst students in our interview:

> *Aunam: 'Maybe the students felt that they had to have a story that fitted the 'grand narrative' of History, and not necessarily those day-to-day social histories?*
> *Paul: Yeah and it'd be interesting to know, how many stories were chosen by them, or where they may have shared the project with home...and again, home, because of peoples' own historical understanding of the past, saying 'and this is the story you should share.'*

Paul raises a pertinent point regarding 'public' discourses around History and the narratives that are committed to national memory over others (Harris and Reynolds, 2014; Weinberg et al., 2007). In the British context the first and second world war, are reified and embedded as part of British national identity (Ugolini [no date]). However *Paul* described a feeling of saturation amongst some students with topics traditionally studied and focus on in the History curriculum.

> *Paul: 'Well certainly amongst some of the female students, they wanted to get away from talking about war, they were fed-up of looking at - they spent a long time looking at in the first term, the first world war and whilst they appreciated and understood elements of that were important in terms of understanding the nature in which men and women were engaged in that way, by the end of the Spring term, they very much wanted to look at other notions of History'*

In the survey, students were asked to feedback what they would like to have covered in the unit or what they felt may have been missing. The majority of students did not respond to this question but of those that did, they said they would have liked more work around topics that had a greater connection to their lives. These were: '*general cultural trends', 'music' and 'how*

things like music, fashion and technology have evolved.' One student noted that although they were choosing not to continue studying History:

> *'…this topic sertainly [sic] did make me think twice'*

Instead, more students responded to the subsequent question asking them more broadly what they would like to study in History lessons or ways to improve their experience of the subject. Some students made comments about issues related to teaching and learning in History, such as:

> *'When I finally bigin [sic] to get things, we have to move and learn about other stuff.'*

> *'By doing more practical ways of learning the topics'*

> *'More group work tasks'*

> *'Making it more relevant to now'*

These comments do reflect some of the challenges History teaching may present to some students. As discussed earlier in this chapter in the battle between Geography and History - History was perceived as being too much writing, which would also suggest less practical. The comment raised around the pace of teaching points to one of the challenges of teaching and learning in schools. From settling down the class, presenting an overview of the topic, introducing the task, students working on the task and feeding back (with the optional homework instruction added), is no mean feat to achieve in 55 minute blocks with 30 students (seven students of which had a statement of additional need) - all crammed into one hot classroom with windows that open no more than ajar. *Paul* and I did not present an exhaustive account of the period 1945-2000, but perhaps the pace was too fast in our attempt to get students familiar with enough chronology of the period. *Paul* and I later reflected on the idea of paring back some of the content to focus on greater depth, but were also particularly interested in the idea of covering 'technology' across the period. It was a topic neither of us had thought of before.

In terms of the subject content we did cover, students noted the following with regard to what they felt was missing:

> *'More on English culture and the history of England'*

> *'More about England's past and how we came to be.'*

> *'WWI and WWII'*

> *'The Victorians'*

> *'The Tudors'*

> *'I would rather spend more time on big things like wars and not little things'*

> *'If it included more stuff worldwide not just Europe'*

The first six of the responses above sit in contrast to the earlier comment *Paul* makes regarding the fatigue some students felt in repeatedly studying war. Yet, it does support the

notion that the study of History (certainly in the English context), is typically thought to be about *'big things'* or events - principally World War I and II, which are memorialised in the mainstream British memory and media (Danilova, 2015). It could also have been that these four students did not have any strong desire in wanting to study more about the topics they suggest. It could have been a reaction to the British values context surrounding the research project which the students had been made aware of. Or, perhaps in combination with this awareness, they may have perceived the unit as 'too diverse' and rich with minority voices/stories, and therefore may not have been an authentic account of the 'real' British (hi)story in their eyes (Banks, 2009a). It has been noted in research elsewhere of the challenges in promoting what is typically perceived as 'minority' histories to a largely white audience (Bracey, 2016; Maylor, 2010).

5.9   Student Engagement

Although I had not spent any substantive time with the class outside of the teaching of the unit, *Paul* noted in his interview that he noticed a greater level of student engagement specifically in the unit, compared to the rest of the academic year. *Paul* was particularly struck by the participation of every student in the class in the 'significant stories' research task that was set at the start of the unit. For *Paul*, it was rare to have all students willingly participate and present in front of their peers. *Paul* had even given each student the opportunity to only produce a written summary instead. *Paul* was surprised by this, noting in the interview:

> *'Aunam, some students **never,** never speak in class!'*

From my perspective, the unit did appear to capture some parts of student interest but given the limited time I had in lessons with them, it is difficult for me to know this with any certainty. I anticipated Key Stage 3 students to be shy, or less talkative compared to the primary school students, which they appeared to be overall. Although, like *Paul*, I too was struck by the voluntary participation of each student in presenting their significant story. *Paul* added that a few students had mentioned the content of the unit to other Year 8 students outside of their own History class. These students then queried with *Paul* why they were not looking at that particular topic during their History lessons. The topic in question related to the Miners Strikes. *Paul* had decided to teach two classes with the new content and the rest with a previous version. It was unexpected to consider the thought of 12-13 year old students discussing the content of their History lessons outside of lesson time.

In a similar vein, some students from the lesson were approaching *Paul* at lunchtime or after-school to query what was required for homework or to comment that they had completed the homework.

> Paul: *'One or two students had gone online and looked at materials or stopped me in the corridor to say 'oh sir, I'm looking at so-and-so-'...so they were following up things outside of class –'*

Paul felt that this was evidence of some students' engagement. In particular a student with moderate learning difficulties, who had never previously handed in any homework throughout the academic year, managed to ask his older sister (also in attendance at the school) to query

the homework instructions set for migration aspect of the unit. The student then successfully completed and handed in the homework to *Paul's* surprise and delight.

> Paul: *'He sent me an email **before** the lesson with the work, 'look sir, here's the work that I've done'...so that was wonderful'*
> Aunam: *'And was that a first for him?'*
> Paul: *'It was! It was!...and like I said I was on duty, so his sister came and saw me, but he was there in the background!'*

More specifically, *Paul* felt that me being present in the class made a direct impact on one female student of colour. I was somewhat sceptical of this but *Paul* assured me that he noticed a difference in her attention and the quality of work she produced. I had only had one conversation with the student about the case of Stephen Lawrence. I felt that it may have been the relevance of topics in the unit that had maybe been more impactful, although she also happened to be the only student at the end of the last lesson to say bye and thank you to me directly.

In terms of identifying students' engagement in the 'what' or substance of the curriculum, one of the survey questions asked students to list a maximum of three events, issues or facts from the unit that they had enjoyed learning about. These included:

- *The Miners Strikes: 13 students*
- *British Empire: 7 students*
- *Park Hill Flats: 6 students*
- *British in India: 3 students*
- *The change in government from Conservative to Labour in 1945: 3 students*
- *Windrush and Migration: 3 students*
- *Stephen Lawrence: 2 students*

From these responses, it is reasonable to assume that students were particularly interested in more local history as Harris and Reynolds (2014) research has noted, but this could also perhaps be an interest in more tangible examples to contextualise wider national events or policies, than a preference for local stories. For example, the case study of Park Hill Flats was part of a wider topic on national welfare reforms in the post-war period. However this does still suggest that students are interested in a curriculum that is connected to their socio-cultural worlds to some extent, and that this interest will likely influence their enjoyment and therefore further study of the subject or not. Moreover, there were a handful of students who *Paul* noted discussing the content of their lessons to peers in other classes, who then asked why they were learning about something less interesting than the Miners Strikes - a topic that had resonated with some students. Getting to a place where some students are actively having those conversations is surely part and parcel of instilling a love of knowledge as the overarching aim of a curriculum, as opposed to focusing on '*the best that has been thought and said,'* by a culturally select few (DfE, 2013).

5.10   Conclusion

What the research at Moorside High School highlights is the governmentality of British values, in that students largely understood and accepted British values as being representative of the rules and norms of living and/or 'being' British, and therefore simultaneously presented

another set of criteria to judge British authenticity (Farrell and Lander, 2018). The language used in support of British values by students echoed that of 'everyday bordering' discourses which are used to manage and identify the most deserving of migrants/citizenship status (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). There was however some questions from students around how the British values applied in day-to-day life, in particular the value of tolerance. Overall, there was limited criticism of the concept from students except the majority of students feeling as though they were not yet represented by the value of democracy because they were not yet able to vote.

The content of the curriculum *Paul* and I developed was with a clear aim of including different perspectives and joining-up narratives in British history that may be less committed to national memory – particularly in relation to histories from 'below' i.e. class and race. What my data showed was the extent of the received wisdoms and grand narratives students can internalise, which revolve around the superiority and inherent progressiveness of Britain, which included an almost disbelief that racism in Britain does exist. This emphasises the importance in presenting counter-stories - different histories and stories as part of the curriculum - for the reason that it can challenge the subtle race and class biases that are at risk of being reproduced in the classroom through the History curriculum. Although, from the experience here with the Year 8 class – fostering some understanding amongst students of such social issues would not be likely to alter through the teaching of one unit alone, particularly as some students felt the unit was not 'British' enough for them.

In terms of engaging students as producers of knowledge, this was less of a feature here, compared to the research inquires the primary school students engaged in. However, the significant stories exercise was useful in terms of student participation, and the relational impact hearing students stories had on *Paul* as a teacher. The exercise was useful in showing the way it could be applied in the secondary context in terms of students consolidating aspects of what they had learnt through their research, making connections between their personal histories and what was studied in History, but also in revealing students understanding of what History is i.e. that it is largely about men and war.

Chapter 6: Discussion - Values and Narratives

I now move on to the first of two discussion chapters. In chapters four and five, I discussed various issues connected to students understanding of the purpose and utility of British values, as a wider window into students' interpretations of national identity and how the curriculum is received. I highlighted how particular ways of knowing and being manifest in the school curriculum, and considered how this subsequently interacts with students' understanding of both what it means to be British, and how they place themselves. Now, in this discussion chapter I evaluate these issues in-depth based on collective insights from both *Brook Valley Primary School* and *Moorside High School*. I explain why questions around the 'nation' 'values' and 'belonging' are important to consider, and situate my data within wider academic and public identity debates. I focus on three of the most dominant narratives arising from my data; these are: a celebration of British progress, perceptions of 'cultural clashes', and the hegemony of whiteness. I discuss what the wider implications and risks of such hegemonic narratives are.

6.1   Values, Identity and Belonging

National identity is indeed a perennial issue in British politics (Richardson, 2015a). However since 2001, the discourse around it has steadily evolved to appropriate and misuse the language of values, in an attempt to depoliticise nationalism and its accompanying raciology (Kundnani, 2014; Gilroy, 2012). British values, now administered through teachers in English schools, is a static conceptualization of belonging. It is a concept not developed by educationalists, but forming part of a wider securitised, anti-immigration context which risks reproducing racial and social inequalities and limited notions of Britishness. As yet, critical approaches towards teaching British values in schools is not common practice (Vincent, 2019). It is difficult to gauge how more critical approaches would be received by Ofsted inspectors, and this would likely reveal an inequality in how BME or Muslim majority schools would be subsequently scrutinised for adopting such an approach (Sian, 2015; Vincent, 2018) However, British values as an educational concept does not relate to civic life. The official guidance around the policy is sparse in terms of describing the values with any level of detail or examples in relation to pedagogic approaches, apart from suggesting debates, holding mock elections, or student-led school councils. However, fostering a sense of civic belonging is a dialogic process that requires reflection and participation between people in a way that the competitive nature and performance of debating would likely not facilitate (Bakhtin, 1981).

Belonging is a dynamic, reflexive process that changes over time and circumstances depending on where we might identify an emotional or social connection, or in response to how we might be identified, perceived and subsequently placed (either formally or informally) by others (Jenkins, 2014). Yuval-Davis (2006) notes, that it is important to distinguish between 'belonging' and the 'politics of belonging.' Where belonging relates to an attachment, sense of identity or even of hopes for the future, a politics of belonging instead relates to an active political project that seeks to define the parameters around participation, entitlement and status. As British values reflects a politics of belonging, the pertinent issue such policies pose, is whose version or conception of belonging and national identity is reinforced in the process, and what is this likely to reproduce as a result? Hall argues (1996) that although identities are

perpetually unfinished and always in the making, they are nonetheless constructed within the confines of pre-existing discourses that surround us. As such they are an act of power which allow us to include/exclude based on hegemonic perceptions of 'difference', which risks entrenching existing lines of socio-cultural power in society. Thus, political projects around belonging are problematic for the primary reason that it reduces the complexity and nuance of social identities into bounded concepts. Although the values *(Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect, Tolerance)* could be interpreted as universal values (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017: Panjwani, 2016) and could be taught to students from such an outward perspective - the values are purposefully embedded in a politics of belonging by designating them as 'British.'

Bhabha (1994) notes that the nation is nothing short of narration. National identity is paradoxical for the reason that it aims to promote shared values and histories, but it also facilitates exclusion for others. This exclusion predominantly relates to the narratives and myths of national identity and Britishness which prevail in mainstream discourse and in turn, privilege certain identities over others. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) describe national identities as a product of invented traditions, seeking to create continuity with an invented past through values and norms of behaviour. Thus on the surface, it may seem as though British values can be presented as a route to inclusivity and establishing shared values amongst diverse students and teachers. However, there are relationships of power that govern not only why the concept even exists in education, but also how it is subsequently interpreted in practice by teachers and understood by students. Moreover, the culturally selective nature of the school curriculum may reinforce particular narratives of Britishness based on a politics of authenticity. What this might look like in practice, is harking back to an ahistorical paternalistic narrative of the past (Andreotti et al., 2018) instead of acknowledging more 'difficult' British histories that would allow all parties to move forward (Uberoi, 2015; Parekh, 2000).

The following section focuses on three overarching, hegemonic narratives that run through the data in my research; the celebratory narrative of progress, the culture clash narrative, and the narrative of whiteness - although all three narratives overlap in their nature and implications. I have drawn on the theoretical insights of CRT and critical pedagogy as an analytical lens to consider issues in relation to British values, and the wider curriculum. I was particularly interested in identifying what narratives sit in the "shine" or surface-level of Britishness, and what are lesser known or rest in the "shadows" (Bailey, 2017). The themes and reference points of this discussion are by no means novel. There is a wealth of literature documenting the problematic nature of British values (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Mansfield, 2019; Revell and Bryan, 2018, Vincent, 2018), narrow conceptualisations of Britishness (Alexander et al., 2012; Gilroy, 2012: 1987; Smith, 2016), institutionalised inequalities in the curriculum (Rudolph et al., 2018; Yosso, 2002: 2005), and specific issues related to racism and anti-Muslim racism (Breen and Meer, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Shain, 2012; Sian, 2015; Miah, 2015). But what I seek to do in the discussion is add to this body of work by drawing on empirical data gathered from two different school contexts and the voices of students.

6.2   The Celebratory 'Progress' Narrative

The first narrative collectively present across British values, British history and the mainstream curriculum is a narrative predicated on the celebration of 'Our Island Story' as a story of 'progress' and British (or rather English) achievement. The policy focus for the 2013 curriculum review was on developing a curriculum based on traditional subjects, canonical knowledge and a celebration of all things English (Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2017). British values is in keeping with this culturally restorationist policy trajectory (Ball, 1993). Since British values have been pre-selected and labelled as 'British' they present the impression the values have been attained by or are inherently characteristic of the nations history, or as one student summarised, they represent: *'something the nation focuses on and has achieved.'* This confuses national history with nationalism. This conflation indicates the problematic nature in defining values through the lens of the nation state as it sanctions dominant grand narratives and potentially silences more enriching, critical discussion about citizenship and belonging. As such, the purpose of British values appears to be less about facilitating students with a civic education that is centred around critical reflection (Vincent, 2018), political literacy, social action and responsibility, but more about establishing a sense of pride and superiority in 'Britishness,' and ultimately generating compliance/conformity (Harris, 2017).

