Social Integration in Post-Multiculturalism: An Analysis of Social Integration Policy in Post-war Britain

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Abstract: Social integration is one of the most urgent issues in Western countries, where cultural diversity has been recognized to make social unity danger. In the past, social integration used to be tackled by multiculturalism, which was an effort to recognize cultural diversity as a positive aspect of society. However, multiculturalism is losing the moral support of society because multiculturalism itself could not be a social glue among different people; rather it is thought to make society unstable. Thus, a new philosophy and policy is required to manage the issues of social integration in a globalized social environment. In order to create social integration, on one hand, people with different backgrounds need to share the same concept of society. On the other hand, people have to become accustomed to cultural diversity. However, this is not easily accomplished because both measures for social integration seem to be politically contradictory and incompatible. How, and by what reasons, could these two conditions of social integration be satisfied? To answer this question, this paper scrutinizes the changes in social integration policy in post-war Britain. I divide social integration policy in Britain into three stages focusing on the relationship between social unity and cultural diversity: from after World War II to 1979; Thatcher’s and Major’s Conservative Governments; and Blair’s new Labour Government. The social integration policy and philosophy of the new Labour Government in particular is important because it represents post-multiculturalism discourse for social integration. The Labour Government tried to establish social integration by introducing an abstract common identity, which both the majority and minority groups could accept and which is compatible with various cultural or religious conventions and teaching, as it were, citizenship and Britishness, as a set of liberal values. Although the Labour Government’s policy itself was controversial, it is giving us a reference point for the debate on social integration in a post-multicultural era.

Keywords: social integration, post-multiculturalism, new Labour Government

The growth of immigrants against the backdrop of globalization has had, positively and negatively, a strong impact on developed countries. It has, on the one hand, compensated for decreasing populations and restrained inflation through the supply of a young and cheap labour force. It has also contributed to cultural production,
which is an important product in post-industrial economy. However, the increase in cultural diversity as a consequence of mass immigration has brought about some serious conflicts and backlashes in host countries. Myths that immigrants come to “steal” welfare and to destroy the host’s cultural heritage have spread with the result of a rise in the “politics of insecurity,” as exemplified in Islamophobia and the anti-immigrant movements of far-right groups (Goodhart, 2006; Huysmans, 2006).

The most urgent issue in this context is how can we establish social unity and welfare equality in a culturally diverse society without any detrimental costs to the merits of diversity. This issue has been recently discussed in the debates on post-multiculturalism, especially since the 1990s. Multiculturalism appeared in the late 1970s to criticize the ideology of liberalism, which set a strict border between the private and public spheres and insisted that cultural practices should be recognized only in the private sphere. In contrast, multiculturalism claimed that all cultures also had the right to be recognized as “authentic” in the public sphere and should be given social support for that purpose. In spite of the important contribution to the debates on justice, however, multiculturalism has had its fair share of criticism. One keen criticism of multiculturalism argues that the unconditional recognition of culture could destroy social commonality and unity, and even justify segregation and inequality among different cultural or racial groups (Barry, 2001). It seems that multiculturalism does not function sufficiently as a social bond or glue; thus, new political precepts for social integration are required in place of multiculturalism.

In this paper, social integration is defined as a situation in which “social unity” exists in “cultural diversity.” In order to create social unity in culturally diverse conditions it is necessary for people with different backgrounds to share the same concept of society. This means that people live in different places, eat different foods and have different interests, but, nevertheless, have the same image of society, feel a belonging to the same society and follow common rules. On the other hand, for social integration to succeed, people need to become accustomed to cultural diversity. For that reason, it is necessary for cultural diversity to be recognized in the public sphere. However, the measures needed to create social unity and recognize cultural diversity seem to be politically contradictory and incompatible. Due to the existent power balance, ways to bring about social unity would compel minority groups to follow rules and ideas about identity which are the product of the majority groups. In contrast, adaptation to cultural diversity will create a psychological and fiscal burden for both majority and minority groups. How, and by what reasons, could these two conditions of social integration be satisfied? To answer this question, this paper scrutinizes the changes in social integration policy in post-war Britain.