It is unsurprising therefore that the secondary school students overwhelmingly interpreted British values as being a necessary list to understanding the country, '*how things work'* and the *'rules we have to follow'* or that it was important they understood the values for their *'skills'* and for when they *'grew-up'*; or that it served to *'teach [them] more about the way of life in Britain.'* Only 2 out of 29 students surveyed from the class felt that teachers should *not* be responsible for teaching British values. The roots of this acceptance may be in the lack of understanding around what a value actually is. The majority of students suggested a value related to an ambiguous sense of worth, which in turn could mean British values were interpreted by students as 'British worthiness.' Or the lack of criticism from students could also be indicative of the performative conditions of schooling and testing, which stifles problem-posing education and the space for critical thinking (Berry, 1998; Freire, 1996; Popkewitz, 2018). The secondary students understanding of values was in contrast to the primary school students. Although they were unfamiliar with the term 'British values' they had an initial understanding that values were conscious behaviours. They were also quick when asked to list values they felt were important that related to how we behave towards one another. This sits at odds with the individualistic liberalism of British values which emphasises the relationship between individuals and the state, over how we treat each other as a society and could foster a sense of 'collective action' (Sleeter, 2014). These were also criticisms raised by teachers *Hannah* and *Paul* – although *Paul* was critical of the *'British'* element of the values specifically whereas *Hannah* saw little issue with this.

The nature of secondary education marks a shift in focus from the Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural education of primary education, to a curriculum focused on developing subject specific knowledge and monitoring performance through greater testing. Personal Social Health and Economic education exists but is non-statutory, meaning there is no standardised curriculum but it also focuses, again, on the individual (House of Lords, 2018). Citizenship education is however compulsory as part of the secondary curriculum. However, Citizenship is also regarded as less 'high stakes', reliant on didactic styles of teaching, and holds a lower status

as a subject within schools. It is often squeezed out of the timetable as greater emphasis is placed on core 'academic' subjects as part of the Ebacc, which means students are likely to be aware of Citizenship's relatively lower-stakes 'status' (Burton, 2015; House of Lords, 2018 103-108), (Lord and Jones, 2006). Increasingly at secondary level, the focus for students (and therefore teachers) is measured through success in examinations (Ball, 2003).

This means students may be more likely to accept what they are taught and be less likely to critically engage with such subjects, for the sake of 'getting through' the content required because they have to, or what Ormond (2017) describes as student 'astuteness.' Teacher *Paul* noted the performativity of students' acceptance of topics such as British values, which he believed students felt little transcendence and connection to with their everyday lives, as it represented just another task they as students were required to do. For many students, school embodies 'official knowledge' and therefore British values would be received as 'official' also (Apple, 1996). However, this internalised performativity is understandable as students generally are not given insight into how the curriculum is subjectively constructed, who it is assembled by, and why particular topics are chosen over others – principally the curriculum is received as a vehicle towards the next step in life (Lord and Jones, 2006).

Since British values in the curriculum came into effect in 2014, four years later expectations were communicated by Ofsted regarding the teaching of British values, suggesting it should be embedded across the curriculum (Spielman, 2018). History was specifically cited as an opportune subject in which to do this. Interesting to this discussion were the historical examples Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman offered, which reveal the narrow, nationalistic intent supporting British values. Students according to Spielman, should be expected to know and celebrate Britain's story of *'strength and success'* and achievement (Spielman, 2018). Examples noted included:

- *Magna Carta and the Emergence of Parliament*
- *The English Reformation and Counter-Reformation (Henry VIII to Mary I)*
- *Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade: its effects and its eventual abolition*
- *Women's Suffrage*

It is important to note however that these are examples which could present opportunities for adopting a critical approach towards the British values, as there are ironies and contradictions to consider which could facilitate a more critical understanding. Students could be actively making nuanced judgements as to whether the so-called British values are being upheld or not using recent examples. For instance, with regard to Women's Suffrage, Wolton (2017) makes the argument that the direct action methods the Suffragettes used to bring about democratic change were seen as extremism then, and would likely be described as extremism if practiced today. Wolton (2017) also highlights the anti-democratic nature of Prevent (and therefore British values) and the inherent irony of this in relation to the value of democracy. The Magna Carta, also celebrated by David Cameron in a speech supporting British values in schools (Cameron, 2014), cites it as the cornerstone in the British tradition for 'liberty and justice for all under law.' However, victims' families of the Hillsborough Disaster had to use the European Human Rights Act 1998 as a means to achieve justice; an act which has been weaponised as part of a national narrative around the loss of British sovereignty to the European Union, which invited David Cameron to suggest a 'British Bill of Rights' to replace it in 2010 (Gillborn, 2015: Uberoi and Modood, 2013).

The English Reformation is noted as a topic over-emphasised in the British historical psyche and national curriculum, over more 'difficult' or urgent topics such as race or Empire. Part of this 'Tudormania' is because of its nostalgic narrative of 'English exceptionalism' by resisting a Catholic Europe (Higgins, 2016). As a result, a 'slanted version of Britishness' through British values is implicated in the narratives Spielman selects here - which is left open to more warping from the lack of government guidance on British values (Mansfield, 2019, p.45). At present a critical approach towards British values in schools is limited (Vincent, 2019), and given the lack of standardised training and guidance on British values, such teaching would be largely influenced by the time, knowledge and subjectivities of individual teachers.

What these examples highlight, is a celebratory narrative of British progress, which in turn are also culturally 'white' moments. Spielman's (2018) curriculum based examples draw parallels with the celebratory performativity of the 'Life in the UK' Citizenship Test which echoes a teleological progress narrative of British History, told principally through an English gaze (Dillon and Smith, 2019; Demir, 2017). In the test applicants are required to pass to claim British citizenship, questions on the topics Spielman notes are included, with questions such as: *'When did Britain abolish slavery?'* or *'Which colonies were granted independence?'.* Questions which note moments of 'progress' with Britain on the 'right side' of history. Where cultural or ethnic diversity is reflected in the official Life in the UK handbook, it is restricted to the festivals and celebrations of 'others', whilst Demir (2017) also highlights the absence of working class struggles - yet another parallel to mainstream curriculum practice (Dillon and Smith, 2019; Warmington, 2020; Grinage, 2020). The framing of history in this manner fails to create an understanding between the history of Britain as a 'great trading nation' and its relationship to racism and exploitation, that we continue to live within the effects of today (Dillon and Smith, p.41). This lack of widespread understanding and knowledge continues to distort public discussions around the myriad ways structural racism persists (Southbank Centre, 2018), but which the school curriculum could be used as an intervention to counter such slanted perspectives, or hegemonic narratives.

Academic Historians across the UK signed a letter criticising the misrepresentation of slavery and Empire specifically in the citizenship test (Historical Association, 2020). They highlighted the way the dissolution of the British Empire is presented as a democratic transition to being 'granted independence' or 'self-government' (Dillon and Smith, 2019, p.52). This masks the reality of violence and torture involved - such as the Mau Mau rebellion in 1950s Kenya - an example one secondary student alluded to when describing the British withdrawal from India as a *'peaceful'* exit, in contrast to Kenya which was violent (although I would argue no colonial transfer of power has been peaceful). This was based on the students sociocultural knowledge tied to his Indian-East African background:

> *'Britain was trying to act as the peace keeper which couldn't because India was fighting Pakistan which had no time for the British.'*

However, he still framed Britain as having a paternal role in the independence process in India. This response echoes the work of right wing Eurocentric Historians such as Niall Ferguson, who was consulted by the government in 2013 regarding a revised History curriculum (Higgins, 2010). Ferguson's counterfactual 'History' seeks to celebrate the achievements of the British Empire and present a more positive, paternal interpretation of its legacy (Ferguson, 2018). Ferguson (2018) celebrates Britain's paternal role in facilitating the advancement of states

across the global South, through railways and telephone lines. More realistically as Boahen (1987) argued, such infrastructures were principally developed to facilitate the exploitation of natural resources. However, there was one student in the secondary class who responded to a map exercise in which *Paul* and I presented the geographical scale of the British Empire at four different points in time, concluding that:

'By 1974 most of the countries managed to gain their justice and independence'.

The key point in this students response is the use of the word *justice* - a word not used by any other student who instead described the change across the maps as evidence that the Empire was simply *'getting smaller.'* This particular student's background was from a former imperial colony and therefore also had access to a different or community history of Empire. However, in the grand narrative of the British Empire, the British are thought to have civilised the world through the transfer of power, instilling the principles of democracy, and adopting the role as teacher – which continues to influence international relations today (Gopal, 2019). In reference to the Partition of India 1947, hegemonic narratives often omit deliberate British policies whereby religion and ethnic stereotyping were actively used and politicised as part of imperial governance or 'indirect rule' (Mamdani, 1996). The state use of deterministic 'ethnic' categories is what Darder and Torres (2009) describe as an ideology to name, code and ultimately exploit.

Based on the data in this study, I would argue British values acts as yet another smokescreen to project a 'Whiggish' grand narrative of History and defining the boundaries of national identity. It offers little in relation to how students interpreted the purpose of British values which was about civic life, responsibility or behaviours. In parallel, the Like in the UK Test has been criticised for failing to offer information about living within society, for example how to access services or how to report a crime (House of Lords, 2018). Whilst there may be times for recognition and celebration in terms of Britain's historical contribution, to only show one simplistic side masks the reality of struggle and strife certain groups have experienced and/or continue to experience, and therefore reduces the perceived need for social action (Andreotti et al., 2018: Mignolo, 2000; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). As Osler (2009) argues 'students need to understand that historical narratives are not fixed but changing,' and open to constant revision as this is central to critical thinking. Furthermore, since the aim of Prevent itself (and therefore British values), is to encourage young people to reject forms of extremism - which includes far-right extremism which is continuing to rise across Britain (Sabbagh, 2020) - it is also important to equip students with a more historically sensitive and well-rounded understanding of British history (Parekh, 2000). Bhabha (1994) argues that we 'retreat' into celebratory narratives instead which bypass issues of race, class and power to avoid more *critical* remembering. But critical remembering is crucial to developing a national sense of belonging that is inclusive, anti-racist and allows us to recognise and challenge the material inequalities that continue in society and more globally.

Therefore, if we are to continue with the concept of British values we need to look more closely at the British values and use it as a framework in which to evaluate past and present examples across British history and politics. This would be in addition to generating an understanding amongst students of what a value is and therefore reflecting on the extent to which British values can be described as such. For example, presenting students with stimuli to pose questions, asking them to reflect - Was this an example of respect? How? Why not?, could

help create the conditions for knowledge that could help make abstract values and concepts more relatable, less ambiguous and less open to self-congratulating narratives (Andreotti et al., 2018). By not engaging with questions and alternative perspectives, we risk perpetuating the distorted belief that Britain is superior to other places in the world. A superiority that many of the secondary students already internalised when for example, (a) discussing possible reasons for migration in the post-war period, (b) listing neo-colonial 'development' indicators to assess which nations are 'better' than others, (c) the surprise from students at the treatment of Black and Asian people and striking miners, and (d) the assumption that gay marriage had been legalised much earlier in time.

6.3   The 'Culture Clash' Narrative

Stuart Hall (1996, p.2) argued that it is the wider 'discursive practices in which the question of identity recurs' that is most important and revealing. In the context of British values, its discursive practice is rooted in an anti-radicalisation agenda - with Islamist extremism as its largely exclusive priority. The underlying assumption is that a lack of identification to a sense of Britishness poses a threat to society. Such assumptions are grounded in a fear that minority identities are thought to sit in perpetual conflict with a British/Western identity, as terrorism, loyalty and the multiculturalism have become increasingly entangled (Burton et al., 2018; Keddie, 2014; Lynch, 2013). This narrative invokes the spatially imagined 'clash of cultures' narrative between 'Western' and 'Eastern' cultural values (Huntington, 1996; Kundnani, 2012). This narrative is thought to be part of a cultural imperialist project in which Islam is homogenised and reproduced as the 'other' against Western norms and values (Said, 2003). The perceived incompatibility and potential site of conflict between Western values and Islam is infamously noted in Huntington's (1996) 'clash of civilisations' discourse.

Panjwani's (2016) research on British values with Muslims teacher, critiques Huntington's thesis, arguing they did not perceive any incompatibility but rather an overlapping consensus between British values and their Muslim values. Similarly, Green's (2017) research in Tower Hamlets with young British Muslims reported they already identified with British values and believed this to be an important aspect of their British identity. However, Mamdani (2004) would argue that Muslims feel a sense of pressure to show they are 'good' according to official discourses, for fear of being framed as 'other' or dangerous (Crozier, 2015). Increasingly, the expectation of ethnic minorities and particularly Muslims to either explain or condemn has become a persistent feature within the media, where the inability to scrutinise the complexities of government or policy, is reduced to a culture war which normalises racism (Qureshi, 2020). As such, British values is connected to the institutionalisation of state racism towards Muslims (Breen and Meer, 2019; Miah, 2017).

The issue here stems beyond that of the nation as an elite social construct filled with unknown strangers as Anderson (1983) synonymously noted, but of some acting as greater 'strangers' than others. Strangers who pose as greater risks and potential threats to the narration and aspiration of the nation. For instance, on the task of schools promoting British values, Chief Ofsted Inspector Spielman (2018) stated:

> '...schools with the job of promoting British values and equalities are sometimes teaching young people who get conflicting or even downright contradictory messages

outside school. For example, freedom of belief is inimical to the prevailing view in some communities. Similarly, the acceptance of the equal rights of women or of gay rights may not fit with the views a child hears at home. No wonder, therefore, that some young people feel torn between different identities.'

Given the context surrounding British values (the Trojan Horse affair in which a number of schools in Birmingham were thought to be part of a Islamist take-over plot), it is clear what Spielman is implying by *'some young people'* - namely what Muslim students receive at home and at school as sitting in conflict. This reinscribes the notion of Muslim identities as being inherently problematic, and the exclusive recipients of cohesion and integration policies (Miah, 2017). Interestingly, tackling prejudiced views from home in terms of racism is not considered as pressing for Spielman. Instead, she deliberately invokes women's rights and homosexuality which are issues frequently associated with the vilification of Muslims in the press. In the case of the Trojan Horse controversy, some school inspections did note a narrower, conservative curriculum being given to students couched under an Islamic ethos (Mogra, 2016). However, the issue had been singularly reduced to one of oppositional cultural values, as opposed to also being the product of a fragmented school system, which allows independent schools to teach their own curriculum and the subsequent lack of local authority oversight over such schools and their governing bodies (Arthur, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). The same liberalism that continues to increase the number of independent schools and academies across England and extend the parental market of 'free choice' based on catchment areas, continues to deepen socioeconomic inequality (Gorard, 2015; Alexander et al., 2015) and patterns of 'white flight' across England (Millar, 2021). This acts as a particular barrier to the 'integration' official policy still insists upon (MHCLG, 2019).

British values in the curriculum is founded on the belief that families, households and communities are not ideal spaces in which to impart values and produce the 'right' kind of future citizen (McGhee and Zheng, 2017). This has parallels with advocates of 'powerful knowledge' in the curriculum, in which the 'everyday' knowledge related to students households and cultural backgrounds is deemed to lack the 'right' kind of knowledge and comparative value (Rata, 2012; Weelahan, 2010; Young, 2013). My interviews with the primary school students showed the knowledge they had gained from their family and household allowed them to contextualise the meaning of some of the British values such as respect and democracy. Students particularly in the primary school enjoyed being the bearers of knowledge to their peers, with a handful of students noting the enjoyment they gained specifically from acquiring knowledge from home and being able to translate this into 'school knowledge.' In this way, what the students in this research did 'hear at home' had some practical value in the classroom setting and was recognised as such. This therefore minimised any risk of students feeling allegedly 'torn' between home and school as Spielman (2018) describes. Different aspects of their identity were being valued. The point I make here is not the dispute the reality that some students may indeed enter school with prejudiced, discriminatory views (Andrews, 2016), but rather that British values offers very little to actually challenge and educate students to think critically and reflect on their values and systems of thinking either.