Already a large volume of research on social integration policy exists in the UK; for example Sakuma Kose’s inclusive reviews (Sakuma, 1998, 2007), some studies focusing on the policy-making process (Freeman, 1979; Bleich, 2003) and on social philosophy and history (Favell, 2001). Differing from previous studies, I concentrate on the relationship between social unity and cultural diversity. In this connection, I also shed light on the role of “citizenship” (Karatani, 2003) because citizenship expresses a form of social unity and also defines how far diversity can be accepted in society. This paper divides social integration policy, in the UK, into three stages in accordance with the form of relationship between social unity and cultural diversity: after World War II to 1979; Thatcher’s and Major’s Conservative Governments (1979–1997); and the new Labour Government (1997–2010). Finally, I discuss the possibility of liberal nationalism, which is a political and philosophical stand,
found in the post-multicultural debates, as a concept that may aid better social integration in a globalized society.

**Consensus Politics: After World War II to 1979**

Since World War II, the issue of compatibility between social unity and cultural diversity has become a significant part of the national agenda in the UK. At first, this issue was tackled through a kind of compromise, as it were, in the process of “agreement politics” between Conservatives and Labour. This compromise concretely indicates three political exchanges between immigration law and race-relations law.

**Social Unity and the Immigration Act**

First of all, I consider three laws concerning immigration: the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962, the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968 and the Immigration Act 1971. The UK Government enacted the Nationality Act 1948, just after World War II in order to reorganize the Commonwealth in the post-war period. This law is perceived as “tolerant” because it did not set a special category for citizens living in the UK, such as a “British Citizen,” and conferred equal rights to all citizens in the Commonwealth. Although the UK invited immigrants from a variety of backgrounds to come and aid the recovery of the post-war British economy, the majority came from Ireland and Europe. Non-European immigrants have increased since the US Government passed the McCarran–Walter immigration and naturalization bill in 1952, which regulated immigrants from the West Indian countries into the USA. The rush of immigrants into the UK, instead of the USA, caused several racial conflicts, such as the riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958, and became an important political agenda during the 1960s.

In this context, the Commonwealth Act 1962 was legislated by the Conservative Government. The purpose of this law was to control the number of immigrants through issuing work vouchers. Interestingly, the number of vouchers issued for people from the new Commonwealth countries, such as India, Pakistan and West India, were severely restricted, while the total number of vouchers increased and people who had a UK passport issued in Ireland were excluded from the regulation. This implied that the Government thought white citizens were more eligible as a constituent of UK society than non-whites. This idea was reinforced further by two immigration laws. In 1968, another Commonwealth Act was enacted by the Labour Government to control Asian immigrants from African countries. In these countries where independence from the UK was recognized, “Africanization,” which gave preference to native Africans over Asian residents, was declared. Related to this issue, an important concern for the Government was how to rescue white Africans who had roots in the UK, while, at the same time, shutting out Asian immigrants. For that purpose, the government introduced the category “patriality,” into the Commonwealth Act 1968, which referred to persons who had at least one parent or grandparent born in the UK or who had become a citizen of the UK or one of its colonies, by adoption or enrollment. This law “represented a crude device to prevent Kenyan Asians with British passports entering Britain, by linking right of entry to having a parent or grandparent born in the United Kingdom” (Kirton, 2000: 11) and, therefore, also showed the intention of the Government to limit British citizenship to white citizens. As a result, on the grounds of this law, only about 1500 immigrants from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, per year, were permitted to enter the UK. The successive Conservative Government also introduced the Immigration Act of 1971, which built on the
Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968. This law classified citizens into two categories, “patrial” and “non-patrial,” and imposed on the latter a limitation on free entry into the UK (Freeman, 1979: 62). In contrast, those in the patrial category, regardless of whether they possessed a British passport or not, were granted free access to the UK. In addition, the Irish were included in the patrial category. These provisions indicate that many of the white residents from Commonwealth countries were able to enjoy free access to the UK while a large number of the non-white residents were excluded from such free access.

This series of immigration laws was a political action to mitigate the insecurity of majority groups in the face of increasing immigrants from black and minority ethnic populations. It was also the first answer to the controversial question, “Who is British?” although it was not the final answer. Thus, these three immigration laws functioned to confirm social diversity and reinforce a sense of belonging to the UK among the white majority by border control (Karatani, 2003: 168–170).

Cultural Diversity and the Race Relations Act

However, for the promotion of better social integration, it was also necessary to persuade people to adapt to the reality of multicultural Britain. In this era, this was achieved by three Race Relations Acts: in 1965, 1968 and 1976.

The first Race Relations Act was enacted in 1965 just after Labour got into governmental power. This law banned “expressive racism” on the grounds of skin color, race and ethnicity in the public sphere; for example, in hotels, restaurants, pubs, cinemas, and public vehicles. It also made it possible for a new organization, the Race Relations Board, to arbitrate racial disputes. The second Race Relations Act was legislated in 1968. This law banned racial discrimination in private realms, such as employment, housing and unions. The power of the Racial Relations Board was enforced and it was allowed “to investigate discrimination even when no complaint had been received” and “to bypass the Attorney General and to bring legal proceedings when conciliation failed” (Bleich, 2003: 84). This law also established the Community Relations Committee, the purpose of which was not only to stop racism but also to promote more positive relationships between different race groups (Sakuma, 1998: 420–421; Bleich, 2003: 84). In 1976, the Labour Government passed the third Race Relations Act to tackle racism by stronger provisions. One of the important changes was the ban of “indirect discrimination,” which covered racial disadvantages caused by systemic and unintended racism. All codes of employment were reviewed from the perspective of indirect discrimination. Also, the Committee for Racial Equality was established and initiated positive action, such as “ethnic monitoring,” which took into account racial representation and balance in public and private organizations (Bleich, 2003: 108–109).

Race relations law, in contrast to immigration law, met with strong opposition because it forced the white majority to change their image of “Britain” and to adapt to a culturally and racially diverse environment. Nevertheless, the three Race Relations Acts finally came into force after many political negotiations and compromises. The successful legislation of the Race Relations Acts was possible partly because the liberal contingency of the Labour politicians, who accepted or helped the legislation of stricter immigration laws, urged the introduction of these laws in order to redeem their self-image as a tolerant party that stood by the weak. There was also a political consensus between Conservatives and Labour. Both parties had a common interest in excluding such hot issues as race problems from the political arena (Freeman, 1979: 43–49) and also believed in the classic slogan coined by

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Labour politician Roy Hattersley: “Integration without control is impossible.” In this era, the politics of consensus made it possible for potentially opposing measures for social integration to be utilized to create social unity and support cultural diversity.

Separation between National and Local: The Conservative Government in the 1980s–1990s

The 1980s witnessed the death of consensus politics between the Conservatives and Labour. In place, the issues on social integration came to be resolved separately at the national and local levels. On the one hand, the central government tried to fulfill the host society’s desire for social unity and, on the other, some local governments tried to realize the minority’s wish for cerebrating cultural diversity.

Social Unity and Assimilation: National Level

Discourse on social integration changed in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher got into power and dismissed consensus politics between the Conservatives and Labour. The fraction of consensus politics had already appeared in the 1960s. One example was the infamous speech, “river of blood,” by Enoch Powell, an MP of the Conservative Party. He cautioned his supporters about the immigrant invasion into “our” society and made an appeal to stop the legislation of the Race Relations Act 1968. His speech attracted the attention of those who worried about the increase in the non-white population of their towns and cities. Powell, himself, was subsequently dismissed from his position of shadow cabinet minister because of the speech. People’s antipathy towards immigrants, however, resulted in the rise of far-right groups, like the British National Party.

Popular support for far-right groups was also enhanced by the rush of Asian immigrants from Uganda. In this context, Thatcher thought that taking advantage of moral panic, caused by mass immigration, was the shortest way to achieve and keep governmental power.

When Thatcher took over the leadership of the Conservatives she started to arouse people’s insecurity towards immigrants and developed a campaign against immigration into the UK. She also declared the introduction of a new meaning of citizenship in order to define being British in a narrower way (Karatani, 2003: 182). In 1981, Thatcher enforced a new nationality law, which integrated the previous nationality law and immigration law. It put in place, for the first time, the category of “British Citizen,” which granted special rights such as free access to the UK. The key point in this law was, on the one hand, that British Citizen was only accorded to those in the patrial category, which was introduced in the Immigration Act 1976. Those who had other types of citizenship were excluded from the rights that a British Citizen could enjoy. This meant that the Nationality Act 1981 partly replaced “jus sanguinis” for “jus soli” (Ward, 2004: 131).