While the focus of this study has not been directed towards grappling with the wider problematic Prevent strategy, British values is still an extension of this counter-terrorism policy. Between 2018-2019, the education sector alone made the most number of referrals for students, with the median age being 14 (Home Office, 2019). As a result of Prevent and the

wider cultural problematisation of Muslims, there have been examples of racism in schools by teachers wrongfully referring young students racialised as Muslim to Channel; the multi-agency counter-terrorism safeguarding team (Addley and Topping, 2017; BBC News, 2016; Breen and Meer, 2019). The reality of the connection between Prevent and British values was unknown to both the teachers in my research, which suggests that specific training and discussion for all teachers had not occurred in any detail in either school. Sian's (2015) research illustrates the disproportionate levels of training on Prevent across schools, which sees schools with less advantaged, higher BME populations receiving greater training. I felt that both schools in my research were perhaps under less scrutiny overall with regard to a Prevent, British values or integration agenda. In the secondary school, white students from more affluent backgrounds were still the majority, and in the primary school although majority Muslim, was still a school aligned to a Church of England foundation. Both are contexts which perhaps reduce the state gaze, compared to Muslim majority schools (Sian et al., 2013; Meer, 2007; Vincent, 2018).

In such a securitised education context, diversity and race equality training in schools and teacher education is increasingly important (Lander, 2016; Kincheloe, 2006). The training *Hannah* did receive for example as part of her PGCE course in relation to such issues amounted to *'no more than a week'* on 'diversity' during her PGCE. The training consisted of being planted into a *'multicultural'* school placement in a famously multicultural English city, for experience rather than practice. Young British Muslims note their personal experiences of the lack of cultural/religious training of teachers, which often meant little was done in the classroom to challenge negative stereotyping or to present Muslims as being, in their words *'modern'* and *'ordinary'* (Stevenson et al., 2017, p.33). The pervading perception of Muslims as being culturally 'other' in the context of Britishness was apparent during interviews with the primary school students. All students I interviewed pointed out the images of people that looked as though they were visibly Muslim - based on items of clothing - as being non-British. Particularly interesting was *Stephanie's* response to a Muslim woman wearing a hijab as *'normal people don't wear these things,'* despite her own white-British mother wearing a hijab. Although *Stephanie* could have been conflicted about her relationship with her mother, the rest of the students socialise and learn alongside their majority Muslim peers, some of whom wear hijabs too. Yet on a theoretical level, Muslims were thought to be culturally un-British.

In the secondary school, one student attributed the British withdrawal from India as a product of not being able to *'control'* Muslims. Apart from this, there was not much else I could infer from the secondary students regarding their perceptions of Muslims specifically. Rather, a handful of students constructed a false national or a *'them'* when surveyed. Many of the secondary students felt British values exemplified the rules of the nation, with some students suggesting a *'them'* who need to know about the British values - not a 'we' or 'us'. As one student described: *'if they are going to live here then they would need to learn the British values'.* Constructing similarities and differences between ourselves and others is a 'standard part' of understanding our identity which we all engage in (Jenkins, 2014, p.149). However, whilst they may be social constructions, they also have very real consequences. The construction of a *'them'* as a point of difference, increasingly reflects elements of a populist, state sanctioned discourse in Britain rooted in *'everyday bordering.'* Such discourse and constructions of others are fuelled by concerns of immigration, 'too much diversity' and supposed cultural loss, often directed towards Muslim minorities (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017; Kundnani, 2014). In a discursive nod to the social system of everyday bordering, students

linked knowledge of the British values to a form of national allegiance or legitimacy to remain, subsequently leading them to conclude that it was important and necessary for teachers to teach it, and for a *'them'* specifically to know it.

However, it is important to highlight how this binary, simplistic narrative of cultural clashes has moved beyond the 'good/bad' Muslim (Mamdani, 2004). Claims of a new culture-war have become increasingly commonplace and manipulated for political gain, against an overly 'woke' left. Part of sustaining this alleged 'war' is in utilising the emotive language of the 'left-behind' and the 'white working class' as victims in the face of diversity (Gilroy, 2012; Gillborn, 2015). Such rallies against the 'woke left' are being deployed as a reactionary barrier to policy change, historical revision and government and media scrutiny. Comments for example, Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch, arguing against CRT and grossly misrepresenting the principles of the theory as being focused on 'white privilege' (Wood, 2020), also contributes to a climate that continues to play race and class against each other for deliberative space (Akala, 2018; Southbank Centre, 2018). A picture of the 'left behind' is painted which typically constructs a romanticized version of the 'local' or the white working class, framed as victim to globalisation and immigration, as opposed to government policies (Gillborn, 2015; Escobar, 2011).

This new culture war serves to obfuscate political efforts in support of anti-racism, and results in a lack of understanding in how race shapes narratives on national identity and its power in sanctioning which voices are heard and which stories are studied as part of the curriculum. In this vein, calling for the revision of figures (and statues) such as Robert Peel or Churchill, to the calls for greater acknowledgement of the British Empire in the curriculum, have faced criticism as being un patriotic. Being accused of being unpatriotic would be an anticipated criticism of taking a more critical towards teaching British values too, in which teachers and students from BME/Muslim backgrounds would be likely to face disproportionately harsher scrutiny (Farrell and Lander, 2018; Lander and Santoro, 2017). This culture war against an alleged 'cultural Marxism' has filtered through into education policy if we also look at the latest statutory guidance instructing schools not to teach 'victim narratives harmful to British society' or 'extreme political stances' such as overthrowing capitalism (DfE, 2020); guidance which sits in contradiction to the broader aim to provide a 'broad and balanced curriculum' (DfE, 2013, p.4), but also poses as a threat to critical pedagogy which itself in rooted in Marxian principles.

6.4   The Narrative of Whiteness

Prior to the 'muscularly liberal' British values in the school curriculum, the 2013 curriculum review sought to facilitate students' knowledge of 'Our Island Story' through a more nationalised curriculum (DfE, 2013; Gove, 2010; Alexander et al., 2015). Developing an understanding of where we live, its culture and history is important. However the scope of national narratives which permeate the curriculum often promote union jack cultures, at the expense of understanding the social inequality entangled in standard patriotic interpretations of Britishness (Race, 2020; Richardson, 2015a; Smith, 2016). For Michael Gove (2010) this meant British authors celebrating the 'great tradition of our literature - Dryden, Pope, Swift, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Austen, Dickens and Hardy - should be at the heart of school life,' as opposed to 'non-British' texts such as Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. This was dropped from the national curriculum, despite its salient themes around racism and justice (Kennedy,

2014). The focus instead is more on a whitewashed, nostalgic cultural restoration of Britishness that is culturally white and positioned as the norm of Britishness, whether this is consciously acknowledged or not (Ball, 1994; Giroux, 1997; Habib, 2017).

There are examples of resources and research collaborations to widen the scope of the school curriculum beyond a celebratory grand narrative (*see* Alexander et al., 2012; [Bangla Stories, 2010](#), Elahi, 2017). However, such approaches rely on the efforts of individuals and funding to 'do' diversity work within a wider policy system that reproduces whiteness and colour blindness as the norm (Gillborn, 2005; Picower, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2003, Giroux, 1997). Whiteness it is not necessarily an active pursuit amongst white people (non-white people can reinforce whiteness too), but rather it is a concept used to make transparent a wider system that upholds racial inequality and prevents action being taken to address the supremacy of white cultural and economic interests (Leonardo, 2009; Nayak, 2007; DiAngelo, 2018). Principally, the concept of whiteness allows us to move the focus of analysis away from 'the BME other to examining the hidden operation and exercise of power' (Lander, 2014b, p.100). I now turn to whiteness as the third dominant narrative that reinforces 'slanted' versions of Britishness and historical understanding, through policy and practice. In this subsection, there are two broad tenets that reinforce whiteness which I discuss; these are (1) forms of racist nativism, and (2) the minimisation/denial of race and racism.

The first aspect of whiteness in this discussion relates to the ways in which the legitimacy of the 'native' or the claim to nativism (perceived in the British context as white) is placed above people of colour and therefore structures who has the greater legitimacy and historical continuity claim to belong. Smith (2016) describes Britishness as a political construct which embodies elements of this racist nativism and influences who is socially constructed as an 'us' or a 'them.' The secondary students in this study noted that Britishness constituted either being born in Britain, speaking English, having a British passport and/or British parents. Britishness seemed to be a simplistic set of requirements with no racial framework attached to it, perspectives similarly found in Maylor's (2010) research. Likewise the primary students felt that Britishness was a product of being born in the country. However, this is what I would characterise as the 'party line' or 'official' rhetoric of citizenship. *Georgia* (my only white British interviewee) specified that Britishness could also mean having the *'what's it called, like the visa thing,'* which she also assumed I would hold one of, as opposed to a having a British passport just like her and her family. There was an underlying belief amongst some of the secondary students that by being born in Britain, they inherently knew what British values were by default. This was unlike a fictional 'them' who were described as needing to know about the British values *'if **they** are going to live here.'*

Often with racist nativism, the identity of 'true nationals' remains invisible or unsaid, but is implicitly inferred in reference to 'false nationals' or a 'them' (Bhabha, 1996; Smith, 2016). What the 'them' in the students' responses signify, is the way problematic cohesion discourse and immigration rhetoric around 'deserving' migrants has been embedded into everyday discourse (Monforte et al., 2019). The designation of a 'them' is similar to the way the 'BME other' has been characterised in policy as needing to learn English (Fortier, 2018), to integrate and not lead 'parallel lives' (DCLG, 2016; Home Office, 2001), and for newer arrivals to pass a formal citizenship test based on a Kings and Queens history (Demir, 2017). In reality, this citizenship landscape has served to advantage white migrants from North America and Europe, than those who experience greater vulnerability from conflict often connected to British actions overseas (Bassel et al., 2018). Much of this political rhetoric in the media and

policy has been targeted at Muslims, Muslim women in particular, who are seen to pose as barriers in the alleged promotion of British values (Smith, 2016).

Moreover, we know some students have been pre-judged by some teachers as being more 'at-risk' or less 'integrated' in terms of displaying British values from the outset based on their race/religion or rather, lack of whiteness (Addley and Topping, 2017; Breen and Meer, 2019; BBC News, 2016). British values is thus problematic because its description as 'British' risks becoming conflated with national identity and used as a tool to assess a students' 'British' credentials. Such assessments are likely to be based on perceptions of alignment with a cultural whiteness. The need to prove or demonstrate an alignment to 'Britishness' would likely be directed towards students from Muslim, Black, Asian and Gypsy/Traveller backgrounds who are more likely to be placed on a sliding scale of Britishness based on how 'integrated' they seem (Bhopal, 2012; Keddie, 2014). Evidence of 'integration' into Britishness for some teachers in Keddie's (2014) research in a multicultural school setting, illustrates the problematic reality of individual teacher subjectivities when national identity is considered. In Keddie's (2014) research, the criteria of 'integration' that BME students failed on included not knowing about the Olympic Games, Easter, or the Diamond Jubilee. These are three lacklustre symbols of mostly white-Britishness and not ones I would expect students to know. It does confirm however that 'integration' is often one-way traffic. It is directed towards people perceived as being culturally different from the outset and problematic if there is overt evidence of such, yet assumed to be non-threatening if there is an absence of such integration amongst the established (white) majority (Modood, 2014).

Yet, aside from teachers, the primary school students in this research made their own implicit connections between race, integration and Britishness. For example, students pointed out non-white figures as being non-British. Although the students explained these choices were because of additional items of clothing (*scarves, hijab, taqiyah*) as signifiers of being non-British - all of these figures were in fact British born people of colour. In addition, I represented a puzzle of Britishness to them. Although I looked like I was *'from somewhere like in Asia'*, I had a *'British voice.'* Despite the diversity of the class and wider school, and that many of the students had older sisters they felt were my age, the assumption was to think I was from elsewhere – unlike them - revealing the whitewashed reality of how Britishness is interpreted beyond the surface-level, neoliberal cultural consumption of racial 'others' (Chetty, 2014; Grinage, 2020; Warmington, 2020). As some of the students I spoke to had gotten to know me, they felt I could be British or at least 'half-British.' My voice became my marker of British credentials. So although I looked visibly and thus by default 'un-British', my voice was a hallmark of integration and could therefore grant me (conditional) 'Britishness'.

I expect this perception in my day-to-day life living in Britain and have experienced this in multiple professional and educational settings, yet I was still taken aback to hear it from students as young as 8-9 years who were people of colour too. For example, *Ruvin* contradictorily pointed out my un-British *'burnt'* skin (but not his own), whilst *Stephanie* specifically noted the blackness of her father as the standpoint for her ethnic 'difference' as opposed to the whiteness of her mother (hooks, 1990). Although the students are in the early stages of developing a greater understanding of identity outside of their families (Jenkins, 2014), these examples suggest that it is not exclusively white people that can align with or reinforce whiteness (Gillborn, 2005; Giroux, 1997). Whiteness is deeply embedded as a norm of British authenticity. Moreover, it can sustain ways of thinking and perceptions that can lead

people of colour to believe the myths that sustain it, which mean people of colour can internalise a sense of inferiority or racism based on markers of assimilation to whiteness (Allen, 2005). hooks (1990) argues that academics focus on the difference of others in the analysis of race and do not examine whiteness. During this research, I even found the choice of language used by some academics researching matters of ethnicity in education, unproblematically using the terms 'native' and 'indigenous white' in reference to students (Hawkey, 2015: Janmaat, 2018).

The second aspect of the whiteness narrative in this discussion relates to the minimisation or denial of race altogether. This perpetuates a level of ignorance and lack of progress in understanding social inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Picower, 2009). Often with this narrative, the seemingly benign, 'colourblind' language of culture or cultural diversity is noted to be preferred by teachers (Bracey, 2016; Priest et al., 2016), but which also risks subverting the effects of real racism and limiting critical insight and understanding of inequality and power (Crozier, 2014). Some make the claim that Britain is in a post-racial era where race is no longer (or never was) as an important issue as historically may have been the case (Bhopal, 2018), by drawing on legislative advances (Bell, 1992) or the success of 'model minorities' and equality of opportunity discourses (Gillborn, 2005; Tomlinson, 2014), or by emphasising that the equalities of all need to be considered. Whilst *Hannah* and the primary students insisted that we are *'equal, but different'* and *Paul* believed in human rights values - such beliefs can be used to uphold the myth of Britain as a post-racial society. Equality and human rights discourses have often been deployed at the expense of promoting racial equality (Sian et al., 2013), whilst positioning selective Western cultural norms as universal values (Santos, 2009). This is not to say that human rights values are not important and necessary to impart an understanding of. They include the principles of fairness, dignity, justice and respect for all by law (Banks, 2009b). However, the concern is that the discourse of human rights alone has meant racism and has been dissolved into a more generic form of injustice, so it is easier to palate and does not risk being perceived as pandering to racial minorities (Sian et al., 2013, p.22). Before we can consider human rights values, we must first move past the nationalist, assimilationist ideologies that are embedded within British values and the scope of the traditional 'academic' curriculum, and instead foster democratic classrooms which recognise and explore issues of social justice and measure national ideals against its realities (Banks, 2009b; Banks, 1993a).

With regard to the primary school, *Hannah's* whiteness led her to frequently emphasise the multicultural population of the school, which presented a shadow text of 'racism cannot exist here' (Bailey, 2017), or perhaps even that 'students from minority backgrounds cannot be racist or inherently understand diversity' (Maylor, 2010). However, the primary school students evidenced a capacity to be racist themselves, but not necessarily associate their actions as being racist. They understood what racism was through learning about the Civil Rights struggles in the US, citing figures such as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks as inspirational people to know because they '*fought for coloured people's rights.*' Yet they understood racism to be gross acts of crime and overt discrimination – something which had to be demonstrably serious enough to justify involving the police, in *Osama's* case. We know that 1/3 of students in school have experienced racism (Andrews, 2016; Gayle, 2020) but that young students also have the capacity to understand issues such as racism and inequality (Elton-Chalcraft, 2011; Priest et al., 2016). This ability to understand means students could be proactively taught about issues of racism as being more than individual actions and beliefs but rather systems of

inequality as CRT emphasises – and which the Civil Rights struggles were in response to also (Bryan, 2012). Instead, *Hannah* had to reactively address the issue of racism, whilst having very little confidence and knowledge in how to approach such a topic. The lack of race and diversity training *Hannah* described within her initial teacher education programme, and subsequently at the school, would have presented a message that this was less important to consider as part of her teaching practice (Lander, 2014a).

Currently, issues around race and society in Britain are not featured as part of the national curriculum, but the secondary students too would later study a whole unit on Civil Rights in the US. Yet, they did not know about examples of racism in the UK. They were particularly surprised by the death of Stephen Lawrence and how migrants of colour were treated on arrival in post-war Britain. As Younge (2020) argues, the existence of American racism often serves to cushion European nations into holding a 'moral confidence' that race is not a problem by comparison, ignoring its histories of colonialism and slavery, as well as its racist realities. There is something more acceptable in studying racism in the US than contending with the racism of colonialism and slavery of which Britain was a world leader. However, as most of this violent racism occurred 'over there' and 'not here' in Britain, it limits our ability to critically remember, especially if we are not taught about it (Bhabha, 1994). This lack of knowledge ultimately regulates how much importance race is perceived to have in British society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Perhaps now students will be more aware of racism in the UK in light of the Black Lives Matter protests and debates around race inequality which resurged in 2020. However, calls of broadening the scope of the national curriculum and allowing students the space to develop a more critical understanding of British history and culture has been rejected (Proctor, 2020). Ultimately this serves to reproduce whiteness as the wider curriculum, teacher education, British values and teaching practice continues to reinforce a message of assimilation into a patriotic whiteness (Aronson et al., 2020; Smith, 2016).

6.5   Conclusion

As a result, it is difficult not to see British values as anything other than a deliberate attempt to socially regulate young students and confer a sense of belonging through a set of values, that are conflated with ideas of national identity and nationalism (Crawford, 2017; Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017; Farrell, 2016; McGhee and Zhang, 2017). It presents itself as another tool to entrench 'insider-outsider' notions of citizenship (Panjwani, 2016), and a potential yardstick to judge who is 'us' and who is 'them' - a discourse students in this research had already internalised to some extent. Therefore, despite the 'catch-all' appearance of British values on the surface, it is an example of the state using a politics of belonging to steer and direct what the ideal citizen is and should conform to (Popkewitz, 2011). Whilst in theory Britishness can be achieved by anyone, being accepted or recognised as such is another more pertinent issue, as notions of Britishness are increasingly about advancing whiteness (Crawford, 2016). The Windrush Scandal and the increase in racially motivated hate crime following terrorist attacks and Brexit, has evidenced that the 'achievement' of British citizenship is a racialised process, contingent on the events and the political/media discourse that surrounds it (Gentlemen, 2020).

At the same time, Teacher Standards requires teachers to remain partial and non-partisan (DfE, 2011). Yet, the wider messages students receive from both the scope of the national

and school curriculum, and the subjective interpretations of British values made by individual teachers (Mansfield, 2019), would suggest a clear contradiction. As Harris (2017, p.6) states:

> It is virtually impossible to avoid imparting values through teaching; the choices teachers make either reflect particular value positions (even if these are implicit) or send out particular value-laden messages.

What I have sought to do in this chapter, is add to the past, present, and no doubt future, work which seeks to highlight the problems attached to a curriculum limited in scope, and the problems in prescribing 'official' versions of belonging. Britain's perpetual search for its identity in a post-colonial world, combined with the Our Island Story curriculum, appears to project an inward look to an 'authentic' past that rejects diversity. Whilst the notion of British values draws on a discourse of assimilationist 'values' that appear inclusive, but silence real issues of social justice by promoting liberalism (Gilroy, 2012). Liberalism is problematic because it encourages people to form their identities without referencing the social conditions around them. The concept of society becomes reduced to that of individuals and passive consumers (Kincheloe, 2001a), where wider understanding of systems of social inequality are lost within indoctrinated beliefs in meritocracy and equal opportunity (Alemán and Gaytán, 2017).

Given the pervasive singular narratives of celebratory progress and partial accounts of British history, it is reasonable that students or teachers would be likely to internalise such narratives of progress, cultural otherness and whiteness, and therefore be uncritical of British values as a concept. The cultural restorationism of the curriculum, British values and the cultural war on the 'woke left' (Johnson, 2019) is a predominant feature of the Boris Johnson government; rhetorically pleading with the British public to stop 'our cringing embarrassment about our history, about our traditions, and about our culture' (Waterson, 2020a). Again, this forms part of the neoliberal narrative to demonize and dismiss critical thinking, historical revision and debate as unpatriotic (Diversi and Moreira, 2013). Yet, historical miseducation subverts the democratic process, which is simultaneously championed as a fundamental British value (Kincheloe and Steinbeck, 2006). When we forget to critically remember, we risk giving rise to prejudice and further social inequality and become susceptible to following a rhetoric of 'political correctness gone mad' or 'wetness' as Johnson describes (Waterson, 2020a). For that reason, it is imperative that students have access to different narratives and sources of knowledge that help them understand their connections to the world, and allow them to reassess the assumption and ideals that Britain is inherently democratic, progressive or superior, as many students in the secondary class did so.

Chapter 7: Discussion - Politics of Knowledge

In the last chapter, I discussed how three culturally selective narratives are imbued within British values and the scope of the national curriculum. I emphasised this risks this poses in terms of the continued positioning and marginalisation of 'racial others' and the perpetuation of a limited historical view of the past. I argue that this is likely to influence students' perceptions of history, social inequality and how they understand their place within the wider world. In light of these problematic narratives, I now want to consider issues specific to knowledge in the curriculum and explore the social realist concept of 'powerful knowledge' in greater detail – in light of the attention and emphasis in current policy on the curriculum to be 'academic' and 'knowledge rich' (DfE, 2013; 2016; Gibb, 2015; White, 2018; Williamson, 2020). By drawing on the analytical insights of CRT and critical pedagogy, the aim of this discussion is to draw attention to the systemic, institutionalised forms of racism and social injustice that exist in structures such as the curriculum (Apple, 1996; Gillborn, 2006; Yosso, 2002). Formal structures (curriculum guidance and exam boards) and informal structures (teachers knowledge, societies beliefs) can send or reinforce particular messages to students as to what constitutes as valid or 'official' knowledge (Darder et al., 2003).

There are several questions I seek to explore throughout this discussion, which are: *what* kinds of knowledge are deemed 'rich' (i.e. of 'academic rigour'), *whose* knowledge is it, and in *whose* interests does this knowledge serve? However, the curriculum also is an exercise in 'making' kinds of people (Popkewitz, 2018) - it embodies a cultural theses about who is a desirable citizen in the eyes of the power wielding dominant. Therefore, it is not sufficient to examine 'what' or 'who' but to also ask the question, *why*? (Popkewitz, 2011). Asking why is not just examining why we have come to teach specific topics or bodies of knowledge over others, but about reflecting on the wider purpose of the curriculum and the knowledge presented to students, as it relates to hopes and aspirations of a future society (Carr, 1998). Asking why also necessarily brings matters of pedagogy to the forefront (Rodriguez, 2013), in exploring how to foster more inclusive, equitable ways of being both in and within the world (Diversi and Moreira, 2013).

7.1   What is the Purpose of Schooling?

Conservative Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb, described education as the 'social justice cause of our times' and the purpose of education as threefold: as the engine of the economy, foundation of culture and civilized life, and as essential preparation for adult life (Gibb, 2015). This was echoed by current Education Secretary Gavin Williamson (2020), arguing education needed transforming as 'the national curriculum had been stripped of knowledge' by New Labour policy, meaning 'soft skills were more in fashion' and 'textbooks were out.' Although the Conservative Education Strategy, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (2016) was scrapped shortly after its release, its vision of a globally competitive, outcomes driven, 'knowledge rich' education system is still consistent. Success is increasingly measured in relation to the labour market and performance rankings in both global league tables such as PISA (Williamson, 2020) and the national Progress-8 measure (DfE, 2013). The reason I note this is because this culture of managerialism and accountability in education (which is by no means unique to Conservative policy and accelerated previously under New

Labour) has continued to alter what it means to learn and teach today (Ball, 2003; Lingard and Rizvi, 2010). 'Good teaching' for example has been reduced to a matter of better implementation strategies for students to learn the core knowledge, as opposed to longer term gains such as developing critical dispositions (Popkewitz, 2018). Whilst we may be raising standards, we are also entrenching cultures of competition (Alderson, 2020a). Yet, developing 'informed citizens' is what Gibb (2015) describes as an essential component of schooling too. However, such an technical educational context means educators rarely 'ask questions about how schools can prepare students to be informed citizens, nurture a civic imagination, or teach them to be self-reflective about public issues and the world in which they live' (Giroux, 2010, p.716).

With the teachers in this research, despite the differing levels of training, personal and professional experiences between *Paul* and *Hannah,* both saw civic education as part of their role and had a willingness to engage in public, social issues with students. *Paul* firmly believes in developing the skills of students to question things and be critical, which partly feeds into his passion for History as a subject. Both teachers believed that education was about making students more well-informed, well-rounded people, and sought to draw on their interests and creativity where possible to achieve this. They had a clear intention and desire, but were partly constrained by the wider demands of what it means to teach in state maintained schools today. Large class sizes, students with additional needs, larger workloads, and limited time for resource planning or professional development activities/training, were common themes between them. This also means adopting curriculum topics from national guidance or exam boards that may be 'new' to the school is less adopted in light of these performative constraints teachers experience, which in turn continues to limit the scope for greater diversity in the school curriculum. For example, Alexander and Weekes-Bernard (2017) note the AQA History West African Kingdoms module as an example of a new, diverse curriculum topic but with minimal school uptake, because of the additional work required to plan and create new resources. Such a context serves to reaffirm white cultural privilege (Picower, 2009) as it limits our conceptions of reform and capacity for change (Apple, 2011).

In relation to students developing a greater understanding of the wider world and countering Eurocentrism, there are topics suggested in the national curriculum guidance at KS2 level that include the West African Kingdom of Benin AD 900-1300, the Indus Valley Civilisation and the Qing Dynasty of China. However, if these topics are new to schools and not previously taught before, the additional work required of teachers in terms of developing their knowledge, planning, creating and funding new resources, can lead to the recycling of more familiar topics of the History curriculum (Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Leach et al., 2020). As student *Stephanie* noted '*it's always the Romans that we do*!' For *Hannah* the priority had to be on getting students English and Maths 'ready' and her recent PGCE training reflected this priority. For *Paul* it was getting KS3 students prepared for modular assessments and KS4 students GCSE ready. This could at times mean that *Paul's* extra-curricular efforts to diversify the History curriculum but also in areas outside of his own subject area, could be perceived as him not focusing enough on the 'main event.' While *Hannah* may have initially not been too convinced of the importance of this research or understood my perspective on what diversity in the curriculum should look like, relative to *Paul*, the impact of the curriculum work led her to commit to a change in practice for the schools Year 4 curriculum, Moreover, she was keen to also draw on this research experience to *'take to other schools'*. This echoes what Harris and Clarke (2011) found in their research with student trainee teachers, who became more

understanding of the need to teach diverse topics once they have engaged with the why/purpose element of it. In this case, *Hannah* reflected on the impact of the unit on her students in terms of their engagement, her developing an understanding her students better, students enjoyment, and the independence and social solidarity it fostered amongst the class – that then led her to re-consider the wider purpose of the curriculum as a relational practice (Bell, 2011).

7.2 Knowledge Is More Than Knowing

It is all the more pertinent to consider questions around knowledge but also its limitations, as policy insists on a return to a 'rigorous, knowledge rich academic curriculum' which is argued to benefit all students (DfE, 2016, p.23). The official aim of the national curriculum is to '*[provide] pupils with an introduction to the **essential** knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the **best** that has been thought and said'* (DfE, 2013, p.6). A key issue for this research is around what knowledge is currently institutionalised as the 'best' and therefore credited as having universal value, and what relationship this 'essential' knowledge has in fostering 'educated citizens' in reality. The 2013 national curriculum review undertaken by then Education Secretary Michael Gove, was particularly influenced by the work of Michael Young and the social realist concept of 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2008; White, 2018). For social realists, powerful knowledge is distinguishable from 'everyday' or social knowledge because knowledge because it is rooted in the epistemological traditions and practices of academic disciplines (Young, 2008; Young and Muller, 2010). As such, it is argued to enable students to envisage the future (Wheelahan, 2010), open up new ways of questioning, engage in political/moral debates (Young, 2008), and ultimately gets students to think (Young, 2015; Muller, 2000). Content too connected to students' lives is thought to lack intellectual challenge, and reinforce disadvantage amongst the working class in particular (Rata, 2012).

For social realists this concern with the relativism of social knowledge is a matter of social justice through social mobility, as some forms of knowledge are argued to provide greater capital than others 'irrespective of their origins' (Young, 2013, p.104). But what counts as valuable capital in education in terms of knowledge and skills is a matter of social definition imposed by powerful groups in society (Gillborn, 1990; Yosso, 2005). And if *'the powerful are so not because they can arbitrarily impose their knowledge/culture as 'powerful knowledge/culture', but because they enjoy privileged access to the knowledge/culture that is powerful in its own right,'* then where does this leave students labelled as 'disadvantaged' on account of race, class, gender and/or disability? (Moore, 2013 p.350). If students from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds have their home knowledge and cultures affirmed daily as part of the national and school curriculum (which subsequently means they more equipped to navigate the hidden curriculum), then how is access to powerful knowledge an adequate means of achieving social mobility? (Kelly, 2009; Hinto, 2015). Advocates of powerful knowledge at least attempt to engage with issues of social class, but nevertheless theorise as through the only social justice problem in education is *access* to knowledge (Zipin et al., 2015).

Moreover, they remain deafeningly silent about the reality of institutionalised racism embedded within the subject knowledge labelled and selected as 'academic' and the

epistemological practices and colonial histories of academic disciplines. Knowledge is not about the subject itself, but rather about creating citizens and civilising the 'other' - in terms of class, race and gender (Popkewitz, 2018). Whilst epistemologies are a result of 'social practices where power is being exercised that can reinforce colour-blind, 'race' neutral, ahistorical, and apolitical points of view' (Hylton, 2012, p.25). Moreover, they are also silent on the nature of competitive, performative schooling practices to 'test' such powerful knowledge, which encourages internal streaming, and filters students on to a two-tier qualification system which perpetuates race and class disparities (Gillborn et al., 2017; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Lipman, 2003; Reay, 2017). Moreover, it fosters a neoliberal culture in which students become competitive individuals, which can hinder the development of a critical consciousness and understanding of social issues (Lander, 2014b). The focus is narrowly on the acquisition of subject or discipline specific knowledge through narrow structures of social mobility (Apple, 1996). However, social mobility is a flawed concept rooted in notions of meritocracy, when the reality is that certain disadvantaged groups irrespective of their successful acquisition of 'facilitating' academic knowledge, still face barriers in academic outcomes, employment and progression opportunities – all of which continue to stratify society along measures of class, ethnicity, gender and disability (Crawford et al., 2017; Reay, 2017).

How are persistent attainment gaps meant to be closed, and how is 'instilling a love of learning' that previous governments Gibb (2015) notes had failed to do, meant to be achieved through the acquisition of 'academic' knowledge? How can more students develop an interest in learning and develop an understanding of the world, with only access to academic, culturally selective knowledge? Young (2013, p.104) argues that critical pedagogues have 'one-dimensional' focus on who has the power to define the curriculum, but I would argue social realists perhaps have a narrower focus on the acquisition of subject/theoretical knowledge, as opposed to wider issues around institutionalised inequality, pedagogic practice and the relationship knowledge in the curriculum has with social life (Kincheloe, 2006). The curriculum extends beyond disciplines as it also embodies ways of being, knowing and relating. For instance, in the case of *Stephanie*, there was a clear relationship between her wanting to study 'different people' (i.e. Black historical achievements and figures), and trying to navigate the internal and external parts of her identity, as was also the case with *Max* (Jenkins, 2014). Knaus (2009) emphasises that it is when students of colour are able to explore and have their experiences valued in the classroom space, that they can then begin to make sense of their reality, identities and survive, if not thrive.