The other important law in relation to social unity was the Education Reform Act 1988. There are two significant parts to this law. One is the introduction of a national curriculum. The national curriculum reinforced nationalistic assimilation by controlling the contents of education; for example, increasing classes for British history, using standard English and prioritizing Christianity in ceremonial events and religious education. It also resulted in reducing programs related to the understanding of multicultural Britain and multiculturalism because the unification of the curriculum made it difficult to make time for classes other than core and foundation subjects (Troyna and Carrington, 1990: 76–111).
The other point of the Education Reform Act 1988 is that it deprived the Local Education Authority (LEA), which was a traditional supporter of the Labour Party, of its power over schools. Instead, power was delegated to the parents of students, head teachers and boards of directors. The delegation was concretely conducted through introducing open enrolment, granting parents the right of school choice, and permitting schools to opt-out from the control of the LEA and giving such schools the position of grant-maintained school or voluntary-aided school.

The reinforcement of school autonomy seemed to afford schools the opportunity to develop their own unique education, including multicultural education. Paradoxically, however, it also functioned to enforce assimilation. For example, it was assumed that mainly traditional Christian schools would opt-out from the control of LEA to promote their own education on the basis of Christianity. The Government thought that the autonomy of each school would keep the majority’s culture from being contaminated by minority cultures (Sakuma, 1998: 499–519). On the contrary, state-aided schools for Muslims were not permitted until the Conservative Government lost power in 1997 (Walford 2003: 283–284).

Cultural Diversity and Multiculturalism: At the Local Level

When national politics turned to assimilation, local politics turned to multiculturalism (Sarup, 1991). Local cities had suffered from racial conflicts during the 1960s. For example, Notting Hill and Nottingham witnessed riots in 1958; the opposition campaign against immigrants in Smethwick in the general election of 1964 proved successful; and the “river of blood” speech by Enoch Powell in 1968 was also influential. These events made racial issues a significant social agenda in local politics as well as in national politics during the 1970s, and especially in the 1980s. Local politics responded to issues of social integration differently from national politics, which was hijacked by the political right. A new integration policy and philosophy appeared at the local level, that is, multiculturalism. I will refer to the case of Bradford to observe the problems concerning the multiculturalism policy of the 1980s and 1990s.

Bradford is located in the northern part of England and developed through the textile industry and manufacturing. Bradford accepted a large number of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent and was a multicultural and multi-ethnic city in the 1980s. The relationship between Bradford and multiculturalism started when the Bradford City Council introduced the “Race Relations: 12 points plan” in late 1981, when race riots occurred in several cities in the UK. Based on this plan, the council started to take into account cultural and racial differences in policymaking (Singh, 2002: 198). Discrimination and injustice imposed on minority groups was tackled by various actions; for example, providing employment and service for minority groups, introducing racial recognition training and ethnic monitoring in public organizations, and providing halal foods and separate education for Muslim boys and girls in school.

However, strong opposition was raised against these multiculturalism policies in Bradford. For example, when a government memo to schools gave advice on how to advance multiculturalism education in 1983, head teachers in Bradford understood it to be bureaucratic intervention, by the LEA, in the traditional authority and autonomy of schools. Thus, the Bradford branch of the school committee officially opposed the memo (Tomioka, 1998: 602–614). An important controversy over multiculturalism was triggered by Ray Honeyford, who was the headmaster of Drummond Middle School in
Bradford. In 1984, he bitterly criticized the LEA, which supported multiculturalism, and parents of minority groups because they disturbed the order of the classroom and spoiled the traditional values and virtues of England with their hysterical requests for the recognition of cultural differences. Although Honeyford was later dismissed as head teacher for a series of improper statements, he opened up a nationwide dispute against multiculturalism. The dispute represented a conflict between traditional values and multiculturalism as a new political idea.