There is a relationship therefore between curricula practices and how students construct ways of being, and understanding others that cannot be achieved through the pursuit of powerful knowledge alone (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2006). It is limited in allowing students the self-reflective space to develop a literacy that allows them read and write the world and ask questions (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Part of being able to critically question, is to have access to different sources of knowledge (Wrigley, 2018). No one can deny that we all need and should have access to theoretical knowledge which can provide some basis to work through competing beliefs, misinformation, and also the empowering potential of such knowledge (Bhaskar and Norrie, 1998). Nor can we deny that it is the process of making critical judgements that is most important, and for that it is necessary to have access to content (Hawkey, 2015). But this does not negate the principal issue that it also risks communicating to students that some knowledge (and therefore ways of being and relating) are 'more useful or valuable or truer' than others (Biesta, 2017, p.78).

Herein lies the critical issue of powerful knowledge, when also combined with; the lack of critical diversity in the national curriculum, the limited training or racial literacy amongst educators (Aronson et al., 2020; Dunne et al., 2018; Lander, 2014a; Sian et al., 2013), the limited space to develop new curricula or reflect on aspects of the 'hidden' curriculum such as textbooks (Alexander et al., 2015; Loewen, 2008; Kelly, 2009; Teach First, 2020), and the constraints of a performance culture in stifling pedagogic innovation and diversity of assessment practices (Ball et al., 2012; Popkewitz, 2011; Reinhardt, 2018). Problematic representations of 'difference' are embedded in school practices such as textbooks, which appear as neutral, more objective sources of knowledge, but are Eurocentric in scope. This has implications for minority students (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, p.12), but also on the development of critical thinking and the racial literacy of all students (Bryan, 2012). Although teachers do mediate textbooks, students are educated through a system of exam specifications which represents 'officialdom' and sends cultural messages as to what knowledge should be valued in society (Apple, 1996). This has an impact as students are unlikely to know how subjectively constructed the curriculum is in reality. Part of acquiring that understanding is a recognition that there are many knowledges in the world that intersect and/or compete with canonical school knowledge in dynamic ways (Andreotti, 2011; Banks, 1993b). But also understanding that an unequal hierarchy exists in what knowledge is afforded greater value, namely that Western/European epistemology is often valorised as universal truth and reinforces a system of whiteness (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Santos, 2014).

Teachers do act as gatekeepers to knowledge and mediate government policies and requirements as part of their teaching practice (Mitra, 2009). However, teachers are also part of a wider system of institutions and cultures which prioritise certain ways of knowing and being over others. Subject leaders, school leaders, governing bodies, commercial exam boards, teacher educators, University institutions and government policy makers are all complicit in perpetuating hierarchical cultural messages in what knowledge is more valuable, whilst also steering what the purpose of schooling should be. If we look to 'official' curriculum documents for example, a non-statutory KS3 History suggestion is the topic: *'Enlightenment and founding of royal society.'* But the Royal Society and its intellectual/epistemological developments in the 'vertical' (Bernstein, 1999) fields of science and medicine are inextricably linked to colonialism, human exploitation and resource extraction (Chakrabarti, 2010). Moreover, at the height of the 'reason' and 'progress' associated with Enlightenment thinking in Europe, transatlantic slavery, capitalist exploitation and the creation of a 'sub-human' race of Black people was ideologically institutionalised (Williams, 2014).

This does mean that as a topic, there is much critical content to explore - however it is unclear how this topic would be translated and taught by schools in practice, given the constraints in terms of teachers' knowledge, training and workloads. And while it may just be a suggestion, it does reveal, again, the celebratory narrative and nationalistic intention of the national curriculum. This is not to deny the importance and relevance of the knowledge developed through the Royal Society, but to understand the context and history which have implications to this date (Andreotti et al., 2018). Other suggested topics as part of the KS3 History curriculum, include:

- Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade: its effects and eventual abolition
- Britain as the first industrial nation

- The development of the British Empire

All of these topics are inextricably linked to each other and bear deep causal relationships. Yet they are non-statutory topic areas, compartmentalised into distinct topics and not featured as part of the overall core chronology of British History in the national curriculum. Weelahan (2010, p.150) argues that powerful, subject knowledge 'equips students to be part of society's conversation' but what if that conversation is limited by hiding potentially difficult histories, for the sake of presenting a unified conception of knowledge and therefore social relations? (McCarthy and Sealey-Ruiz, 2010).

The topics I have provided as examples here, are all deeply entangled in constructions of race and colonialism, as are the academic disciplines from which 'powerful' knowledge is said to be derived from (Grosfugel, 2007; Mignolo, 2000; Santos, 2014). Academic disciplines and fields of knowledge are rooted in positivism, imperialism and the superiority of 'white-male Western knowledge' and authorship (Kress, 2011; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Geography as a discipline is particularly rooted in colonialism. For example, survey research conducted by The Royal Geographical Society was a key part in 'drawing' up the arbitrary territorial boundaries for European colonies during the 1884 Berlin Conference. This 'Scramble for Africa' by European powers in the nineteenth century was also rooted in scientific racism (Mccaskie, 1999, p.674). It is this nexus between power and knowledge embodied in European colonial ideologies, that constructed a non-Western 'other' (Said, 2003), where the culture of the white race was 'consolidated into a dominant frame of reference for civilization, moral development a rationality' which persists today (Leonardo, 2005, p.46).

Furthermore, the paternal colonial relationship of 'coloniser' and 'subject' has perpetuated the role of the 'West' as the *teacher* of knowledge (Gopal, 2019). This paternalism and orientalism subsequently feeds into the hegemonic nature of subject specialisms developed via University disciplines. Knowledge is produced through various 'systems of privilege' (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p.132), which rely on enforcing epistemic pushbacks when certain histories and advantages are challenged (Bailey, 2017). After all, institutions reflect the people who occupy it (Ahmed, 2007). And Universities remain persistently white, elite spaces, whose organisational cultures and reward systems privilege closed publishing and funding, which perpetuates this elitism in knowledge production. These disciplinary or subject specialisms developed within Universities, then filter through into the secondary curriculum, until students in primary school become the recipients and 'beneficiaries' of 'hand-me-down' curricula. Although these bodies of disciplinary knowledge/ideas are initially filtered for secondary schooling, they are then 'diluted' until rendered 'suitable for primary consumption' (Catling and Martin, 2011, p.332).

So the key question becomes: How can knowledge and learning be imagined beyond such Eurocentric or colonial paradigms (Andreotti, 2011), in a manner that ensures all students have access to the knowledge they need to succeed within the reality of a neoliberal knowledge economy? Indeed, some may reduce my criticisms by asking, what do you suggest we teach instead? Or insist that there are some forms of knowledge that are inherently better than others, drawing on the epistemology of certain disciplines/subjects (Moore, 2013). This is true that theoretical knowledge such as algebra, map reading, measurement, textual analysis and so on, are necessary to teach. That is not being disputed. It is equally possible to accept the power of knowledge and the power relations implicated in it (Zipin et al., 2015).

Rather, it is about challenging the assumed neutrality of disciplinary knowledge, particularly within Humanities and Social Sciences. It is about making known the 'shadows' of what has led to certain forms of knowledge being labelled as 'powerful' or academic over others (Rudolph et al., 2018), and acknowledging the role of social knowledge as worthy of curricula pursuit as part of producing academic knowledge (Wrigley, 2018). Social justice is also a struggle for cognitive justice (Santos, 2014), particularly as the performative context of the education system is predicated on students becoming 'passive recipients' of "official" truths (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998).

Students become socialised from the outset of their academic life into banking models of education that relies on the performative consumption of knowledge (Freire, 1996). Yet the capacity to analyse and question the internal authority of a subject is what Young (2013) himself argues is where the 'power' of powerful knowledge is. However consuming academic/theoretical knowledge until one reaches the age to be able to actively criticise it, is not sufficient in achieving the level of critical literacy which enables students to ask questions, problem-pose, reflect on the past, analyse present realities or explore future possibilities (Bell, 2011: Kincheloe, 2006; Shor, 2009). Students are indeed capable of making criticisms and asking questions earlier if they are able to access different sources of knowledge. The aim therefore should be to also make transparent and contextualise the foundations and ethics of 'powerful' knowledge and curricular selections, and to create pedagogic spaces that draw on different sources of knowledge. Everyday knowledge can act as sources of rich knowledge which could be used to increase diversity in the curriculum, as well as spark interest amongst students who may internalise hegemonic labels and school sorting practices which render some students as 'non-academic' *(e.g. 'lowers' at Brook Valley Primary School)*. This is important to consider as internal streaming practices disproportionately disadvantage students of colour, particularly black students (Gillborn et al., 2017; Gillborn and Youdelll, 2000; Lynn, 2004), of which the 'lowers' all were. It can have the potential to stimulate students to reflect, ask questions, but also have access to a sense of external validation that they and their communities can be part of school or 'official' knowledge (Alexander et al., 2015).

7.3   Funds of Rich Knowledge

Having highlighted the problematic aspects of what is traditionally understood and labelled as 'academic' knowledge, I now want to make the case why social knowledge is worthy of curricular attention by drawing on my empirical observations from both case study schools (Wrigley, 2018). I used the concept of Funds of Knowledge (FoK) as an approach to exploring the curricular and social justice potential of social knowledge, with the additional research intent of increasing the diversity of knowledge produced in both schools. As FoK can sit within CCW approaches which is rooted in a critical race perspective, it involves 'a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice' (Yosso, 2005, p.82). FoK is an approach to knowledge that valorises and incorporates the lived experiences of students' into the classroom and uses these sources of existing knowledge as a 'scaffold' for conceptual learning (Amanti, 2005, p.135). But whilst I focus specifically on FoK, there are general observations here which relate more broadly to the value of social knowledge, or CCW approaches when developing the curriculum. Given the policy imperative for the curriculum to be knowledge rich and the concerns I have raised regarding the asymmetries of power in curricular practice, and the lack of knowledge diversity,

I want to reflect here on the potential of FoK as a 'pedagogical opportunity' to build knowledge that can be both rich *and* diverse (Rios-Aguilar et al, 2011). Although the approach and outcomes of using FoK transpired differently in each school, the overarching principle was to use the experiences of students as an object of inquiry to support core curriculum objectives.

FoK has traditionally used the 'household' as an object of inquiry (Hogg, 2011), and teachers-as-researchers conducting visits to students households, to gather insights and develop possible curricular opportunities that link both home and school together (Moll et al, 1992). However, the traditional approach of conducting home visits is difficult to accomplish within the large workloads teachers experience and the ethical considerations this poses. One of the challenges of FoK is how to source empirical data on households that can be integrated and used as part of the subject curriculum more thoughtfully. This challenge is evident in itself through my findings across both schools. A FoK approach in the secondary school was much more limited, compared to the primary school. This may be why studies using FoK are comparably limited in secondary education, but also perhaps attributable to the more limited contact time teachers have with students, the higher stakes testing involved, and the less integrative nature of learning overall than primary or early years education, where the majority of academic research on FoK is concentrated.

Therefore, while I see the benefits of theory, I feel it is important that it is responsive to the constraints of schools and teaching practice but also the conditions political policy constructs (Kress, 2011), and so I did not, and do not envisage the use of FoK as a replacement, or suggest that all knowledge be contextually situated within students lifeworlds - but rather, I want to reflect on the potential of using a FoK approach to supplement and extend the possibilities of the curriculum. I consider its potential to develop spaces for rich knowledge, and also as a space for resistance and producing counter knowledge (Giroux, 2010; Zamudio et al., 2011). My discussion is somewhat limited as this research was an in-depth study of only two schools, and even then, the time and space to facilitate greater use of FoK was greater in the primary school than the secondary. However, the purpose of this study was not on scalability but rather, an exploration of how small scale changes or sites of resistance, could be made within the confines of an existing school curriculum and its objectives, by altering what is traditionally recognised as knowledge for classroom use (Zipin, 2009). Two of the most significant findings of using a FoK approach relate to, (1) the types/nature of knowledge the process facilitated, and (2) the affective impact of this knowledge and the process of inquiry on students and teachers.

Adopting a family or household approach is thought to avoid presenting communities as internally homogenous (Llopart et al, 2018), but students create their own social worlds and FoK independently from which to derive meaning from, based on their own sense of identity, interests and popular culture (Rios-Aguilar et al, 2011). Therefore, the approach was for students to conduct their own research inquiries, thereby selecting, mediating and presenting information they felt was interesting and meaningful to them, from an amalgam of different sources (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998). Crucially, before knowledge can be of 'critical' value it must first be meaningful (Giroux, 2009; Subero et al., 2018) or resonant (Rodriguez, 2013). For instance, many of the primary students initially wanted to research geographical places unknown to them and their households, but where it reflected a pop culture interest of theirs (e.g. the US because of particular YouTubers, or Argentina/Russia because of football). However, it soon became apparent that students wanted to research and explore places

connected to their diverse identities and family life histories as they began finalising what their research interest was. This meant students focused on what resonated with them, as well as what individual family members had to say about their place, as the starting point of their research. They then developed this initial resonance through internet and book based research, as opposed to starting with a homogenous, broad-level overview of a place provided by a teacher or a textbook. For instance, what is often challenging within multicultural education is what happens when the school teaches the 'culture' of a group or place in a way that does not reflect how an individual student experiences it? (Noble and Watkins, 2014).

How FoK and more celebratory, multicultural approaches may differ here, is that in this case the primary school students had the agency to represent and actively produce knowledge they felt was right for them, yet relevant to the scope of the geography unit. They were not necessarily positioned as the authority or spokesperson, or as hooks (1994) describes the 'native informant' on behalf of a wider group of people. This meant that of the multiple students researching Eritrea, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine, the students all chose to represent different things of value and interest to them. This is important to note, as there are differences within, as well as between groups (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). They subsequently shared this information with each other in a non-competitive manner in the final 'fact-finding' session or open afternoon (Rodriguez, 2013). Tryona (1987, p.317) emphasised that a co-operative, non-competitive environment is central towards developing an anti-racist education. Students in this space were actively learning from each other, valuing each other's diversity but understanding this diversity as a cognitive resource in the context of school knowledge (Banks, 1993b). Reflecting on the research weeks later, teacher *Hannah* noted how this experience had brought solidarity amongst the class, how much 'nicer' and respectful they had been to one another, but also how she had learnt so much more about her students, which subsequently emphasised the importance of the relational aspect of her teaching practice (Bell, 2011; Rodriguez, 2013).

The primary school students described their sense of agency as being *'free'* and *'in charge'* which the majority of students specifically noted as one of the most positive, enjoyable aspects of the FoK process, compared to how they normally felt they learnt in school. The level of independence all students displayed had an impact on teacher *Hannah's* praxis, who noted that she may have underestimated what younger students could be capable of. Going forward she was keen to find ways to encourage this further as part of the wider curriculum, as well as replicating the FoK approach we adopted in her teaching career beyond Brook Valley Primary School. This sense of agency and students being positioned as the expert was one factor *Hannah* and I reflected on in relation to the students institutionally labelled as 'lower ability,' who displayed enthusiasm, engagement and worked collaboratively with other students.

Recognising students as having their own FoK meant students were not being internally streamed, or have certain expectations placed on them from the outset to reach an 'objective' truth - which acted as a counter to institutional practices of labelling (Zipin et al., 2012). Three 'lower ability' labelled students said they enjoyed the curriculum unit because it was *'fun'* but it was also meaningful as it was an enrichment of what they already knew or had access to (Subero et al., 2018). They produced work in a dedicated way that surpassed the expectations of their own teacher as well as mine. The performative context can means students who are not as close to meeting institutional targets or markers of academic progress can be neglected (Lingard and Rizvi, 2010), or lead students to believe they do not rightfully belong to particular

subjects (Carlone and Johnson, 2007). With a deliberate FoK approach to producing knowledge, this research demonstrated the participative and academic capabilities of all students when spaces of learning are opened up (Barton and Tan, 2009). It suggests that powerful knowledge alone does not stimulate the sense of agency that fosters academic interest and success (Alderson, 2020).

What was particularly interesting through the experience of adopting a FoK approach, was that it facilitated avenues for me to have deeper, unexpected conversations with the primary school students. I would describe these conversations as being knowledge 'rich' but out of the scope of the national curriculum (and perhaps even at tertiary level curricula). I spoke to *Meryem,* who conducted her research on Iraq, about the Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement and how the first iteration of what we now refer to as a library was founded in Iraq in the 9th Century (Al-Khalili, 2012; Gutas; 1998). *Meryem* was both shocked and proud, perhaps at the thought that her family/background has validity in knowledge and a contribution beyond the state of Iraq. Similarly, there were several students I spoke to researching places in Africa that were learning about colonialism - what Zipin (2009) may describe as 'dark funds of knowledge' (less positive or celebratory issues connected to students' backgrounds). Whilst *Carlos* felt proud of an Italian link to Ethiopia given his avid interest in footballers who play for Italian teams, the other five students felt confused and angry as to how colonialism came to be, perceiving a sense of injustice. These students apart from *Carlos*, were all labelled as 'lower ability' yet access to this knowledge outside of the scope of the traditional curriculum not only helped them contextualise their family histories and identities, but also build a sense of curiosity about wider historical and social conditions as a result (Amanti, 2005).

Combined with their newfound sense of agency and freedom, this led them to ask further questions concerned with 'why?' (Darder et al., 2009). From these interactions, there is perhaps a potential in FoK's valorisation of the lived experiences of students, that can facilitate opportunities for students to develop a greater consciousness of social issues and power (Freire, 1996). Students asking questions is particularly crucial to developing a critical consciousness as it means they are being agents in their own learning, as opposed to be driven by teacher-led questioning (Berry, 1998). However, I do recognise that my academic interests and knowledge may have helped facilitate some of these conversations, which is why I only suggest its 'potential'. But equally, students themselves were having those thoughts internally or with family, and would maybe develop those lines of questioning and curiosity further down the line. What my research with the primary school students suggests, is that a curriculum which is attentive to the lives and needs of students rather than performative goals of the system, allows space for students to be engaged and enthusiastic about knowledge (Smyth et al., 2013, p.309).

In the secondary school, it was more challenging to factor in ways for students to bring in their social knowledge given the balance needed between covering the chronology, content and skills of the History unit. *Paul* and I focused on the wider aim of increasing the diversity of voices throughout the unit instead. However, the students conducted a shorter piece of research compared to the primary students on a 'significant story' from the period 1945-2000, to present to the class that reflected their understanding of British history. Students were given the free choice to research something they felt a connection to in terms of their neighbourhood, household or was something they simply found of interest that they could feasibly research.

Paul described the task as presenting students with the agency and freedom to '***really** be in charge of which story they wished to bring and represent.*'

The majority of students chose to represent personal histories connected to their families, although this reflected the stories of male figures, whilst some students presented stories that made a consolidative link to some of the content covered in lessons (e.g. events connected to the British Empire, trade unionism, the effects of the Education Reform Act 1944). The individual presentation of these stories did allow some new subject-based knowledge to be shared such as Ghana's independence from British colonialism. However, the way FoK was applied in this more constrained context, meant that greater knowledge was produced that provided more insight for *Paul* (and myself) regarding students' perceptions of the study of History, as well as knowledge about them and their lives. *Paul* felt there was space in the national curriculum for more activities such as this:

> *Paul: 'I mean as a teacher it ticks all the boxes that you'd hopefully want from your students where - it's pupil led, research and development by students...it deploys the skills of research, critical thinking, editing, presentational skills. It could work in one or two instances in a collaborative way, sharing with each other, each presenting individually but learning from each other as they go along, so there could be space to allow students to peer review, in perhaps a triangle or paired group, and before they then present to the rest of the class.'*

What was most significant about the research the secondary students carried out, was the relational impact this had on *Paul* (Bell, 2011). *Paul* felt he had got to know his students better in just one 55 minute lesson of students sharing their researched stories with the class. All students felt comfortable to present and speak, even when provided with the option not to. Granted some students might not be taught History by *Paul* again, however *Paul* would still be a member of staff visibly present around the school and who now felt a greater level of investment in the students for having shared knowledge connected to their lives. FoK does offer a pedagogical opportunity to develop the understanding needed to develop positive relationships for learning and reminds teachers and other students of the value of existing sources of knowledge (Reinhardt, 2018; Rodriguez, 2013). But this process does require initial investment from teachers in deciphering ways to 'activate' students FoK (Rodriguez, 2013), in a way that enhances or compliments the curriculum unit under study. Perhaps the experience of applying FoK to draw out students social knowledge was more transformative for the primary students than the secondary, partly because younger students perhaps have a greater connection between their sense of identity and their family/household (Jenkins, 2014 p.81).

Overall, what the experience of producing knowledge through FoK across both case study schools suggests, is that students need access to knowledge that has resonance to their sociocultural worlds, histories and interests. The practice of schooling, its norms and narrow curricula scope can seem like navigating a new way of being altogether, particularly for students who may experience structural disadvantage (Carlone and Johnson, 2012). If students have come to understand what subjects are based on what limited knowledge they have been presented with they may develop learner identities that dislike the subject and be unlikely to study/engage with it further than what is necessary (Cowie et al., 2011). Instead, it is within forms of pedagogy such as FoK that knowledge is made available to all students 'inside their language and histories and not outside history' (Giroux, 2009, p.453). As such, creating spaces to develop a curriculum with, rather than solely for, is a necessary approach

to consider for (a) increasing the diversity of subjects/disciplines in the long term, (b) cultivating interest and engagement amongst diverse learners, whilst (c) also redistributing what forms of cultural capital are typically valorised in the curriculum (Yosso, 2005; Zipin et al., 2012). Again, I am not suggesting that all aspects of the curriculum should be developed through the everyday knowledge connected to students. Rather, I argue that students FoK could be drawn on in tandem with, or as a route towards more conceptual or consolidative learning. Everyday knowledge, is not so every day – it can have academic curricular value in its own right, as well redistributing power, creating a sense of agency and building relationships for a positive learning experience (Biesta, 2017).

7.4   History is Beyond The Island Story

History is widely perceived and esteemed as an 'academic' subject and its status as such was reinforced through the EBacc and Progress-8 accountability measures (DfE, 2015; Harris, 2017). Moreover the subject is referenced by social realists in facilitating access to 'powerful' knowledge (Young et al., 2014). Yet it is also a subject vulnerable to instrumental use and manipulation, in a bid to foster patriotism and acquiescence through white-washed, elitist narratives (Carretero, 2011; Loewen, 2008; Richardson, 2006). During the national curriculum review in 2013, professional Historians had complained that the subject was dull, had focused too much on skills, and students left school with no chronological narrative of British history (Higgins, 2010; Uberoi and Modood, 2013). Then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, argued for a return to a linear narrative approach which celebrated 'Our Island Story' (Gove, 2010; Richardson, 2015a). Equally, History is a subject often at the centre of public debates around diversity in the curriculum and its wider role in fostering social understanding between people (Arday, 2020; HC Deb, 2020; Alexander et al., 2015; Leach et al., 2020). As this research was conducted with secondary students in a History class and the primary students were accessing historical knowledge through their FoK inquiry in the context of a Geography unit, I want to reflect here on the realities of school History.

The purpose and aim of the History curriculum as stated in DfE (2013, p.188) guidance is:

> *'A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement.'*

This purpose is one I agree with, and have been general principles guiding my approach to this research and my arguments thus far. Rather, it is assessing whether a *'coherent understanding of Britain's past,'* critical thinking or curiosity is truly possible both within the linear scope of standard curriculum guidance, which excludes a sizeable population of British minorities, but also under the constraints the system produces which impacts changes in practice (Mansfield, 2019). For instance, Black History Month is currently non-statutory in the national curriculum, but even where taught, is often focused on US narratives (Traille, 2007). In the case of the primary school in this research, students knew the story of Rosa Parks, but their understanding of Black Britishness was through a lens of black sporting exceptionalism. This suggests that greater reflection and clarity is needed on the wider purpose of Black History Month for *all* students, beyond the more immediate, although equally important

validating and self-affirming benefits for Black students in seeing themselves represented in some form at least (Bishop, 1990).

But the reality that Black History is not statutory at all within the curriculum, is a wider issue. Only 11% of GCSE History students are studying modules related to Black British History (Leach et al., 2020). Of the three largest national exam boards, AQA offers the 'Migration, Empires and the People' GCSE module which covers some Black British History yet only 3.77% of all History GCSE students currently study this (Leach et al., 2020). However, there is a tension in that Black or 'diverse' history in the curriculum as being principally framed around stories of migration i.e., of black and brown people being recent to British history. Akala (2018) notes how British post-WWII migration narratives often conjures up images of Black and Asian immigrants, who were brought up under colonial rule, often spoke English as their first language and went to school pledging allegiance to the Queen. Yet, migrants of colour were considered more foreign than white migrants from non-British colonies across Europe, who even spoke different languages. In this sense, teaching diversity principally through migration risks reinforcing the existing historical inability to conceptualise Britishness without whiteness (Gilroy, 2012; Southbank Centre, 2018).

In Moorside High School, post-war migration was not a topic *Paul* and I could escape in the period 1945-2000. However, *Paul* made attempts to draw links between the British Empire and colonial troops deployed during the wars in the teaching of migration, and discussed the agency of Black and Asian people in the 50s/60s to challenge discrimination (Bristol Bus Boycott, Grunwick Dispute). Being taught migration or not however, there is the more principal issue that the vast majority of students leave school with next to none or a very limited understanding of Black Britishness. As such, students equally lack a coherent understanding of British history because of this, which is in contradiction to the aim stated in official guidance. How this manifested in my research, is that students in the secondary school knew of the Montgomery Bus Boycott but not the Bristol Bus Boycott, which the latter drew inspiration from. The students in the primary school knew of Rosa Park's story, but which also creates a message to students that racism exists 'over there' in the US in its most extreme forms and 'not over here' (Warmington, 2020; Younge, 2020). As a result, students in the secondary school had little to no knowledge of racism in the British context, and the death of Stephen Lawrence for example was largely perceived to be 'out of British character.'

In light of the recent rejection of a review into the diversity of the national curriculum (Proctor, 2020), it would reasonable to conclude that narratives which seek to recognise and include minorities are perceived as single issue, as opposed to extending wider benefits to all (Banks, 2009a). This could be even be inferred from the responses of some secondary students in this study who identified themselves as white-British. They noted that they wanted to have studied more on: *'English culture,' 'English history,' 'more about England's past,'* WWI, WWII, the *Tudors* and the *Victorians* (even though the latter four suggestions fall out of the period 1945-2000). This demonstrates the balancing act needed between what are the hegemonic histories committed to public memory and policy, with what are still traditionally perceived as 'minority stories' in wider understandings of British history. The students' responses could be interpreted as symptomatic of the dominant perception of History as the study of 'big' events, or British history as Tudormania (Higgins, 2016), or it could reflect what Bracey's (2016) research found more generally of the challenges in promoting 'minority' perceived histories to white audiences. Or it could reflect a reaction to feelings of being 'overdosed' on diversity and

excessive accommodation (Maylor, 2010), which follows in a similar vein to the pattern of dismissing patterns of racial/ethnic inequality, with the issue of white, working-class boys (Akala, 2018; Gillborn, 2008; Gilroy, 2012).

Perhaps the cover of an anonymous survey could extend some students the space to be honest in expressing something they may have been more reluctant to say directly to a teacher and researcher of colour. Moreover, this may reflect Applebaum's (2004) argument that white students tend to reject a curriculum that addresses issues of race and racism because they benefit from these systems, whether this is consciously known or not. Although equally, students' prior knowledge is often a product of collective memory and historical cultures that exist in the wider public space (Weinburg et al., 2007). For instance, the storytelling around WWI and WWII and its remembrance in the UK reflects a complex relationship between nationalism and the role of the media in committing particular narratives to public memory over others (Danilova, 2015). This includes how such wars are framed less, as a series of global conflicts and efforts. This was not just militarily overseas, but also included the contribution colonial soldiers made on the home-front in maintaining British agriculture (History Extra, 2020), as well as the role of colonies in providing access to resources and the increased neoliberal interventionism of Britain that followed suit (Cooper, 2002).

However, there are spaces in the curriculum guidance to be creative and teach units from multiple perspectives that could foster a more critical, historiographical understanding of British history (Mansfield, 2019). For instance, there is a tension in labelling aspects of History as 'Black History' or 'diverse History' as opposed to recognising those histories and achievements as just History (DiAngelo, 2018). In other words giving a fuller, more socially just account of historical periods and the inextricably connected nature of events instead. This may remove the risk of students 'switching-off' and paying less respect to a topic area they feel does not represent them. For example, within the parameters of the existing curriculum guidance, there is space to teach a unit exploring the relationship between the Industrial Revolution, Slavery and Empire. Such a joined up approach could impart a richer understanding of the ideologies and beliefs leading to the construction of race but also its relationship to capitalist expansion, and its legacies (History Extra, 2018; Southbank Centre, 2018; Williams, 2014).

For example, sugar produced through the use of slave labour was the first commodity refined in Birmingham's factories (History Extra, 2018; Mintz, 1986), and cotton derived, again from slave labour and empire, fuelled the industrial revolutions of Liverpool and Manchester. While *'Ideas, political power, industry and empire Britain 1745-1901'* is a statutory topic in the national curriculum guidance, slavery is not even though it is central to histories of industry, migration, and 'ideas' such as race - which we live within the effects of today in British society (McCarthy and Sealey-Ruiz, 2010). At KS3 the Holocaust is a statutory topic however, but as Mamdani (2002) argues, it is a topic often presented outside of historical context, meaning it is not adequately situated within the European reality that Hitler was born into which was 'soaked in the conviction that imperialism is a biologically necessary process' if we look to the Maoris of New Zealand and the Native Americans of Tasmania. In some ways, the lack of statutory guidance is problematic (as is similar with British values) because it leaves these types of curricular links and interpretations up to the knowledge of individual teachers, their time and resources - instead of mandating a fuller, more coherent and ethical account of 'Our Island Story' in reality.

Paul explores curricular spaces in depth when considering the school History curriculum and our understanding of race in contemporary British society:

> Paul: '*There is space to put in a unit of work...so it may cover for example the [African-American] civil rights movement...but that needs to then look at for example the way in which Britain has become the society it is today - so let's question the whole nature of slavery and the economics of that trade and the issue of race and identity - because there wasn't a sense of people of colour in the past...but it's not the same issue that occurred during the transatlantic slave trade, or during the Empire, or in the post-colonial period - and each of those periods, the way in which people in society have behaved in terms of their writing, in terms of their actions, in terms of the values - have all been passed on from those things, and yet very little work has been done in the classroom to unpick that...and so any understanding as to why we have a rise of the far right, is very much dealt with in traditional terms, very sensationalist terms sometimes, without looking that these issues go more deeper and more broadly in society.'*

Paul believed the study of History can enable students to reflect on the importance of something from the past on their lives today and assess its potential relevance to a world in the future. On reflection, *Paul* and I could have perhaps done greater work with the secondary students in unpicking their assumptions around migration, in light of the comments some students made. These comments included perceptions of migrants of colour being drawn to Britain because of Britain's inherent wealth, 'better' education but also of their surprise that workers from Commonwealth nations were invited by the government in the post-war period. These assumptions seemed to interact with (1) ways of classifying the world they had learnt about in Geography based on arbitrary and ahistorical development indicators (Andreotti et al., 2018), (2) hegemonic narratives of Britain as a great nation, and (3) wider neo-assimilationist discourse around deserving/underserving migrants (Bassel et al., 2018; Monforte et al., 2019; Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). This finding alone emphasises the importance of teaching richer, more complex histories because in the interests of 'truthtelling' we should '[confront] rather than [forget] divisive episodes in society's past to understand the complexity and realities of social life (Uberoi, 2015, pp. 512–514).