The rise of the presence of Muslim and other religious communities did not necessarily result in better race relations in Bradford. For example, the LEA made compromises with minority groups and acquiesced to their claims to keep the LEA’s control of schools. Both Labour and Conservatives also conceded to certain groups and even supported some religious conventions in order to get the minority vote. However, this also created a “silent culture,” in which any chances for people to honestly talk with each other were quashed. As observed in the next section, the multiculturalism policy led to the promotion of segregation of minority groups from mainstream society. Also, race recognition training lacked moral support from some public officers, leading to racial discrimination, which has persisted in a covert form (Singh, 2002: 120–121).

Ironically, multiculturalism at the local level functioned to compensate assimilation at the national level. Although those who could not be assimilated to traditional British or English values were given the right to keep their own identity in the name of multiculturalism, they were marginalized from mainstream society as a second citizen. This meant that recognition of cultural diversity, in this era, was not considered as something that upset the majority’s culture and values. Rather, it was merely regarded as being irrelevant.


As observed in the first section, the issue of social integration, in relation to compatibility between social unity and cultural diversity, has been recently discussed against the backdrop of globalization. A crucial point discussed is how can social unity be possible where diversity has been a necessary part of society. The new Labour Party, which took back power in 1997, clearly realized this issue.

The first action of the new Labour Government was the legislation of a new race-relations law, which had not been revised since the 1970s. This was accelerated by the release of the Macpherson Report, which was a report on the murder case of a Caribbean boy, Stephen Lawrence, in 1993. This report dealt with the process of the police’s investigation into the case, not with the murder case itself, and accused police of institutional racism. According to the Macpherson Report, police officers looked down on the parents and friends of Lawrence and did not seriously listen to their statements. For example, a Caribbean boy, who was a friend of Lawrence and an important witness, was not at first treated by police as an eyewitness but rather as a suspect. As a result, police lost a great deal of significant evidence in the course of their manhunt, and the five white men who were important suspects in this case were finally discharged because of the insufficiency of evidence. The Macpherson Report criticized such conduct and attitudes of police towards minority groups as “institutional racism” and pointed out that it was deeply rooted in the police and other public bodies (Macpherson, 1999).

This report shocked a large number of people because it destroyed the self-image of the British as being a tolerant nation. The claim of institutional racism made a strong
enough impact to influence the political elite to push for the legislation of a new anti-racism law, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This law imposed a duty on all public bodies with some exceptions, such as immigration, to bring about more positive relationships among different racial groups, as well as promote further racial equality. Almost all public bodies have been obliged to take into consideration racial balance in recruitment. While a large part of these provisions was already included in the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 expanded the object of the rule and also adapted the rule more strictly. In addition, each body was required to design a concrete plan for achieving racial equality (Okahisa, 2008: 228–229). In order to guide such a plan, the law also obliged the Committee for Racial Equality to establish a new code for employment to improve racial equality.

The enactment of the new race relations law preceded one of the new immigration laws, in the same way as it did in the 1960s and 1970s; the new law was realized as the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. However, the relationship between social unity and cultural diversity was defined differently in the 1960s and 1970s. This was illustrated in the white paper Secure Borders and Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in the UK, which mapped out the framework for the new immigration law. The purpose of this report was to explain how to achieve compatibility between two awkward and difficult conditions for better social integration; supplying the labor force demand with cheap and skilled labour, and suppressing public antagonism against immigrants and ethnic minority groups (Blunkett, 2002: 23–28).

In considering the latter point, it is important to recall the racial disturbances which occurred during the summer of 2001 in Northern England—Oldham, Burnley and Bradford. A series of disturbances attracted public attention because many young Asians, Muslims in particular, participated in these disturbances and caused destructive damage to the city. The fact that Bradford was a scene of disturbance and had undergone the most serious damage also shocked politicians and governors because Bradford, as discussed in the previous section, was supposed to be a model city which had led the way for developing multiculturalism policy for social integration. The disturbances, thus, led people to doubt the effectiveness of multiculturalism policies. This doubt was reflected in several governmental reports which reviewed disturbances in North England in 2001 (Cantle, 2001; Ouseley, 2001). Almost all of these reports referred to the cause of the disturbances as being the existence of “parallel lives,” a situation whereby “the ignorance about each other’s communities had been turned into fear, and even demonization. The result was intolerance, discrimination and, in extreme cases, violence” (Home Office, 2004: 7). The expression “parallel lives” was used to describe the situation where people from different communities did not share common values and feelings of belonging to the same society. In order to reduce inter-cultural conflict and promote inter-community relationships, the new Labour Government began to engage in creating shared common grounds which everyone in the UK could follow.

To tackle parallel lives, the new Labour Government presented a new idea of citizenship. As demonstrated in Secure Borders and Safe Haven, citizenship does not designate only the right to possess a UK passport but includes duty and shared feeling for “a heightened commitment to full participation in British society and a recognition of the part which new citizens can play in contributing to social cohesion” (Blunkett, 2002: 30). This means that the criteria for being a British citizen is based on whether or not one is willing to follow social rules and to participate in civil society.
The discussion on immigrants and social integration in the UK resulted in the Nationality, Immigrants and Asylum Act 2002. This law prescribed new requirements for naturalization of immigrants; for example, English-language ability and knowledge about UK society. Although English-language ability was already a requirement for naturalization under the Nationality Act 1981, there had been no strict adherence to this requirement. Recently, however, English-language ability as well as basic knowledge about UK society is considered necessary for naturalization because this aids the integration of newcomers by creating cooperation among different racial groups. Thus, passing the citizenship test became a requirement for naturalization. The Nationality, Immigrants and Asylum Act 2002 also prescribed that those eligible for citizenship attend the citizenship ceremony for naturalization and swear to be a British citizen. This kind of ceremony has been instituted in “traditional immigration countries,” such as Australia, Canada and the USA, in order to have new citizens experience a feeling of common belonging. Also mayors and other citizens of note are obliged or recommended to attend citizenship ceremonies to celebrate the immigrants becoming a new citizen.

Citizenship has been included in education also. The new Labour Government began discussions about making citizenship education a compulsory subject as soon as they got into power. Although citizenship education had been introduced already under the 1988 Education Act, it was not a compulsory subject; only an elective subject. Therefore, citizenship education was marginalized in the national curriculum, which centered on core subjects, such as English, maths, and science. Thus, the Labour Government encouraged schools to conduct education on citizenship. Citizenship education was first introduced to tackle moral corruption among the young, with the hope of diffusing consumption culture and apathy.

In addition, as a part of citizenship, social integration was introduced through the promotion of better relationships between minority and majority students (Crick, 1998). Especially after the events in 2001—disturbances in Northern England and terrorist attacks in New York—the construction of a common identity and understanding of the UK as a multicultural society have been key aspects of citizenship education (Ajegbo, 2007). To address these issues, the new Labour defined citizenship as a commitment to abstract democratic values like toleration, law-abiding attitudes and engagement in community activities; hence citizenship was presented as inclusive of cultural diversity.

Citizenship as an abstract value is concretely represented in the idea of “Britishness.” Some members of the new Labour Government and center-leftists have thought that the newly defined national identity could bring about social unity in a culturally diverse Britain (Goodhart, 2006). Interestingly, Britishness was defined not by traditional English culture or skin-color, as Conservative and far-right groups did, but by more abstract and democratic values. For example, ex-Prime-Minister Gordon Brown explained Britishness as “being outward-looking, open, internationalist with a commitment to democracy and tolerance” (The Guardian, 12 November 1998). In this thinking, Britishness is applied not only to the patrrial category, of which the majority were white, but also to the non-patrials, citizens who have African, Asian, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh heritage. New Labour thought that Britishness was a key element for better racial relations and social integration. Thus, Trevor Phillips, who was the chair of the Committee for Racial Equality, argued: “I disagree with those who say that integration and Britishness are irrelevant to the struggle against racism” (The Guardian, 28 May 2004).

Emphasis on Britishness derived from the idea that multiculturalism, developed
during the 1980s and 1990s, could not work as the doctrine of social integration in the UK. Labour criticized multiculturalism because it had become a narrow program run by ethnic minorities, for ethnic minorities, thereby functioning as a bribe to prevent mainstream society from radically changing (Alibhai-Brown, 2000: 48–53). Labour was also concerned that multiculturalism could cause a backlash within the white majority. It has been pointed out that an “overdose of culture” through multiculturalism resulted in the deterioration of racial and religious relations and, by extension, the disturbances in Northern England in 2001. A large number of politicians and commentators warned that diversity without unity would bring about social division and, worse, could destroy civic values like tolerance, liberty, and democracy, which were all premises for multiculturalism. Hence, some Labour politicians advocated that commitment to Britishness, as a social representation, could aid minority groups and achieve racial equality (Phillips, 2005; Blair, 2006; Brown, 2006; Straw, 2007).

The new Labour Government, thus, tried to realize compatibility between social unity and cultural diversity through abstract democratic values and common identity.

**Conclusion: Social Integration in Post-multiculturalism**

This analysis of the social integration policy in the UK has contributed to post-multiculturalism debates. As referred to in the first section, multiculturalism, on the one hand, criticized liberalism because of its silence on cultural diversity. However, on the other hand, multiculturalism has recently been criticized because of its inability to create a “bond” for society. Rather it is seen as a possible cause of social division along the lines of culture, color and religion, thereby contributing to the destruction of toleration and equality among different cultural communities. In reply to this post-multiculturalism issue on the relationship between cultural diversity and social unity or welfare equality, a new political philosophy has appeared since the early 1990s: it has been dubbed “liberal nationalism” (Tamir, 1993; Miller, 1995; Kymlicka, 2001). Liberal nationalism is considered a position which: perceives liberalism and nationalism as dependent on each other (Tamir, 1993); bases solidarity and identity on common nationhood (Poole, 1999); assures equality and liberty through citizenship (Miller, 1995); and recognizes cultural diversity and the uniqueness of each ethnic group on the grounds of democracy sustained by national commonality (Kymlicka, 2001). This philosophy evaluates the importance of a common national identity, defined by civic values and common language (not culture or race) for social integration. To share national identity could aid communication between the majority and the minority and between the new and the old nations. It results in people’s social participation and attachment to the wider society. Such a feeling of belonging to the same society makes it possible to promote cultural recognition and welfare equality among different cultural communities. Finally, it could change conventional public culture, and institutes, to encourage them to become more open to diversity (Kymlicka, 2001).

The social integration policy of the new Labour is a representative case of liberal nationalism theory. It is found in the idea of Britishness as it appeared in the context of criticism towards multiculturalism. The new Labour Government recognized this problem of multiculturalism and introduced a new framework and policy for social integration on the basis of liberal nationalism. On the one hand, Britishness represented a national identity that consisted of some of the traditional values and history of the UK, but, on the other hand, it was tolerant enough to accept dual identity and diverse
cultural or religious conventions. Britishness is a political effort to re-imagine national identity without depending on narrow ethnic identities, like Englishness or Scottishness, and is intended to bond people from different backgrounds. This liberal type of nationalism seems to consider both the majority’s requirements for social unity and the minority’s requirement that cultural diversity be recognized.

Thus, this paper explores how social unity is possible in a culturally diverse environment. To illustrate this point, I examined the social integration policy of post-war Britain. Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate the main points discussed in this paper. In the era of consensus politics, compatibility between social unity and cultural diversity was achieved through political exchanges between immigration laws and race-relations laws. In the era of the Thatcher Conservative Government, it was achieved through two separate policies: the assimilationism policy, at the national level, and the multiculturalism policy at the local level. In the era of the new Labour Government, the problems between social unity and cultural diversity were tackled by representing Britishness as an inclusive identity over other cultural identities. Yet it must be noted that the meaning of Britishness and citizenship has changed in each stage. Shortly after World War II, social integration of ethnic minority groups was not an important political issue; therefore, Britishness and citizenship did not need to be defined clearly. Rather immigrants living in the UK were tolerantly accepted under the imperialistic ideology that everyone in the Commonwealth is equal as a “subject of the Queen.” However, from the 1960s onwards, the rise in numbers of immigrants, especially

### Table 1. The Features of Social Integration in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (Era)</th>
<th>Relationship Between Unity and Diversity (Reference to Figure 1)</th>
<th>Features of Britishness</th>
<th>Social/Political Philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Consensus Politics (post-war 1979)</td>
<td>Political Barter (Compromise) • Immigration Acts • Race Relations Acts</td>
<td>• Subject of the Queen (Imperialism) • Non-non-white • Toleration (Indifference)</td>
<td>• <em>laissez faire</em> ↓ • Classic Liberalism (Assimilationism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Thatcherism (1979–1979)</td>
<td>Separation between National and Local • Nationality/Education Acts (Assimilationism)</td>
<td>• White (Englishness) • Toleration (Recognition→Segregation)</td>
<td>• Assimilationism • Multiculturalism (Parallel/Complementary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) New Labour (1997–2010)</td>
<td>Britishness and Citizenship as a Media • Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act • Race Relations Act</td>
<td>• Democracy • Internationalism (non-Englishness) • Toleration (Recognition→Inclusion)</td>
<td>• Liberal Nationalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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![Figure 1. Relationship between Social Unity and Cultural Diversity](image-url)
non-white immigrants, raised the issue of identity among white residents in the UK. The first political reaction to this issue was the implementation of immigration laws, which gradually restricted British identity to the white patrial category. The Conservative Government, during the 1980s and 1990s, intensified this trend. During this time, however, the idea of citizenship did not clarify the relation to the duty of being a good citizen but rather simply referred to the formal rights of the individual or consumer. The Labour Government made citizenship more practical and set it at the centre of social integration policy. Citizenship and Britishness were presented not just as ascriptive rights but also as duties incumbent upon all those who were members of the community: whether or not they be non-white, non-Christian or non-English. Such a common identity is recognized as a mechanism which makes possible mutual respect and peaceful communication among different communities.

The idea of social integration based on civic nationalism has also been gathering attention in other European countries: it is referred to as “new assimilation” (Joppke and Morawska, 2003). This strand states that assimilation should not be understood as a cultural assimilationism, which requires minority groups overall to change their way of life. Rather, this is regarded as a civic assimilation, which requires minority groups to undergo a partial change in attitudes as related to civility (Brubaker, 2003). This common civility makes possible communication and welfare solidarity among different religious or race communities. Examples of similar changes in the social integration policy in the UK can be seen elsewhere in Europe. Illustrations of new assimilation policies include: the rise from *jus soli* to *jus sanguinis* of German nationality law in 1999; and drastic change from multiculturalism to a citizenship policy in the Netherlands during the 1990s.

Of course, liberal nationalism, or new assimilation, is not free from criticism. For example, these theories are inclined to treat only legal immigrants as the object of policies, thus lacking an adequate framework that can include asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, thereby giving rise to problems in human rights. Therefore, these theories fail to include a theory of justice (Inoue, 2003). Other criticism on liberal nationalism is that it emphasizes social unity, such as citizenship or common identity, to the point that it limits flexibility in coping with some issues on cultural diversity, as found in the head-scarf controversy in France. The citizenship approach for social integration tends to attribute a minority’s deprived situation to their lack of commitment to wider society, not to institutional racism and poverty. Therefore, this citizenship policy of the new Labour has been criticized as one that simply works as a “placebo,” which prevents society from robustly tackling racial discrimination and inequality (Gillborn, 2006). Other research, using statistical data, also points out that the effect of Britishness on social integration is, in fact, “limited” or “ambivalent” (Adachi, 2009).

In considering all the issues above, inclusive of the criticisms, we find that the integration policy of the new Labour Government provides us with a reference point for further discussions on how to make social unity possible in a culturally diverse society.

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Notes

1 The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development foresees that, in many developed countries, it will be difficult to meet labor requirements without immigrants in 2020. The white population in the UK has decreased and the UK has become an aged society; immigrants and ethnic minorities contribute to the (re-)production of society. In reality, research shows that the economic boom since the mid-1990s in the UK was parallel to the increase of immigrants and that about 20% of economic growth in 2004–2005 can be attributed to the direct influx of immigrants (Riley and Weale, 2006).

2 According to the data of the International Social Survey Program, attitudes towards immigrants in Europe, as a whole, changed negatively from 1995 to 2003. Interestingly, while evaluation of the immigrants’ contribution to the economy of the host society did not change significantly, the anxiety about crimes by immigrants showed a marked increase.

3 A report of the Department of Education and Skills demonstrates that the shortage of the labor force in the UK in 2001 amounted to about 765,000 positions; the larger part of these were not filled (Hogarth et al., 2001).

4 The knowledge required to get British citizenship includes various themes, including: national institutions, Britain as a multicultural society, law, employment, sources of help and information, and everyday needs (Crick, 2003: 14–16).

References


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