Studying History has valuable academic and social importance, in terms of its ability to foster critical thinking skills, as well as the providing a space to cover topics that helps students understand politics, society and the wider world. Therefore, it is all the more pertinent to improve students' experiences of the subject sooner rather than later. KS3 History is important as students then decide whether to pursue the subject further into KS4/GCSE level (Mansfield, 2019). Studying History can be a short lived experience if students do not enjoy the subject and think it is just about remembering dates and essay writing (Ofqual, 2017). In Moorside High School students were making 'astute' decisions (Ormond, 2017) about what to focus on for GCSE success as early as Year 8. Therefore, KS2 experiences of History are also equally important since students are making subject choices earlier, and may 'switch-off' from lessons they are unlikely to pursue in the future (Lord and Jones, 2006). For example, student *Stephanie* noted that she would like to study more modern History *'near now'* as did a handful of students in the secondary school. Students were perhaps wanting to study topics that may bear greater contextual relevance or meaning to their lives and interests. Alexander et al. (2015) raise issue with the current History national curriculum, in which the chronological

account of 'Our Island Story' begins at primary school level with the Anglo-Saxons, even though it can be more challenging for younger students to have a sense of time that far back. Student *Stephanie* felt somewhat aggrieved at the lack of Black History in her school and it would likely affect both her understanding of History as a subject of study, as well as her academic interest and in it too. *Stephanie's* current experience of the History curriculum was perceived to narrowly be about *'the Romans, always the Romans!'.*

Stephanie's case illustrates why a critically diverse curriculum is important in being able to see oneself, reflected, validated and actualised (Bishop, 1990), but also emphasises its importance in developing a wider academic interest amongst diverse students in the study of subjects such as History (Atkinson et al., 2018; Cowie et al., 2011). Developing this interest is all the more pertinent to consider in light of the performative reality of secondary education and the process of selecting subjects earlier on (Ofqual, 2017). Some secondary students felt History was too difficult in terms of being *'too much writing'* and it is noted that students often avoid subjects they find more difficult. Nevertheless they are also often willing to choose to study such subjects when they enjoy it (Ofqual, 2017). Engaging the interest of a variety of learners is also important to consider as currently, the whiteness and affluence amongst who is studying (and then subsequently teaching) History is continually reflected back into Universities, and teacher education (Atkinson et al., 2018).

On reflection, it would have been interesting to ask students to reflect on and interrogate their assumptions as to why they believe they are taught particular topics and not others in History as Harris and Reynold's (2014) research did. They found that students were largely unable to identify why or how these decisions were made. This partial construction or assemblage of the curriculum is important for students to gain an awareness of. Even at the ages 8-9, the group of primary students who had found out information related to colonialism in Africa, were developing an awareness of the selective, partial histories that were represented in their day-to-day school lives and how this differed from the histories connected to their home or community lives (Leonardo, 2005). In my case, having access to different histories from home and random books from the local library, was what facilitated my interest in History as a discipline to pursue at undergraduate level. I was not reliant on school knowledge, which in fact was not allowing me to have the conversations about the world that I wanted (Weelahan, 2010).

Some secondary students did express a desire to know more about the world, but felt Geography was the more relevant subject to do this, meaning History was less of interest. But all subjects have a history (Kincheloe, 2001b), and Geography without History is problematic. Some secondary students readily listed a list of development indicators to classify some countries as 'poorer' compared to Britain, without the contextual knowledge of colonialism, or resource extraction, whose histories coalesce and hide into seemingly 'objective' quantitative measures to explore in classrooms (Andreotti et al., 2018; Escobar, 2011). Interdisciplinary thinking is therefore an important part in producing ethical counter-knowledge (Yosso, 2002). In the Geography Key Stage 3 national curriculum guidance for example, on the '*locational knowledge of the Middle East'* is a required topic. But what is the 'Middle East' beyond an imagined geography (Said, 2003) or a geo-political concept that gained greater traction through the development of the Cold War? (Adelson, 2011).

The academic value in studying of History is arguably made through its ability to help students use evidence, make interpretations, and identify change and continuities (Harris, 2017; Hawkey, 2015). However, History offers more than the 'academic' skills and knowledge it facilitates, and instead has a wider purpose in facilitating the reflection and questioning that can support students in developing a critical consciousness (Kincheloe, 2001b). However, there are a number of constraining factors that inhibit the critical thinking potential of History in contemporary classrooms. These include; the challenge to balance depth and breadth across topics, meeting official requirements for external assessments and outcomes, whilst also developing students historical research skills (Ormond, 2017; Puustinen and Khawaja, 2020). Moreover, because of the 'ironclad structure of contemporary technical standards', there are a certain level of "facts" students have to know and teachers have to teach, which can further a perception amongst students that History is about memorising dates, people, or even 'one event here and three superficial causes of an event' there (Kincheloe, 2001, p.592). In order words, trying to get through the chronological, linear narrative, can impede the time students have to develop different interpretations (Puustinen and Khawaja, 2020), but also have the wider discussions that can help students '*understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time*' (DfE, 2013, p.188).

7.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that what is encapsulated as part of the standardised national curriculum, projects wider messages and norms around whose, and what knowledge is to be valued, and therefore worthy of schools to teach, and for society to valorise (Giroux, 2009). Throughout this thesis I have drawn on critical theory to highlight how the curriculum can reproduce power asymmetries in society, through the knowledge that is given 'official' credence over others, and the impact this has on and how students understand British history and the wider world. There are a number of structural constraints (curriculum policy, central school inspections, exam boards, performance metrics, racial literacy and knowledge of teachers) that continually reinforce whiteness, a knowledge hierarchy, and inhibit the perception that changes in practice are even needed (Apple, 2011). Whether knowledge is described as 'rich', 'academically rigorous' or 'powerful', the curriculum is socially, culturally and politically located, and school subjects cannot be separated from their disciplinary histories, which have been aligned to orientalist, 'culturally particularist' (Lentin, 2014) values (Said, 2003; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Indeed, when such problems are posed within academia, they can face criticism for being emotive, biased, subjective (Kress, 2011), or perhaps as my research might be in the eyes of a social realist – 'too relativist' to the point of not knowing what knowledge even is (Moore, 2013; Rata, 2012).

But what I have attempted to do through this research is reflect more broadly on the curriculum as a moral and political practice. By diversifying the scope of the school curriculum and using FoK as an approach to producing counter knowledge and integrate different sources of cultural capital, the intention was to create small spaces to resist dominant discourses and present the possibility of change (Leonardo, 2005). There were some notable gains through the process, such as: the questions some primary students asked, the relationships developed between students but also between students and their teachers in both the primary and secondary school, the knowledge students acquired on colonialism, racism and social action,

the greater confidence in working independently amongst the primary students, and the questioning of sources in the secondary school. Although this research was not without its limitations, critical pedagogical work is an on-going effort of trial, reinvention and linking critical theory to practice (Darder et al., 2009).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The aim of my research inquiry was to first examine the concept of British values, how it is interpreted and understood by students, and how this is shaped by students' wider understanding of citizenship and belonging. One of the major themes from my research in connection, relates to the hegemonic narratives that permeate students understanding of British values and their experience of the curriculum. I identified three narratives across both case study schools, which included: a narrative of celebratory 'progress', a narrative which sustains Muslims as cultural others, and a narrative which reinforces Whiteness, not just as a racial categorisation but as a structured relationship to power and entitlement. All three narratives are indicative of the wider British political context in which individualism, neo-assimilationist policies, Islamophobia, and the mainstreaming of far-right wing rhetoric, are steadfastly becoming normalised as part of British politics and present serious road-blocks in advancing the cause of social and racial justice. As this research study has progressed, CRT has been termed 'illegal' (Wood, 2020), public officials have claimed institutional racism does not exist (Forrest, 2020), whilst the 'oppressors' have divided the working class into the 'white working class' for instrumental political gain (Allen, 2005; Freire, 1996; Gillborn, 2015). All of this continues to amplify race inequality and social division in British society, and work against the alleged 'British value' of 'democracy'.

Therefore, it is increasingly important that we have access to counter-narratives and knowledge that can resist hegemonic, culturally selective ways of being and knowing that are filtered through into the curriculum. This is not only for the purposes of supporting critical literacy, but improving social relations and fostering a sense of justice. In response, my research sought to examine the scope of knowledge in the national curriculum, with a particular focus on the subject of History. I discussed the impact of neo-conservative policies such as the prioritisation of 'academic' or 'powerful' knowledge, as well as the jingoistic Our Island Story' narrative running through the national curriculum. Social realists coining of the concept 'powerful knowledge' has garnered political interest amongst Conservative politicians in directing the purpose of education and the scope of the curriculum towards the narrow pursuit (and competitive testing) of 'academic' knowledge. This is while the role of social knowledge, and more cooperative forms of learning, are undermined in its value. While proponents of Young's (2008) powerful knowledge argue the curriculum should extend beyond the confines of students' backgrounds and experiences, students in this research presented "outside" knowledge that could be described as not only powerful, but wide-ranging in scope and diversity. Rather than the notion of social knowledge be dismissed as lurching towards 'relativism' or seen as an attack on knowledge (Muller, 2000; Rata, 2012; Willamson, 2020; Young et al., 2014), it would be more helpful to consider its role in providing an education that has resonance, critical meaning and diversity.

With my analysis and discussion, my objective was to challenge the claims of neutrality or objectivity in academic knowledge and epistemology, using a critical race perspective (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). I believe issues of race are not considered enough within curriculum studies for the reason that it might decentre the system of whiteness as the 'epistemological vantage point' of academic knowledge and the claims they subsequently make (Allen, 2005, p.64). Creating a false dichotomy between 'social' or 'everyday' knowledge and academic knowledge, fails to consider the colonial histories and realities of social and

racial inequality that are embedded within standard curricula structures and the production of knowledge. Moreover, this lack of consideration creates barriers to developing more innovative, creative learning which is more likely to engage a diversity of learners. A greater recognition of the cultural capital and knowledge outside of what is traditionally presented and selected as academic knowledge, is an important step towards altering deficit views towards people who are raced and classed (Yosso, 2005), but also in nurturing an intellectual interest and sense of empowerment amongst students (Bernal, 2002; Berry, 1998). I acknowledge no curriculum will cater for the needs of every student, nor can it remedy all the shortcomings of society. But what it can do is provide validation, increase understanding between people, and nurture a curiosity and interest in school for a variety of learners.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that there is a strong relationship between knowledge in the curriculum and pedagogy, and the potential it has to foster more socially just ways of being, knowing, and relating to others (Giroux, 2010). As stated in my introduction, my findings are limited to two case study research settings: one primary school and one secondary school in one city in the North of England. It has not been the aim of this study to present data that could be generalisable. I do not have any clear answers regarding how to alter deeply institutionalised problems such as the racism and Eurocentrism of standard curriculum practice and what is valorised as universal or 'academic' knowledge (Andreotti, 2011; Yosso, 2002: 2005). Whilst most of what is presented in this thesis is nothing new in the realm of critical research on British values, and research theoretically informed by critical pedagogy and CRT, the major contribution of my research is in providing rich empirical data and the voices of students to strengthen existing arguments that have problematised the increasing prevalence of nation-state discourses in education and the interconnected nature between race, racism and the curriculum. Moreover, what I have presented in this thesis hopefully offers some insight into how small spaces of resistance that can facilitate a greater plurality of knowledge, could be approached from within the confines of the curriculum. Critical theory benefits from cycles of action and reflection. Therefore, I hope this thesis provides some insight into ways of collaboratively working with teachers to develop curricula and applying critical theory to real world contexts (Apple, 2011).

I think a key area for future research continues to be identifying what pedagogical spaces there are within the confines of the curriculum for diverse, transformative knowledge that can draw on the social knowledge and cultural capital of students to produce knowledge for curricula use (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002b). It will also be necessary to consider ways of developing a more critical understanding amongst students of nationalist discourses such as British values and the Our Island Story narrative. A further area of research could be in undertaking curriculum development research with teachers at both primary and secondary level, in developing topics within the History national curriculum guidance that are currently taught less in schools (e.g., Qing Dynasty, or Indus Valley Civilisation at Key Stage 2) (Alexander et al., 2015; Leach et al., 2020). At Key Stage 3, this could involve developing a more thematic approach that links different topics together, such as the Industrial Revolution, race and empire, as I discussed earlier.

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Appendix 1: Information Poster for Primary School Participation

The University Of Sheffield.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM RESEARCH PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE:

BRITISH VALUES EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: TOWARDS A CRITICAL, GLOBAL CURICULUM AT KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?
- How can teachers, pupils and communities develop different ways of understanding British Values in an increasingly diverse society?
- How can teachers be supported to use their expertise to develop curricula that challenges 'single stories' and builds on the backgrounds of diverse pupils?
- How can we make more space for teachers and pupils for inquiry/exploring 'controversial' issues, within the constraints of a target-driven education context?
- How does all this existing 'academic' research actually connect to school realities?!

WHAT WOULD PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?
- Talking to teachers and pupils to find out how they interpret British values.
- Supporting a teacher in the classroom setting to develop a new curriculum unit with their pupils, that is focused on critical inquiry/global learning.

WHY? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?
- Helping meet Ofsted requirements in promoting British values and SMSC.
- Giving teachers time and space to develop the inquiry-based learning they would like.
- Flexible support from myself to help develop resources for you/subject area (over 12 months)
- Material from project collaborative partners (DECSY, Historical & Geographical Associations)
- Furthering pupils' critical thinking/understanding of diverse perspectives/people.
- Opportunities to co-publish the research and funding opportunities for teachers and schools.

If you might be interested in the project or for more information, feel free to contact Aunam Quyoum a.quyoum@sheffield.ac.uk

Or attend our project event: 12th July, 4.15–5.30pm

191

Appendix 2: Unit Overview for Britain Since 1945-2000

Lesson	Lesson Objectives	Tasks	Resources	Homework

1	INTRODUCTION
	• To introduce the new unit
	• To understand what existing knowledge pupils have on British History,
	• To understand what a significant event means and explain why, and identify what the 'theme(s)' of any event are,
	• To begin to know a chronology of the period and appreciate why timelines are useful in History
	• Students will be able to self assess and compare how much they have learnt at different stages of the Unit (pupils will use a different colour each date they add information to the timeline – they should re-visit this as a starter or plenary activity at three different times over the course of the Unit.
		10 minute task
		• Write down what a significant event means
		• Make notes on the 4 different themes
		• In pairs, list any significant events they know of already
		5 minutes
		• Feedback and class discussion
		10 minutes
		• Introduce end of Unit homework around a 'significant event'
		30 minutes
		• Timeline exercise carried out as a class - plotting and discussing each of the 6 images and deciding:
		    o Why it is significant? (or not)
		    o Who is it significant to? Why?
		    o What theme(s) can each event be described as?
			A3 Blank Timelines (for each student)
			
			Handout of significant events with the title/date and brief explanation of the event.	

2	POST-WAR BRITAIN • To understand the effects of WWII on Britain and the challenges Britain faced from 1945, • To describe the development of the Welfare State and the ideas behind it, • To know an example of local, post-war welfarism in Britain	5 minutes • On post-it notes, each write 2 questions they want to know about British history Complete Inspectorate Sheet	Post-it notes Park Hill Flats - Inspectorate Sheet	
3	POST-WAR BRITAIN • To know an example of local, post-war welfarism in Britain, • To evaluate the concept of Park Hill flats, • To reflect on welfarism, through a comparison from the past and its inception, to now. MIGRATION	15 minutes • Finish Inspectorate Sheet, 5 -10 minutes • Think/Pair Share and Class Discussion 20 minutes • Explanation of work to be completed as homework (each person in the class will be numbered 1-5)	Park Hill Flats - Inspectorate Sheet, Homework handout.	Homework based on using 'Our Migration Story' website, (to be handed in for lesson 4)

	• To introduce the topic • To know the definition of 'push' and 'pull' factors in migration and give examples, • To know the different reasons why and groups of people who migrated to Britain from 1948 - 2004.	• Present slide on push/pull factors 15 minutes • Context of Migration		
4	 • To know the definition of 'push' and 'pull' factors in migration and give examples, • To know the different reasons why, different groups of people who migrated to Britain from 1948 - 2004. • To know why and how the Bristol Bus Boycott happened and its legacy, • To understand how race inequality was experienced in the 1960s - and understand how this has continued into British history.	15 minutes • Dr Hakim Adi video (4:20) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=261&v=pJGb8hTnndM • note-taking, and discussion of prompt questions... 15 minutes • Case Studies feedback based on Homework 20 minutes • Divided opinions on immigration, • Bristol Bus Boycott • Video of Roy Hackett (5:20) 10 minutes • Race equality today		
5	 • To understand the geography of British Empire and why Britain came to have such an empire, • To know the importance of India to the British Empire and the challenges of keeping control from 1945 onwards • To know the effects of British rule in India through the story of Partition in 1947.	10 minutes • Introduction to topic • Look at 4 different maps and discuss what they see/notice with a partner • Feedback to the class 30 minutes • Introduction to Empire in India • Video on 'why India was so valuable to British Empire https://www.bbc.com/teach/class-clips-video/gcse-history-why-was-india-so-valuable-to-the-british-Eempire/zv2rwty • Discuss as a table the downsides and gains of Britain having an empire in India, and complete A5 Sheet individually • Feedback to class 15 minutes • Introduction to British leaving India and Partition	A3 Sheet - Maps of British Empire (to be shared between 2 and re-used) A5 'Gains and Downsides' Sheet on Britain having an Empire in India (sheet each)	

6	**BRITISH EMPIRE** • To know the various reasons why Britain granted India independence, and its effects • To be able to argue, apply knowledge from lesson 5 + 6 and use sources to write a short essay response, • To understand the legacy of Britain's empire today	20 minutes: • In pairs, using the partition milestones A3 worksheet, select and highlight the key information 10 minutes • Class feedback 30 minutes: • Discussion of reasons why Britain left India • Discussion of homework task, what the two sources show, and how to approach structuring an essay response	A3 Sheet 'Partition Milestones' Homework Sheet handout of two sources and short essay question, 'Why did Britain leave India in 1947?'	Essay Question: 'Why did Britain leave India in 194 *Use Source A, Source B and your own knowledge to help explain your answer.*
7	**DEMOCRACY AND PROTEST** • To be able to define and explain the term 'Democracy' • To know the different reasons why the miners went on strike in 1984	20 minutes • Think, pair, share and class discussion on the legacy of British empire 20 minutes • Answer the questions reflecting on what democracy is and create their own definition using examples • Class discussion 10 minutes • Introduction to context of Miners Strikes		
8	**DEMOCRACY AND PROTEST** • To know the causes and effects of the Miners Strikes in the 1980s and its political/social and cultural legacy.			
9	**DEMOCRACY AND PROTEST** • To know the causes and effects of the Miners Strikes in the 1980s and its political/social and cultural legacy. • To be able to evaluate and re-define and explain the term 'Democracy' and provide examples			
10	**YOUTH CULTURE**	10 minutes		

	• Students should gain an understanding of how sources are used and begin to appreciate what an interpretation is,
	• Studentsshould appreciate that historical interpretations change over time
		• Watch video on 'Mods vs. Rockers' https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/clips/zc2hdxs
		10 minutes
		  • Reflect on the use of sources
		  • Prompt questions to discuss
		15 minutes
		  • Ask students to reflect on what constitutes as a youth culture or political protest today		

11	<mark>SIGNIFICANT STORIES</mark> • To review pupils chronology (Timelines) of the period 1945-2005, • Present Significant or 'hidden' Stories			

Appendix 3: Questionnaire – Secondary School

These questionnaires are anonymous. This is not a test and we are not looking for any 'right' or 'wrong answers, so please try to answer as fully and honestly as you can!

Part 1: British Values

The 5 British values defined by the government in no particular order are:

   (1). Democracy, (2). Mutual Respect, (3).Tolerance, (4.) Individual Liberty (Freedom)

   (5). Rule of Law

1. Have you learnt about British Values in secondary school before? Y/ N? (If yes, in which subjects)

_____

2. Did you ever learn about British Values in primary school? Y/ N? (If yes, any details?)

_____

3. Write a **one** sentence definition that explains what a 'value' is, in your opinion? You can use examples of some values to help you describe what it means.

' *I think a value is….*   _____

_____

4. Which of the British Values do you understand the most **and** why? You can write more than one.

_____

_____

5. Which of these British Values do you understand the least **and** why? You write more than one.

_____

_____

6. Do you think the British values represent & include you? (Please explain your answer)

_____

_____

7. Do you think teachers should be teaching about British Values in school? *Why or Why not?*

_____

_____

8. What values do you think are important, that might not be represented in the British Values?

_____

9. Do you see any problems/ issues with British values? Y/ N (Please explain your opinion):

_____

_____

Part 2: Life in Britain

1. List three things that you most associate with Britain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. List three events, issues *or* facts throughout what you have learned in 'Britain Since 1945-2005' that have most interested you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. What event, issue of fact, have you found the most surprising **and** why?

_____

_____

4. How would you describe yourself? English, British or something else? Why?

_____

_____

5. How would you describe your heritage? (You may use terms similar/ different to the above)

_____

6. What topics/events or people do you think have been left out of this Unit that you would have liked to have known about?

_____

_____

7. Since studying "Britain since 1945 – 2005, how do you feel in comparison with your feelings about learning history before, about…?

		Less confident	About the same	More confident
A	Questioning Sources e.g. photograph			
B	Questioning facts e.g. table of unemployment figures			
C	Producing & Using a timeline of events			
D	Contributing to group work e.g. Migration story			
E	Participating in class discussion			
F	Writing an extended answer			
G	Knowing the arguments for/ against an event/ action			
H	Making a judgement about an event/ issue			
I	Knowing key terms e.g. democracy			

8. Are you considering studying History at GCSE? Y/N - Why?

_____

_____

9. How could the content (topics) you learn about in History be improved? What are you interested in learning about?

_____

_____

10. Do you have any further questions/thoughts about British history since studying this Unit?

_____

_____

_____

1. Have I learnt anything new about myself?

_____

_____

2. How much did you enjoy this enquiry?

Loved it	Really liked it	In the middle	Not that much	Not at all

3. What was the <u>best</u> part of our inquiry?

_____

4. What was your <u>least</u> favourite part?

_____

5. What was the biggest difference about our inquiry, compared to how we normally learn?

_____

_____

6. If we did this inquiry again, how could we improve it for next time?

_____

_____

Appendix 5: Example Interview Question Guide

N	Question	Prompt
Introduction		
	• How long have you been teaching (teacher of…)? • How long have you been working at this school? • How would you describe the ethos/background of the school?	
British Values.		
	• What do you understand of the concept British values? • Can you remember when you first heard about it? What did you think?	Positives? Negatives?
	• Which values do you feel the most/least comfortable to explain? Which ones do you think they least? • What values that pupils struggle the most in understanding? • How do you approach the teaching of British values? • How do you think students interpret British values?	What kind of teaching examples/activities?
	• In your opinion, what are British values for you? • Do you think there is anything missing from this list of British values?	Self-definition of British values (accepted, rejected, ambivalent?)
	• In your school, is there much of an emphasis to promote British Values? • As a (x) teacher, how do you feel about your duty to promote British values? • Have you had any training on Prevent? • What about race equality?	Level of school priority, Staff awareness/training Reflections on the link between BV and Prevent?
Curriculum		
	• How much opportunity do you have to develop new units/topics/lessons? • What impacts your ability to develop new topics/resources? • How much support do you receive to do this? Why?	Professional development opportunities/ workload
	• Do you think there's specific types of learning or knowledge currently missing or limited in the current curriculum? • What kind of things do your students want to know?	Knowledge/Subjects/Topics Perspectives/Critical thinking Skills/Pedagogy
	Do you have much opportunity to discuss what might be considered as 'difficult' topics with your pupils? e.g. racism, bullying, inequality. • In what context does this occur? • How do pupils respond to this? • What types of questions do they ask?	How comfortable are you in exploring these kind of topics with pupils? (Mark out of 10?)
Reflections on participation in the project and the **unit** developed		
	• How would you describe what we attempted to do? • Aims and objectives? • How do you think pupils responded to this unit? • Was it different to others - if so, in what ways was this evident?	Opinion on what the project was trying to achieve… Was this: the subject, the content, the delivery, the style, pedagogy?
	• Were there any strengths/limitations in adopting the approach we did/ our ways of working? • Has anybody else within the school shown an interest? Why/how? • Do you think a 'funds of knowledge' approach could be integrated into the curriculum? How could it work? • Has being part of this project or developing this unit made you think about anything differently?	What might the challenges be? What support/resources would be needed?
Are there any final thoughts, comments or questions that you would like to raise?		

Appendix 6: Example Interview Transcript

I: How do you feel about History and Geography?
- Not that good.

I: Not that good? How come?
- Because it's always the same things that we do and the same things we learn about

I: What kind of things?
- So like...we would do something then like carry it on all the time, then we'll do another thing and then have to do the other thing again

I: Can you give me an example of what those things are?
- (.) I don't actually know, but they just do the same kinda thing and they do it again and again and again *(smiles)*

I: So you find that a bit boring?
- Yeah!

I: So what do you want to learn about?
- Like different religions, because we keep learning about Muslims and Christians but we don't do anyone other than those religions.

I: What other religions might you like to know about? How could we make history and geography better?
- By like asking other people what kind of religious things they do, and like for history you could do different histories, different kind of people

I: What do you mean by different people or histories?
- *(becomes louder, more confident)* Because we've only done like history about The Romans, always the Romans, and we haven't done it about people, like *actually* people, like *real people* near now

I: So more modern stuff?
- Yeah.

I: And so what kind of people?
- (.) ....like....(.)...
- Like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King

I: So Black history?
- Yeah! Because we haven't done Black history yet.

I: And you want to learn more about that?
- Yeah!

I: Could you explain why?
- Yeah....I just...don't know why they do same things here
- (.)
- (.)

I: Do you know what a value is? Could you explain what you think it means?
- Is it like something, like something important...like something important you need to show.

I: I've asked you a tricky question there haven't I! I think you're right. Do you have an example of something important people should show?
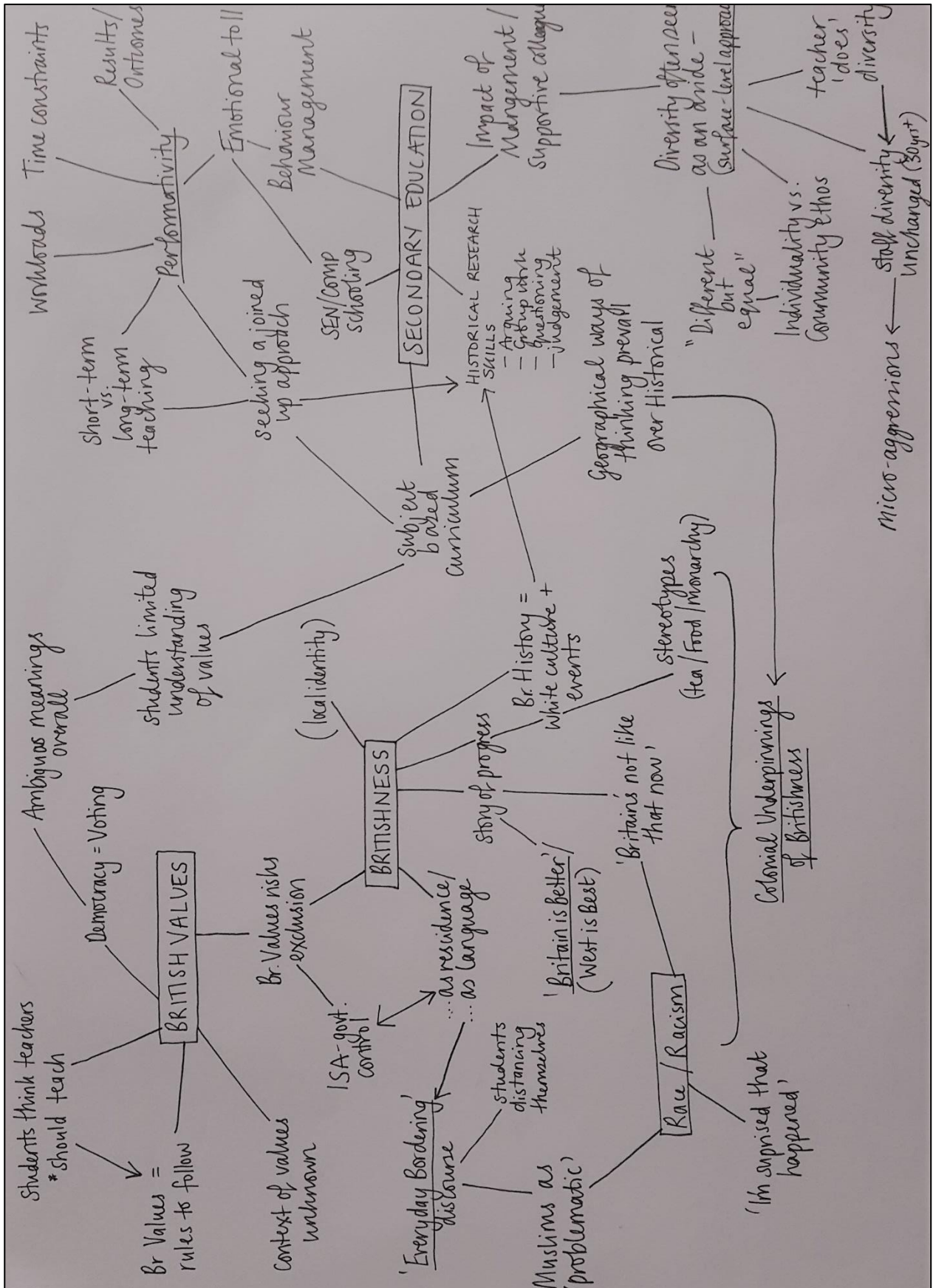- Like respect...equal righ-ting *(unsure, trials off)*

I: Equal rights?
- Yeah!

I: Do you think everybody is treated with equally?
- No....like poor people (.) I don't know.

Appendix 7: Analysis mind-map developed from secondary school data

Appendix 8: University Ethics Approval

Aunam Quyoum
Registration number: 170244783
School of Education
Programme: PhD

Dear Aunam

PROJECT TITLE: British values education in the 21st Century: an interdisciplinary response for a critical global curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3
APPLICATION: Reference Number 016766

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 23/05/2018 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 016766 (form submission date: 16/05/2018); (expected project end date: 30/09/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1039182 version 3 (16/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039181 version 3 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039180 version 3 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039179 version 3 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039178 version 6 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039185 version 3 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039184 version 3 (14/05/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1039183 version 1 (24/01/2018).
- Participant consent form 1039189 version 1 (24/01/2018).
- Participant consent form 1039188 version 1 (24/01/2018).
- Participant consent form 1039187 version 1 (24/01/2018).
- Participant consent form 1039186 version 1 (24/01/2018).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix 9: Participant Consent Form (Primary Students)

Consent Form – University of Sheffield

Project Title: British values and the school curriculum

Name of Researcher: Miss A. Quyoum

Participant number:

Please listen as I read this sheet and ask me questions at any time.
Please put an X in the boxes to show if you *agree*, *disagree* or *not sure*.

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1. I have been spoken to about this project and understand what I am being asked to do.			
2. I have had a chance to ask any questions I have.			
3. I promise that if I start to feel uncomfortable, that I will leave or tell somebody.			
4. I am happy to have my voice recorded and I know that only Miss Quyoum can listen to these recordings. I know that she will delete them once she has written it out.			
5. I know that nobody else will know what I have said today and that my real name will never be used.			
6. I know that Miss Quyoum might use what I say today in her future work in the next 5 years.			
7. I agree to take part in the activity today.			

Name:_____

Date:_____

Signature:_____

Researcher: Miss A. Quyoum

Date:

Signature: