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MULTICULTURALISM IN BRITAIN
A MYTH OR A REALITY:
Re-imagining (Rethinking) Multicultural Britain

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, and that references to other authors' works are made whenever necessary. I also declare that this work has not been submitted in fulfilment of any other degree.

Hiba Khedidja DERRAGUI

In memory of late Professors

F. Djemai, Y. Deramchia and H. Bensaou

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ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism is and has always been a highly contested issue. In fact, the end of the previous century saw the remarkable rise of multiculturalism as a political philosophy, and the growing popularity of multicultural policies in many democratic countries. However, since the turn of the millennium multiculturalism has become a subject of intense political and public debate in Western Europe and particularly in Britain.

This thesis explores key questions related to multiculturalism namely race, racism and belonging while critically assessing multiculturalism from the standpoint of political philosophy and political practice. The ideas of prominent defenders and critics of multiculturalism are evaluated, and debates around multiculturalism and subsequent debates over immigration, cultural rights and Britishness are explored.

This thesis considers the backlash discourse against multiculturalism and whether it has become a divisive force in British society. Why is multiculturalism presented as a threat to British values in Britain and will its replacement be more successful in promoting unity in diversity? The ultimate question underpinning this thesis is how the 'New Britain' of the 21st century is re-imagined as multicultural in the context of the changing dynamics.

This thesis argues that multiculturalism despite being presented as outdated and in retreat remains a convincing response to Britain's cultural diversity thanks to its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and the new challenges awaiting Britain in the future. The argument advanced is that the British version of multiculturalism which promotes 'Britishness' as a strong and inclusive identity makes of Britain a model of tolerance in Western Europe.

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INTRODUCTION

The second half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a number of political movements that sought the recognition of identity and difference in a world characterized by diversity. Indeed, diverse groups resisted society's homogenising or assimilationist approach to cultural, religious, and gender difference asking for their rights to identity-related differences. This mode of recognition constitutes a clear departure from the difference-blind liberal vision of society, and it certainly underlies the concept of multiculturalism which is not about difference and identity *per se* but about differences that are embedded in culture.

Multiculturalism emerged in the 1960s in the context of a larger human rights revolution which was marked by the recognition of group difference within the public sphere; however, used adjectivally, multiculturalism describes a demographic fact of contemporary social life marked by post-war immigration. In this sense, Britain is and has always been a multicultural society whose diversity is the consequence of post-war immigration from former British colonies. Indeed, the salient presence of South Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in the 1960s and their refusal to assimilate, placed first the immigration debate and much later multiculturalism on the public agenda. Therefore, multiculturalism became a politically and ideologically significant movement as Britain rejected assimilationist demand in favour of integration. Britain has merely responded to the fact of cultural diversity by adopting a multicultural approach. She has tried to be multicultural despite the fact that conservative opinion has systematically resisted the description.

Many societies have been 'multicultural' as they have contained people from diverse cultural backgrounds, but multiculturalism as stated by Bhikhu Parekh "is a normative response to that fact" (2006: 6). Indeed, multicultural policies emerged in liberal democracies from the late 1960s and early 1970s notably in the United Kingdom which is a multinational and multicultural nation, leading political scientists

to formulate theories of multiculturalism in response to those policies. Thus, the end of the previous century saw the remarkable rise of multiculturalism as a political philosophy, and the growing popularity of multicultural policies in many democratic countries. Indeed, the ‘multicultural turn’ became the new reality as the previous century was drawing to a close making Nathan Glazer’s¹ famous pronouncement that “We are all multiculturalists now” more than appropriate.

While most of the contemporary political societies are multicultural in the sense that they contain multiple cultures, a multicultural society is not necessarily a society animated by multiculturalism. Indeed, multiculturalism requires that multiple cultures within the same polity be given positive recognition. Many societies in which minority cultures are tolerated and even admired do not receive any public support. These are multicultural rather than multiculturalist. So, multiculturalism requires that the value of cultural diversity be recognised in public policy.

Moreover, multiculturalism and multicultural society raise significant questions and call for new concepts. The questions related to cultural rights of minorities; why do cultures differ and whether all cultures deserve equal respect, whether they should be judged in their own terms or ours or by universal standards. They also include the questions of whether the state should give public recognition to various cultures and treat them equally or privilege the dominant culture, and how the state can respect cultural diversity and ensure political unity. In this sense multiculturalism describes the widespread recognition that cultural difference exists.

It is true that multiculturalism is a term which has been used and disputed for many decades in various democracies in Western Europe. It depends essentially on political systems based on liberal democratic principles. Britain has felt the need for multiculturalism as a solution to ethnic diversity; she has made provision for cultural diversity and the needs of minorities. Despite this, multiculturalism has been highly controversial and is currently said to be in retreat. In fact, multiculturalism has always been a highly contested issue and one of the most controversial concepts in

¹ He wrote *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (1997).

contemporary Britain. It has remained an important issue in British political debate and academia especially after 9/11 and 7/7. Since the turn of the millennium, multiculturalism has become a subject of intense political and public debate making regular headlines in the British national press. In 2000 after the publication of the *Parekh Report*¹ on the future of multi-ethnic Britain which called for greater cultural diversity as well as a more pluralistic outlook on society, the then Tory leader William Hague² declared that Britain is a nation of immigrants. Therefore, ‘multicultural’ has always been a defining feature of Britain.

More significantly, multiculturalism since its adoption in Canada³ has appeared at the heart of national debates about the future of national cultures and identities in a globalizing world. In effect, multiculturalism has been sometimes celebrated; and other times condemned rising debates about the preservation of equality, social cohesion, and national unity. Clearly, widespread discussion of multiculturalism has not settled the debate, but has given rise to a wide range of opinions and positions, making any attempt to settle down the debate even more difficult. This makes, again, any attempt to understand this field of study very difficult regarding the profusion of literature on multiculturalism. But it ultimately makes multiculturalism a very interesting subject of investigation. Hence, the rationale behind this work is to contribute, through an analysis and critique of the rich literature on multiculturalism, to understand British multiculturalism from a foreign perspective, and help hopefully the reader interested in cultural studies to have a better understanding of British society.

It is clear now that multiculturalism has become a subject of controversy as it gives rise to social, cultural and political issues. Opinions about multiculturalism have increasingly become part of contemporary life. Indeed, the claim I want to make from the start is that multiculturalism constitutes a major current issue to understand many other interrelated issues such as race, racism and questions of national belonging.

¹ Named after the Chairman of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, Lord Bhikhu Parekh.

² He served as a leader of the Conservative Party from 1997 to 2001.

³ It was first mentioned in the fourth report of the Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1969 and was adopted officially in 1971.

Today, multiculturalism remains definitely a major issue in the political discourse in several Western countries and particularly in Britain.

Admittedly, multiculturalism has several meanings originating in various historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts. Indeed, issues related to discrimination, recognition of minorities rights on the basis of race and ethnicity, and equality have been used in relation to multiculturalism. Its adoption in social policies has always been subject to intense debates over the best way to integrate ethnic minorities. For many critics of multiculturalism, the term is a floating signifier, and as Barnor Hesse¹ puts it, multiculturalism is a highly “contested frame of reference for thinking about the quotidian of cohesion of western civil societies uncertain about their national and ethnic futures” (qtd. in Fortier 2).

This statement sums up rightly the agitated histories of the politics of multiculturalism as apparent in contemporary Britain. Indeed, the profusion of debates, consultations, strategies, reports and editorials about multiculturalism in the British public sphere since the beginning of the millennium has definitely revealed how unsettled ‘multicultural Britain’ is. Starting from celebrating Britain’s multicultural character in 2000, to social cohesion policies as a remedy to race riots in 2001, to the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, declaring in 2004 that the term should be discarded as it fosters separatism, to the bombings attacks in 2005 perpetrated by ‘children of multicultural Britain’ all of which propelled multiculturalism to the stage of intense and passionate public debate. This thesis is intended to be a contribution to analysis of multiculturalism examining the historical background alongside contemporary social policy perspectives.

This work attempts to address difficult issues, how did the British government face up to the changing realities of multicultural Britain? Were multicultural policies partly or largely to blame for the events of the 7th July 2005? Hence, my purpose is to consider how the ‘New Britain’ of the 21st century is re-imagined as multicultural in the light of the *Parekh Report* which has revived and moved the debate onto the new

¹ See *Unsettled Multiculturalisms* (2000).

ground of re-imagining Britain as a multicultural nation. Indeed, this work offers a new way of analysing multiculturalism as it tackles this sensitive issue from a broad perspective. My concern has been to study multiculturalism not only as a political theory but also as a policy focusing on the range of policies that have been adopted to accommodate the growing cultural diversity of Britain.

For some people multiculturalism has positive connotations as attractive diversity of ways of life and mutual respect, while for others it suggests social fragmentation and inequality between cultural groups. The core question of this thesis is whether multiculturalism, as a British experiment, is a success or a failure. I will introduce and evaluate some of the answers given to this question by leading political theorists, and examine the multicultural policies introduced by the New Labour governments.

Therefore, this work explores the specific conditions of multicultural practice. The distinctive character of British history has resulted in specificities of British multiculturalism. For example, the national identity politics of Britishness are impossible to understand without taking into account New Labour's actions to replace the Conservatives as the party of British nationalism. While this thesis cannot make a claim to comprehensiveness in dealing with multiculturalism, it has dealt with major issues related to multiculturalism providing a new insight into this field of study as it attempts to explore this topic from different perspectives.

Besides, it has been suggested from the Right and the Left of the political spectrum that multiculturalism has become a divisive force in British society. Critics of multiculturalism have become numerous over the years. Sensational events happening in Britain have certainly heightened criticism against multiculturalism. Indeed, events such as the controversy over the Rushdie Affair in the 1980s and the London bombings of 7 July 2005 have been read as marking the failure of multiculturalism. However, it is clear that such events have nothing to do with multiculturalism or multicultural policies. The anti-multiculturalists were actually directing their hostility towards ethnic minorities whose cultural differences are said to

affect the host society in which they live. Again, this is not equivalent to multiculturalism, as I shall explain throughout this thesis.

Therefore, this thesis examines whether multiculturalism is in crisis and whether the concept is fit for the twenty-first century. Many academics engaged in a debate on multiculturalism highlighting its complexity. In fact, multiculturalism has always had its supporters, the multiculturalists, and its critics; and the dispute between them is often presented as a narrative of the rise and fall of multiculturalism, or at least its advance and retreat. The rise of multiculturalism is shown in the multicultural policies formulated as a response to the increased migration from the New Commonwealth countries starting in the 1960s as the traditional policies of assimilation were seen as inadequate for the new immigrants who were thought to be too 'different' to be easily assimilated. This constituted a major problem for some politicians, while others welcomed the adoption of new policies valuing cultural diversity and mutual tolerance.

But more significantly, multiculturalism is presented as being outdated. This begs the question, why is this concept consistently presented as such a threat to British values by media and politicians of the Right and the Left in contemporary Britain? Is multiculturalism really the problem? And will its 'replacement' be more successful in promoting unity in diversity in twenty-first century Britain? More specifically still, I shall be asking how far and in what form multiculturalism can be re-imagined in the context of the changing dynamics in Britain?

The central argument underpinning this thesis is that multiculturalism should be conceived as an imaginary, an ideal whose aim is to achieve diversity in unity. I suggest throughout this thesis that multiculturalism is not just a fact of diversity but a value which is essential for the well-being yet very controversial. It is undoubtedly a complex and multi-faceted concept which is more than a doctrine. As a social concept, multiculturalism is said to have failed as a result of the multicultural policies developed since the 1960s and especially 'difference policies' that prevented interaction and the development of a common public space and identities. The ultimate

aim is to provide a greater understanding of the complexity of the continuing multiculturalism debate. I argue that multiculturalism is still a viable perspective both socially and politically.

My assumption is that multiculturalism remains a convincing response to Britain's cultural diversity thanks to its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges awaiting Britain in the future. In addition, it is my argument that the British version of multiculturalism which promotes 'Britishness' as a strong and inclusive identity makes of Britain a model of tolerance in Western Europe. Britain will in the future continue to be a multicultural nation celebrating and cherishing diversity, as stated by Tony Blair in 2006¹, "So it is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain, on the contrary we should continue celebrating it" (qtd. in Fortier 1).

This thesis is an attempt to identify what multiculturalism actually means and assess the attacks against multiculturalism confronting them with the available evidence. I have analysed most of the charges against multiculturalism trying to balance them against evidence from research conducted by social scientists. Some believe that multiculturalism has been made responsible for the ills caused by growing economic insecurity, and social fragmentation. This led many post-multiculturalists to advocate a shift towards a more sophisticated phase 'interculturalism' in order to face up the new challenges brought about by globalization. However, it is also my argument that multiculturalism is still able to adapt to 'superdiversity' as Vertovec has called it. A philosophy of multiculturalism which demands greater interethnic dialogue and interaction would be the most appropriate response to the detractors of multiculturalism. In this thesis the accepted suggestion that multiculturalism is now a divisive force is critically examined.

I critically assess multiculturalism from the standpoint of political philosophy and political practice. The thesis explores the origins and contemporary usage of the concept of multiculturalism in the context of debates about national identity and

¹ *Our Nation's Future: Multiculturalism and Integration*, speech given at Downing Street on 8 December 2006.

conflicts between individual and collective rights. The ideas of some of the most influential multiculturalists and critics of multiculturalism are clearly explained and evaluated.

This work analyses British multiculturalism under the title of *Multiculturalism in Britain: A Myth or a Reality*, and explains how Britain has dealt uniquely with cultural diversity. Reflecting on the multicultural character of British society means above all assessing the state of multiculturalism in Britain and determining whether it has still a future in the face of the increasing hostility towards such concept. Again, the subtitle *Re-imagining Multicultural Britain* indicates a focus on multicultural Britain as not only a fact but also as a vision, an imaginary one. This thesis explores the unfolding debates on multiculturalism in contemporary Britain and the subsequent changing nature of Britain and British identity. What is explored here is the political philosophy of multiculturalism that emerged in response to immigration as well as a new vision of British society in which cultural diversity is cherished more than ever.

I have, therefore, intensively drawn on the works of the most prominent political philosopher of multiculturalism, Bhikhu Parekh¹ whose contribution to the political theory of multiculturalism has been remarkable thanks to his ability to appreciate the significance of multiculturalism as a major subject of public policy making the connections between the political philosophy and the public policy of multiculturalism. On the other hand, the interdisciplinary nature of this topic has required the recourse to different approaches and theories. Indeed, new historicism has allowed me to analyse multiculturalism within the cultural and social context in which it was raised. Moreover, I have applied discourse analysis as a framework for analysing multiculturalism in order to understand fully this concept and determine the impact the political debate on multiculturalism did have on British society and more generally on the future of multiculturalism in Britain. I have, for instance, analysed the texts, speeches and different discourses produced by British politicians when

¹ He was member of the earliest British government commissions on racial disadvantage and multiculturalism such as Rampton 1981 and Swann 1985, and later Chairman of the Commission of Multi-Ethnic Britain which produced the Parekh Report in 2000.

addressing multicultural and identity issues focusing on the immigration debate, the citizenship discourse and the discourse on Britishness.

I have also relied heavily on the works of Stuart Hall¹ on identity, race and ethnicities for their comprehensiveness and for his post-structuralist approach to the concept of identity.² Besides, Stuart Hall is a leading figure of Britain's New Left who opened a debate that had not been tackled in the post-war-period about immigration, the politics of identity and multicultural society. I have as well drawn on the work of Raymond Williams when analysing the most important concept underpinning this thesis which is the concept of culture; and whose work has definitely influenced Stuart Hall. I have made use of the concept of *Habitus* in Bourdieu's social theory of class in order to explain social mobility. Finally, I have intensively drawn on Edward Said and Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theories in the analysis of the 'multicultural' novels in the last chapter adding new dimensions of meaning to the novels.

Chapter one introduces the topic from both theoretical and historical perspectives, offering a preliminary approach to multiculturalism. In many ways this chapter can be described as an exploration of some of the basic theories of multicultural political theory. I begin by exploring the major strands of thought that sought to provide an understanding of culture and its role in human life; focusing mainly on theories elaborated by prominent theorists namely Will Kymlicka and Bhikhu Parekh as they have offered the most convincing responses to cultural diversity. Then, I look at the very notion of culture, identifying its complex nature in order to comprehend its role in human life. The chapter also shows why the very concept of multiculturalism is so controversial and has different meanings, hence the profusion of the literature on multiculturalism. It situates the concept of multiculturalism historically and provides a first working definition of the term while the other meanings of the term would be unfolded in the next chapters.

¹ He is known as the 'Godfather of Multiculturalism' and he established with Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams the first cultural studies programme at a British University in 1964.

² He was influenced by Derrida's theory of deconstruction.

Chapter two provides an overview of the main aspects and developments of multiculturalism in Britain. It assesses the fact that Britain is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. It addresses the question of cultural diversity and its implications for national identities in post-war Britain. As a former Empire, Britain has to face challenges from immigration, devolution, further European integration and now the prospect of the Brexit. The whole question of this chapter is how did Britain deal with multicultural matters since 1945? I explain how laws and policies in matters of immigration have been adopted and what kind of ideas and discourses have sustained the immigration policies in post-war Britain focusing on the Consensus and the New Right eras, then the more recent Third Way era. Chapter two focuses on the Consensus era and the role of the New Right citizenship discourse in orienting the debates on immigration including various thoughts of Enoch Powell as a precursor of the New Right and those of Thatcher as an executor of the New Right. The chapter also explores the issue of race in Britain emphasising the connection between racial issues and multiculturalism. The chapter examines the future of Britain and Britishness considering simultaneously challenges from immigration, devolution, further European integration and finally the Brexit issue. These challenges are discussed from different perspectives, namely regional nationalisms, Conservatives' and Labour's British nationalism and that of ethnic minorities; it also explores how New Labour reinforced Britishness.

Chapter three examines the policy response to diversity in multicultural Britain especially under New Labour governments. The major focus of this chapter is on studying minorities' cultural rights in the light of the academic debate that took place between two prominent theorists who have two conflicting positions, Brian Barry and Bhikhu Parekh. I have paid attention to the development of the 'politics of difference' in Britain through a critical analysis of the citizenship discourses that developed in Britain during the Consensus, New Right and Third Way eras. This chapter analyses at some length the theoretical concept of equality and the ways it is applied when accommodating minorities relying mostly on Charles Taylor and Bhikhu Parekh's thoughts. Then, I shall examine diverse Government strategies and policies produced

in response to the 2001 riots; and the chapter ends with an examination of the findings of the reports into the disturbances which informed the adoption of new strategies under the banner of ‘community cohesion’.

Chapter four is an attempt to demonstrate the viability and utility of multiculturalism in an age of super-diversity. In this chapter the explicit attack on multiculturalism as being a divisive force is explored through an examination of the debates over multiculturalism which intensified in the first decade of the 21st century, its alleged failure and even ‘death’. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to make a case for multiculturalism as a political philosophy and as a lived experiment. I discuss how multicultural politics has persisted beyond the declamation of its ‘death’ and how it continues to prove indispensable in Britain. In this chapter, I return to the question stated at the outset “Is multiculturalism fit for the 21st century?” and elaborate on the possibility to re-imagine multiculturalism as an ideal; and how a multicultural society as Britain can be held together, develop a common sense of belonging, and reconcile the demands of political unity and cultural diversity. I suggest that it is possible to imagine such a society and that one needs just to rethink the modern liberal state.

The fifth and last chapter stands out of the others as it offers an analysis of novels about multiculturalism; it is about how multiculturalism is represented in coloured British literature and how coloured British writers have changed white-centric ideals and have tried to re-write national identity. Indeed, this chapter explores multicultural and identity issues developed in the previous chapters in coloured British literature. It aims at determining how an increasingly multicultural Britain is defined through coloured British literature with the assumption that literature can be a mirror to society. My assumption is that writing by coloured British should simply be called ‘British literature’. The chapter begins by defining the very controversial term ‘Black British’ before considering the emergence of a coloured British canon which contributed significantly to the enrichment and transformation of British literature as a whole. I will look into four ‘multicultural’ novels written by coloured British writers of South-East and Caribbean descent who have offered a faithful depiction of British multiculturalism, focusing on the inevitability of the relations between Imperial and post-

Imperial Britain from a new post-colonial perspective. I propose a postcolonial reading of the novels relying on postcolonial theories by Homi Bhabha and Edward Said. The chapter also explores how these novels have dealt with the construction of Otherness by the West, and analyses the major themes of the novels namely race and class, racism and cultural identity. It shows how postcolonial history continues to affect people in the present and the influence it has in the formation of individual identity. But the ultimate aim of this last chapter is to show that an individual from a postcolonial background has the possibility to negotiate his hybrid identity and contribute to the transformation of Britain into a multicultural society.

CHAPTER I: UNDERSTANDING MULTICULTURALISM:

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MULTICULTURALISM

There are undoubtedly many ways to approach multiculturalism. Indeed, it is a very controversial concept highly discussed in contemporary political philosophy; hence the need to build a theory of multiculturalism. Thus, the task of political theorists have been to provide visions of the good life appreciating the fact that human beings are culturally embedded and that cultures differ greatly.

Since multiculturalism is about culture, a theory of multiculturalism cannot be built without developing a well-defined theory of culture in human life. In fact, this concept is itself subject to debate, in which competing views would theorize culture and provide convincing responses to cultural diversity which is the task of political theorists. There are two strands of thought, the first ignores wrongly the importance of culture in human life and considers human nature as the basis of political theory while the second sees culture as the basis of political theory. But the latter failed to appreciate the importance of culture and its internal diversity, hence the necessity to develop a theory of culture that considers universal moral values as central components for leading a good life.

This chapter aims at providing an accessible introduction to the issues and debates in the political theory literature on multiculturalism. It is concerned with critically tracing the theoretical development of a theory of culture and discussing its major forms in order to offer ultimately a coherent response to cultural diversity. Another important point that needs to be clarified is of course defining culture which is a difficult task as there are competing views of culture; however, I suggest a working definition which sees culture as a set of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world.

Given this preliminary understanding of culture, the next step is to observe that, for different strands of thought nearly all modern societies contain multiple cultures as a matter of fact. Developing a full theory is not an easy task for political theorists, perhaps the most convincing responses to cultural diversity are those offered by Will

Kymlicka¹ and Bhikhu Parekh² in their seminal works, and which in many ways converge, as I shall demonstrate, since both defend a liberal democratic multiculturalism though Kymlicka appeals to exclusively liberal values whereas for Parekh the merit of distinctly liberal values should be open for contestation in an inter-cultural dialogue.

Most of the ideas developed in this chapter focus on complex debates about culture and cultural diversity. What I have tried to do is show the importance of culture in human life, and ultimately that cultural diversity is an important constituent of human freedom which should be valued in order to build a culturally plural society.

It is believed that multiculturalism is as old as humanity since different cultures have always coexisted and even respect for diversity has always characterised historic empires. Therefore, the emergence of multi-ethnic societies has contributed definitely to the development of theories of multiculturalism, historical conditions also made this development possible, particularly with the rise of the modern state in Europe. Hence, it is important to situate historically multiculturalism and date its emergence as a modern form.

It goes without saying that multiculturalism has always had critics, yet it seems more important for the time being to assess the value of cultural diversity and defend multiculturalism and leave criticism for the next chapters. More importantly, we have to provide a clear definition of multiculturalism though it remains a very complex concept and a controversial idea. Hence, this chapter's aim is explicitly to set out some global orientations for the issues to follow.

1. Theorizing Culture

Any question about multiculturalism is, undoubtedly, connected with culture. Thus, a theory of multicultural society is reliant on a theory of the nature of culture and its role in human life. Political theorists, mainly the monists and the culturalists, developed a theory of culture that could theorize multicultural societies. The naturalists or the

¹ *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995).

² *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, first published in 2000, 2nd ed. 2006.

monists such as J.S. Mill, Hegel, Hobbes and Locke argued that human nature was unaffected by culture and society, considering culture as confined to the morally indifferent areas of customs and rituals though naturalism did not recognise that human nature is culturally reconstituted. In contrast, the culturalists or pluralists such as Montesquieu and Herder assumed that human beings are culturally constituted, differed from culture to culture and shared in common only the minimal species-derived properties. Culturalists, still failed to understand culture's nature and its internal diversity (Parekh 2006:10).

Accordingly, the limitations of both schools of thought led liberal political philosophers to develop theories of moral and cultural diversity, avoiding making the mistakes made by their predecessors.

1.1 Theories of Culture

-Moral Monism¹

There is a belief which existed since the ancient Greeks that different societies organise human lives differently². Moral monism considered that only one way of life is the best and that all societies should live by the truly way of life³; otherwise they would choose inferior ways of life as a consequence of their imperfection. In order to justify that only one way of life is the best, they relied on a conception of human nature as the basis of the good life. Indeed, they assumed that all human beings share a common nature; and that human beings are basically the same because human nature is unaffected by society. They concluded that human nature is the basis of good life (Parekh 2006:18).

For centuries monism evolved taking, therefore, several forms: the rationalist monism of Greek philosophy which assumed a comprehensive way of life; the theological monism of Christianity and the regulative monism of classical liberalism. A prominent figure of Greek monism is Plato (5th Century B.C) who considered that

¹ Berlin was the first to use this term which was borrowed by Parekh. It means according to Berlin that each question has one and only one true answer.

² This reflection gave rise to moral monism.

³ The monists argue that only one way of life is the best.

only one way of life is the best; he saw human nature as consisting of capacities that were unique to humans and that all human beings shared a common nature and possessed three basic faculties¹. However, he considered that human beings were unequally equipped with these faculties to lead the best way of life. Thus, Plato ignored the role of culture in shaping human beings though he recognised the role of the “type of human character dominant in society” (Parekh 2006:23).

On the other hand, Christian moral monism was different from the Greek monism since it was grounded on Christianity. According to Christian theologians such as Aquinas, diversity was an intrinsic good, and what makes the universe perfect is the variety of the natures it contained². Thus, Christian monism celebrated the diversity of species endowed with a distinct nature. Christian theologians considered that a truly moral life had religious basis. Theologians as Aquinas (13th Century) and Augustine (4-5th Century) argued that religion was the basis of the truly good life, Christianity was the only true religion and that others are false or inferior. In this sense Pope Paul VI’s *Ecclesium Suan* recognized and respected other religions, their moral and spiritual values but not their religious insights, he maintained that there is only one true religion Christianity. Clearly, this claim had been a source of much intolerance and violence against Jews and Muslims (Parekh 2006:25-32).

Unlike his predecessors like Augustine, Aquinas produced a philosophical synthesis of Christian and pre-Christian ideas. Indeed, he developed the idea of natural rights which is the very expression of ethical universalism³. This notion of natural law is that universal rules of conduct can be identified by studying human nature. More explicitly, Aquinas argued that universal rules of conduct can be deduced by using our reason to identify the natural ‘inclination’ of human beings (Parekh 2006: 30).

Moreover, Christianity, colonisation and the nation-state helped to shape the early liberal thought. Indeed, liberal thinkers such as John Locke (1632-1704) and Tocqueville (1805-1859) thought that Christianity was the only religion to develop the

¹ Reason, spirit and desire; Plato considered that reason is the highest.

² This idea was used by Vico and Herder to provide a theologically grounded theory of moral and cultural pluralism.

³ The view that certain moral rules are binding on all human beings.

liberal values of human dignity, freedom and equality; and that liberalism was a secular expression of Christianity. Liberalism was also associated with colonialism; even thinkers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill (1806- 1873) were clearly associated with it. In their way of the truly way of life, liberal thinkers had to justify colonialism and explain why people from the colonies were imposed a way of life. Liberalism was also associated with the emergence of the nation-state; liberals argued that a strong and sovereign state was needed for every society. Indeed, liberalism, as it developed led to the rise of the modern state and the flourishing of ideas such as the rule of law and equality of citizens (Parekh 2006: 33-34).

Classical liberalism drew on both Greek monism and Christian universalism. For classical liberals the good life was based on such values as critical rationality, choice and personal autonomy; they also stressed its universality unlike the Greek, and as Christian theologians they thought that life was within the moral reach of all human beings, but unlike them that it could be rationally demonstrated. For instance, Locke and J.S. Mill's vision of the good life was as universally binding and judged all societies and ways of life in terms of them (Parekh 2006:35).

Locke¹ is considered as a prominent advocate of the contemporary expression of ethical universalism that is the concept of human rights which considers that all persons have fundamental entitlement simply by virtue of their humanity. He assumed that the natural law generates a doctrine of natural rights. He concluded that fundamental obligations imply fundamental rights. Hence, Locke's fundamental rights provided a justification of the great political revolutions starting with the *Glorious Revolution* (1688) that established the supremacy of Parliament over the Crown in England (Crowder 18-19).

Moreover, Locke provided a justification of English colonialism in terms of his vision of the good life. He first stated that all men were equal in dignity and rights, they were rational beings and that a rational society was governed by positive laws rather than customs and traditional practices. He advanced the idea that as English

¹ He wrote *Two Treatises of Government* (1689).

settlers were superior, they had a much better claim to the land. He concluded that since the colonisation increased the conveniences of life, then, it did not violate the principle of equality and was beneficial to Indians. He went further in justifying English colonialism stating that Indians were in the stage of nature and that they did not represent “civilized part of mankind”, so English colonialism was in their interest. Clearly, Locke dismissed the Indian way of life since he thought that there was only one rational way of life based on reason (Parekh 2006:37-38).

On the other hand, J.S. Mill¹ gave a new orientation to liberalism by stressing the importance of diversity. He emphasized the diversity of individual character and lifestyle. For him, diversity was source of progress since it led to the emergence of exceptional and original minds, and encouraged a healthy competition between different ways of thought and life. Moreover, J.S. Mill was able to appreciate the variety and complexity of human nature but rejected social homogenisation and cultural assimilation. Thus, he argued that a good life could be lived in several ways, that each profited from a dialogue with the rest (Parekh 2006: 41-42).

However, Mill’s theory of diversity was embedded in an individualist vision of life; by diversity he meant diversity of views and lifestyles within a shared individualist culture not diversity of cultures. Accordingly, J.S. Mill as other liberal thinkers could not grasp the role of culture. Mill took into account culture only to reach the good life not as an independent factor essential in the content of that vision of good life. Thus, Mill’s theory had its limitations because he justified colonialism and considered that traditional societies were backward with no history and had to be civilised. He went further considering that a civilised nation had a right to rule over primitive or semi- civilised societies, and that a more civilised group within it had a right to absorb and dominate inferior groups (Parekh 2006:44-46).

As a brief conclusion, we may say that the three major traditions of moral monism could see only one best way to understand human existence and lead the good life, though no vision of the good life can be based on an abstract conception of human

¹ He wrote *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (1863).

nature alone. Therefore, they either favoured minimum contact with other societies or sought to assimilate them by peaceful or violent means.

-Forms of Pluralism

Moral monism was challenged in the seventeenth century thanks to influential writers as Vico (1668-1744), Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Herder (1744-1803). Indeed, those writers laid the philosophical foundations of pluralism. The three writers had adopted different approaches to culture and its diversity; however, all of them highlighted the inadequacy of the traditional conception of human nature arguing that human beings were culturally embedded and that human nature did not remain unaffected by culture (Parekh 2006: 50).

Vico¹ emphasized the uniqueness of every society; each society had its own values, ideals and systems of beliefs. Human societies were different; this is why it was complex to understand fully a society through a rational analysis. For Vico, every society represented a distinct cultural community, a ‘nation’². He added that only reason helped us understand societies but only to a limited degree (Parekh 2006: 51).

However, Vico failed to lay down the foundations of a pluralist moral and political theory because as the monists he assumed that only one way of life was truly human, and that all others could be graded in terms of it. He valued cultural diversity only as a transitional stage to a culturally homogeneous world; cultural diversity characterized the underdeveloped ages of human kind and declined as society reached the higher stage (Parekh 2006:55).

Similarly, Montesquieu³ valued cultural diversity and saw it as a feature of human life. For him, human beings shared a common nature; however, each society gave rise to a second ‘national’ nature. Montesquieu’s concern was about explaining and judging society’s beliefs and practices. Indeed, for him to explain a practice was to show that it was rational. As an illustration, “although slavery was against nature, it

¹ He was an Italian philosopher and wrote *The New Science* (1725).

² Vico was the first to use this term in its modern sense.

³ He wrote *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748).

was in hot countries founded in a natural reason” though he added that the influence of climate could be countered by moral causes, especially religion and laws. Although Montesquieu was keen to understand every society in its own terms, he failed to develop the pluralist moral and political theory because he thought that his vision of the good life was alone truly human (Parekh 2006: 57).

On the other hand, the liberal thinker Herder¹ provided a more relevant appreciation of diversity of cultures than Vico and Montesquieu together. For him, it is culture rather than shared humanity that really makes us who we are, unlike Montesquieu who sees different cultures as variant ways of expressing the universal features of human nature. Herder rightly emphasized the fact that “human nature was a pliant clay” differently moulded by different cultures. Indeed, his theory of culture was a more developed one; it was really a remarkable achievement. For him, culture in itself embodied a distinct vision of human life, it had also “a singular, wonderful identity” (Crowder 24; Parekh 2006: 68).

Moreover, Herder was one of the first liberal thinkers to emphasize the relation between culture and language arguing that language was more than a means of communication but an embodiment and vehicle of culture. Indeed, culture is bound up with language, and every cultural community had its own language and formed a distinct linguistic community. He insisted on the relation between thought and language and that thought is possible only through language, and languages are the unique creations of particular cultures. Through its language each culture generates its own identifying set of memories, beliefs and norms (Parekh 2006: 68).

According to Isaiah Berlin², Herder sees cultures as ‘incommensurable’ with one another; “all these forms of life are intelligible each in its own terms”, each representing “an ideal of indefeasible validity”, so that “we are forbidden to make judgement of comparative values, for that is measuring the incommensurable.”³ This conception of cultures as incommensurable wholes is undoubtedly an assumption of

¹ He wrote *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man* (1800).

² A British social and political theorist known for his idea of value pluralism as a reaction against moral monism.

³ For more detail, see Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Herder and Hamann* (2000).

cultural relativism¹ which re-emerged in modern Western thought as a reaction against universalism² (Crowder 24).

Herder argued that culture had an influence on the individual's ways of thinking, feelings, sentiments, values and ideals. All cultures, for Herder, were unique expressions of the human spirit; human beings belonged to a single species and shared in common certain physical, emotional and cultural needs and such capacities as rationality, imagination and the capacity to create and sustain cultures. Each cultural community differently developed these needs and capacities and also cultivated new ones. For Herder, we should respect other cultures not because some moral law or principles so requires, but because they mean as much to their members as ours does to us, and we should understand them in their own terms both because we cannot otherwise understand them at all, and because this is how we want others to treat us (Parekh 2006:70).

Clearly, Herder highlighted aspects of culture arguing unlike respectively Montesquieu and Vico that cultures were not the results of geographical circumstances and stages of mental development, but rather products of human imagination, creativity and the search for self-understanding. He also explained that cultures are equal not because they are equally good, but because they mean much to their members. Besides, Herder was a prominent thinker of the Counter- Enlightenment movement which reacted against universal judgments (Crowder 25).

Like Vico and Montesquieu, Herder highlighted more deeply the inadequacy of the traditional conception of human nature. He assumed that since human beings were culturally embedded, human nature was not a uniform substratum underlying and remaining unaffected by culture as most monist philosophers since Plato had imagined. But unlike his contemporary, he stressed the aesthetic and moral value of a culturally diverse world, but not a culturally plural society. Still his theory of culture remained insufficient because he saw culture as a tightly knit held together by a single

¹ It is the idea that each culture has its own unique moral rightness and that all cultures are equal in moral and intellectual status.

² It is the view that there are universal moral rules which override the norms of particular cultures.

spirit though culture is divided along class, gender, regional and generational lines (Parekh 2006:72).

Finally, the three traditional liberal thinkers did break with the tradition of moral monism and lay the foundations of a pluralist theory. In fact, they rightly argued that human beings were culturally embedded and profoundly shaped by their cultural communities. They also argued that there is no separation between the moral life and culture. However, as pioneers of a new tradition of thought, the three writers mistakenly thought that a culture is an integrated self-contained whole, ignoring therefore, its internal diversity and tensions. And more importantly, this mistaken belief makes culture an autonomous area of life dissociated from the wider economic and political structure (Parekh 2006: 77).

1.2 Liberal Responses to Diversity

I have considered previously two traditions of thought; however, both failed to develop fully a theory of the role of culture in human life, less a coherent theory of cultural diversity. They faced considerable difficulty relating human nature and culture. So, even if pluralist thinkers such as Vico, Montesquieu and Herder valued the plurality of human life, they see culture only as a rational, unchanging and integrated whole. Contemporary liberals such as Kymlicka and Raz had an important insight; they offered understandings of culture that many question but they built on the earlier works of others to observe how cultures are linked to individual autonomy (Uberoi 2015:5).

Indeed, more recently liberal political philosophers have offered theories of moral and cultural diversity. In order to tackle cultural diversity, they had to redefine liberalism without breaking with universal principles. Three major contemporary writers provided new responses to diversity. John Rawls¹ is primarily interested in the

¹ He is best known for his defence of egalitarian liberalism.

problems thrown up by moral diversity, while Will Kymlicka, in those thrown up by cultural diversity or different ways of life, and Joseph Raz¹ in both (Parekh 2006: 81).

In *A Theory of Justice* (1971) Rawls dealt with the question of moral plurality considering plurality as inescapable and desirable. He explained that there exist different conceptions of the good life to which human beings want to subscribe and that they need to cultivate others' talents and opportunities. He is concerned with establishing a social cooperation for liberal democratic societies and sees cooperation between free and equal persons² as central to the political culture of democratic societies (Parekh 2006: 82).

Thus, Rawls' answer to pluralism is his political conception of justice. For him, citizens who are committed to justify their actions to each other, they only appeal to the ideals and principles embodied in the political conception of justice or to political values. Furthermore, through political liberalism Rawls suggested to explain how citizens holding different conceptions of the good can create a polity that is just, stable and leave enough space for diversity. Rawls rested his claim on three assumptions. First, justice is the first virtue of society and agreement on it is the necessary precondition of political stability. Second, Rawls' two principles of justice are the only ones consistent with the basic idea of free and equal citizens and society as a system of voluntary cooperation. Third, the principles are free-standing and do not presuppose comprehensive liberalism (Parekh 2006: 83-84).

In *The Morality of Freedom* (1986) Raz sketched, unlike Rawls, questions of cultural diversity and the politics of recognition and difference. He is primarily interested in achieving human well-being considering that individuals' choices and values are shaped by the practices of their society. Thus, the nature and content of personal well-being is contextual in nature and varies from society to society. Raz referred to this as a form of relativism and the consequent impossibility of comparing and judging different forms of well-being (Parekh 2006: 92).

¹ He is one of the most prominent advocates of legal positivism and is well known for his conception of perfectionist liberalism.

² For him citizens are free and equal persons because they all possess two crucial moral powers, namely the sense of justice and the capacity to form, revise and pursue a conception of the good.

Moreover, Raz pointed out that human beings are genetically endowed with certain capacities and desires. For him, culture consists in “training and channelling” these desires. While different societies do so frequently, none can ignore them altogether without damaging human well-being, and hence they can be evaluated and compared in terms of this transcultural test. Again, Raz added that modern western liberal society is based on the idea of personal autonomy which is an intrinsic value for western people. He explained that to be autonomous is to be part-author of one’s life. However, not all western people value autonomy or do so equally (Parekh 2006: 91).

According to Raz¹ “liberalism upholds the value for people of being in charge of their life, charting its course by their own successive choices.” He added that genuine autonomy is not the mere availability of options, but rather the capacity of a person to understand the meaning and significance of her choices and the possibility to locate them in a context of “interlocking practices”, that is a culture. Consequently, membership of a flourishing culture is an essential component of individual well-being; it involves personal freedom and requires respecting one’s culture. This is for Raz “a liberal case, for it emphasizes the role of culture as a precondition for, and a factor which gives shape and content to individual freedom” (qtd. in Crowder 163).

Moreover, Raz thought that immigrants or indigenous people’s culture is inferior because they do not value autonomy and harm their children, concluding that they deserve no respect, they should be tolerated only if they do not harm outsiders and offer their members an adequate and satisfying life. He considered non liberal ways of life as inferior and harmful on the basis of a view of personal autonomy. He also argued that if non liberal ways of life are viable, they should be tolerated, if not they should be assimilated. For him cultures are valuable and worthy of public support only as far as they provide a supportive context for individual freedom (Crowder 183-84).

Nevertheless, Raz adopted later a new approach on the subject of cultural diversity. In fact, he assumed that non liberal groups in liberal western society are

¹ See *Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective* (1995).

integral part of society, which although liberal, is also multicultural. Raz clearly formulated a liberal theory of multiculturalism arguing that human beings are culturally embedded and that society might contain several cultures. He argued that culture has two vital functions, first it structures its members' perceptual and moral world; second, culture gives its members a sense of rootedness, and defines their identity. He argued that since human beings are culturally embedded and depend on their culture for their freedom, identity and well-being, they have a right to maintain and transmit it to succeeding generations. And since different cultures embody and realize different values, none of them can be judged superior to the others though of course they might be criticized and compared in specific respects (Parekh 2006: 96).

Obviously, Raz thanks to his new approach to culture and cultural diversity made a remarkable advance; though he could not free himself fully from his earlier assumptions. Hence, Kymlicka¹ provided a clear response to cultural diversity in his major works, namely *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989) and *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995). He constructed a systematic case for multiculturalism on a liberal basis and established a direct link between multiculturalism and liberal democracy.

Kymlicka identified first the basic principles of liberalism² and argued that human beings have an essential interest in leading a good life. He explained that they lead their life on the basis of their beliefs which they can question and revise; he referred to this as autonomy. Autonomy is for him a necessary condition of the good life. His view of autonomy is clearly different from that of J.S.Mill or even Raz³. For Kymlicka commitment to autonomy is the basis of liberal political theory. He assumed that all individuals should be able to lead the good life, so they should be treated equally (Parekh 2006:99).

Unlike his predecessors, Kymlicka insisted on a more active role for the state in sustaining minority cultures. Therefore, the traditional liberal policy of passive

¹ He is widely acknowledged to be the leading theorist of multiculturalism.

² Liberalism is defined differently by writers.

³ Those writers argued that autonomy is desirable because it leads to progress, happiness, individuality...etc.

toleration should be replaced by a more active policy in which the state accords minority cultural groups positive recognition and assistance on the basis of the two fundamental values of egalitarian liberalism (Crowder 44).

Moreover, on equal treatment, Kymlicka parted company with traditional liberal thinkers who have tended to be hostile to treating cultural groups differently, arguing that a group or community is valuable only so far as it benefits its members. Consequently, although a group itself has no rights, it makes sense to say that its individual members have rights to the survival of the group if it serves their well-being. Considering the question of recognition of cultural difference, Kymlicka argued that it does not depart from the liberal concern for equality but it is rather a way to express that concern more fully since it is necessary to compensate a group's members for underserved disadvantage (Crowder 45).

So far, I have explored the liberal thought of three contemporary thinkers who have redefined liberalism to provide a theory of culture and cultural plurality. Obviously, their thoughts have marked a considerable advance over that of their predecessors, as they rightly addressed the question of cultural diversity and grounded their arguments on liberal principles. They did certainly succeed in defining the role of culture in human life; and perhaps the most successful contemporary liberal thinker in tackling all these questions related to cultural diversity is Kymlicka who successfully formulated the most convincing theory of multiculturalism despite some limitations linked specifically to the tendency these writers have as liberals to make liberalism their central frame of reference by dividing all ways of life into liberal and non liberal.

1.3 Pluralist Universalism: A New Approach to Cultural Diversity

Political theorists have responded differently to the question whether there are universal moral values and how we can judge other cultures. Indeed, the question did receive three different answers: relativism, monism and minimum universalism. Broadly speaking, relativism considers that moral values are culturally embedded, so that each culture is a self-contained whole having its own unique standards of truth or moral rightness, and therefore making the search for universal moral values

unnecessary. Monism, on the contrary, considers that moral values are derived from human nature, which is common to all human beings; therefore, it is possible to arrive at universal moral values. The minimum universalism is in-between, considering that universal values are few and constitute a moral threshold (Parekh 2006:126).

Clearly, both relativism and monism are irrelevant since relativism mistakenly sees culture as a self-contained whole, and monism rests on a false view of human nature. Minimum universalism, though it appreciates both the cultural embeddedness of human beings and their universally shared properties, it recognizes only the universal validity of values not of a way of life. It sees universal values as universal and as being the same in different cultures using them mechanically to judge all cultures (Parekh 2006:127).

In the light of the limitations of these strands of thought, Parekh, who is considered among the greatest figures in British political theory, has efficiently offered an alternative approach to cultural diversity which explains why it is valuable¹. Parekh learned much from liberal and pluralist thinkers and devised a position about human life. Therefore, he argued that there are universal moral values and there is “a creative interplay between them.” According to Parekh, universal moral values are worth cherishing and form part of the good life, thus they are universally valid or binding (Parekh 2006: 127).

What is striking about Parekh’s approach to cultural diversity is that he opened a new perspective never proposed by any liberal or even non-liberal thinker. In fact, he argued that the best way to arrive at any universal values, unlike philosophers who have proposed an analysis of human nature, or universal moral consensus, is through a universal or ‘cross-cultural dialogue’. His starting point is that dialogue brings together different cultural sensibility so that we can appreciate the richness of human beings, and therefore arrive at values genuinely universal (Parekh 2006: 128).

¹ The Bhikhu Parekh Symposium recognized his political work. See *Multiculturalism Rethought: Interpretations, Dilemmas and New Directions*, Eds. Varun Uberoi and Tariq Modood (2015).

This cross-cultural dialogue makes these universal values accessible to all different cultures, it also fosters respect for other cultures and ultimately gives the values an additional authority thanks to cross-cultural global consensus. For Parekh cultural diversity should be valued as a prerequisite for the intercultural learning that enables what Gandhi called “a richer view of reality” (Uberoi 2015: 7).

Further, moral values’ validity has to be established. Indeed, one must advance convincing arguments to explain why we do subscribe to one set of values rather than others. Thus, we have to justify reasonably our choices because moral values do have grounds in the form of intersubjectively discussable reasons and are not arbitrary (Parekh 2006: 128).

For Parekh, since human beings tend to think that their values are self-evident and define reasons in an ethnocentric manner, thus they should avoid accusing others of unreasonableness. It is also important to value human beings because they have several unique and worthwhile capacities, they are capable of creating meaning and values, so they deserve to be valued. However, human worth is not a natural property, it is rather a moral practice which extends to value their individual and collective achievements, and even help them to lead worthy lives. In addition to worth, human beings have also dignity, it implies that no human beings should be judged to be inferior or fall below the minimum required by their status. In short, dignity is neither inherent in human beings nor an individual status but a collective status which is acquired because the individual belongs to the human species and have specific capacities (Parekh 2006: 129-31).

Human beings deserve also equal consideration. Indeed, equality is also a moral practice which reinforces one’s sense of dignity and worth and contributes to the creation of a rich collective life. By equality, Parekh means that we should acknowledge above all the equal dignity and worth of all human beings and respect them equally and give equal consideration to the claims to conditions of well-being. Ultimately, this is according to Parekh the best way to arrive at a body of moral values which deserve the respect of all human beings. However, all the values developed by

the theorist are not exhaustive; his aim through this exercise is to explain how to derive the totality of possible universal moral values by probing in human condition, historical experiences and our judgment of the likely consequences of different forms of human relations and social life (Parekh 2006:133).

Parekh explained that since not all values are equally central to the good life, we have then to identify those that are within the reach of all, central to any form of good life, and for which we can provide good reasons. We have also to consolidate global consensus around them, this consensus is clearly attested in the *1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* which was born out of the kind of cross-cultural dialogue. These basic values include respect for human life and dignity, equality of rights, respect for personal integrity and inviolability, recognition of basic human worth, and protection of fundamental human interests (Parekh 2006:134).

However, the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* is not flawless. Indeed, it is not universally valid since it retains a distinctly liberal bias including rights such as unlimited freedom of expression and unlimited property. More importantly, it takes a statist view of human rights meaning that the state alone is deemed to have the obligation to respect and realize them, though universal human rights imply universal human obligations including a duty to create a global regime of justice. Thus, Parekh suggested explicitly that the *1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* contains some values that have a claim to universality and it is a good starting point for future discussion (Parekh 2006: 134; Uberoi 2015: 10).

Parekh is definitely for the development of minimum universal values which have to be interpreted and adopted in the light of the culture and circumstances of each society. For instance, respect for human life is a universal value, but different societies disagree on when human life begins and ends and what respect for it entails. Again, universal values may conflict with the values of a cultural community just like women members of traditional communities refuse equality with men. Thus, Parekh's reasoning is that since societies are different, they likely realize the universal values differently or even sometimes override some of them. According to him they have to

justify their decisions, and if they provide a reasonably compelling defence, we have the duty to respect them otherwise we should press for change (Parekh 2006:136).

Considering the differences between societies, they more likely tend to interpret and realize moral values differently. This is for Parekh both inevitable and desirable in order to attain higher levels of moral universality. Hence, the importance of intercultural dialogue, which is for Parekh, who is following Gandhi, a sign not of betraying one's cultural community or under-evaluating its history of intellectual resources. Instead it is a sign of cherishing one's community so much that being blind to its limitations is a form of negligence (Uberoi 2015: 8).

One may conclude that Parekh's theory "has a strong liberal orientation", as he puts it, still he argues that liberalism, although culturally accommodating to a degree, is too culturally specific to embrace all the legitimate requirements of multiculturalism. He explained that what is needed are universal principles for multicultural societies, seeking them at "higher level of philosophical abstraction", in "a dialogue between cultures" in which liberal ideas are to be found as well as ideas from alternative cultural backgrounds (Crowder118).

2. Cultural Diversity: The Core of Multiculturalism

Cultural diversity in modern society refers to the presence of a variety of cultures, and therefore to culturally derived-differences. Indeed, multiculturalism is about those differences embedded in culture which is "a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective lives" (Parekh 2006: 2-3).

Arguably, many have considered that the emergence of the concept of culture is the consequence of the advent of the modern nation-state with its borders. Culture is perceived as dividing masses of human from each other; yet human history has revealed that human beings have always interacted and intermingled, reinforcing the affirmation of a shared common culture between all human beings. Therefore, the question is why some cultures became incompatible with others. Thus, understanding culture is merely apprehending cultural diversity. In fact, culture has to be defined

clearly, its role ought to be stated, and its moral worth has to be demonstrated. This is the task of any political theorist who pretends to build a theory of cultural diversity.

One has to bear in mind that culture is not static, nor a self-contained whole, it is dynamic. Cultures benefit from each other and should be accorded equal worth and recognition. Therefore, what is needed is to give a coherent account of the value of culture, appreciating other cultures in their own terms. Finally, cultural diversity in a globalized world is needed since cultures are complementing and correcting each other; hence the importance of making a case for cultural diversity.

2.1 The Nature of Culture

Human beings structure their lives through practices and form their beliefs about the meaning and significance of human life. This system of beliefs and practices is referred to as 'culture'. For Parekh culture is a historically created system of meaning and significance, "it is a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives." He explained that understanding and organizing human life is not theoretical but rather practical. Parekh added that when the word is adjectivized, it refers to the area or aspect of human life highlighted by the adjective. For instance, working-class and mass culture refers to the ways in which these groups understand themselves and organize their relation (Parekh 2006: 143).

Some people think that beliefs and values must generate a comprehensive identity, but others would assert that culture cannot define the whole identity of an individual since people identify themselves in many ways. Moreover, no culture can be more encompassing than others, but it tends to contribute significantly to personal and collective identity. The existence of culture, as stated by Dworkin¹, depends on the existence of "a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention"(qtd. in Crowder 8).

Many writers have been interested in defining the term 'culture'. In fact, the term itself is a major crux of debate. On the one hand, T.S Eliot states in his book

¹ See *A Matter of Principle* (1985).

Notes towards the Definition of Culture (1948) that the word culture has been misused, thus his aim is “to help to define a word, the word culture, not to outline a social or political philosophy” (15).

Thus, T.S Eliot is concerned with the meaning of the term ‘culture’ in relation to the whole society. The term culture is associated with either the development of an individual, a group or class or a whole society. He argued that the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and that the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society. What matters is therefore, the culture of the society. He insisted that the culture of the individual cannot be isolated from that of the group; and that the culture of the group cannot be abstracted from that of the whole society; and that our notion of ‘perfection’ must take all three senses of ‘culture’. For him culture may even be described simply as that which makes life worth living. This is what justifies other peoples and other generations in saying, when they contemplate the remains and the influence of an extinct civilization, that it was “worth while” for that civilization to have existed (Eliot 24, 27).

On the other hand, Raymond Williams¹ notably in his book *The Long Revolution* (1961) examined certain theoretical problems in the definition and analysis of culture. He even went further than others in defining and analyzing culture. Indeed, he privileged a definition of culture which encompasses three categories:

the ideal in which culture is a state or process of human perfection; the documentary, in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work; and the social definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior.(41)

For Williams it seemed crucial to retain these three definitions. He considered that the variations of meaning and reference in the use of culture as a term must be seen as disadvantage as well as a genuine complexity. He argued that any adequate theory of

¹ He is an influential figure within the New Left, and is regarded as the founding father of cultural studies as he developed an approach called ‘cultural materialism’ in which he explains the relationship between culture and society.

culture must include the three definitions and conversely any definition should refer to the others (Williams 43).

Indeed, Williams cited what Fromm calls the 'social character' or Benedict the 'pattern of culture'. The social character is a valued system of behavior and attitudes; the pattern of culture is a selection and configuration of interests and activities, producing a distinct organization, a 'way of life'. He also described 'structure of feeling', it is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all elements in the general organization, and it is possessed by individuals. One generation may train its successor, with reasonable success, in the social character or the general cultural pattern, but the new generation will have its own structure of feeling (Williams 47-49).

He distinguished three levels of culture, even in its most general definition. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most every day fact: the culture of a period; there is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition. The survival of the culture of a period is governed, not by the period itself, but by new periods, which gradually compose a tradition. Theoretically, a period is recorded, in practice, this record is absorbed into a selective tradition, and both are different from the culture as lived (Williams 49-50).

This is undeniably the most elaborate definition and analysis of culture ever presented by a contemporary scholar. However, culture has no coordinating authority, so it is an un-systematized whole. It has as Raymond Williams¹ called residual strands of thought which were once dominant and remain now as historical memories in the dominant culture. A culture has also what Williams called emergent strands which constitute semi-articulated bodies of thought that emerge from a small group out of dissatisfaction with the dominant culture. The dominant culture responds to this challenge by trying to suppress or neutralize them (Parekh 2006: 144).

¹ See *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980).

On the other hand, Kymlicka sees culture as “an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history.” Kymlicka referred to ‘societal culture’ as a modern phenomenon linked with the modern economy and democracy, it is common to all its members and embodied in its institutions. He uses the term ‘culture’, ‘cultural community’, ‘societal culture’, ‘nation’ and ‘people’ interchangeably. For him culture offers its members a meaningful way of life across the “full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres and is institutionally embodied in schools, media, economy, government, ...” (qtd. in Parekh 2006: 18,76).

Admittedly, there is a common belief that culture is connected with religion. They influence each other since religion has an influence on a culture’s system of beliefs and practices; and culture too influences how a religion is interpreted. Parekh summarizes rightly this idea as “No religion can be culture-free”. Further, no culture can be based only on religion, but it can be shaped by it. For instance, some cultures are totally dependent on religion; others are just influenced by religion which is often challenged by the influences of science and secular morality (Parekh 2006: 147).

However, T.S Eliot went further asserting that no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion, asking whether any culture could come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis knowing that the same religion may inform a variety of cultures. He insisted that it is a mistake to think that culture can be preserved, extended and developed in the absence of religion or that the preservation and maintenance of religion can be possible without the preservation and maintenance of culture. Indeed, the development of culture cannot be dissociated from the development of religion. He concluded that both the culture and the religion of a people are different aspects of the same thing: the “culture being essentially, the incarnation of the religion of a people.” But he added that considering culture and religion as the same thing makes sense only when people are unconscious of both their culture and their religion. For him it is possible to see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, and that way of life is also its culture (Eliot28-31). However, one

might respond to Eliot that even when religion and culture are closely connected, they remain separable in thought and practice as we can abstract away the religious basis of a practice and follow it for cultural or even social reasons.

Culture is also connected with society, but the two have different orientations. Society is concerned with the structure of practices deriving from the beliefs of human beings, while culture refers to the content and the organization of the beliefs and practices. What characterizes society is of course its system of sanctions which tend to enforce practices. Therefore, members of a society have to follow its practices since they share its beliefs or because they fear the social consequences (Parekh 2006: 146).

In contrast with the monists who dissociate morality from culture on the basis that culture changes from society to society and morality is universal, it is worth stating that culture structures moral life since every system of morality is embedded in the wider culture. For instance, respect for human life, which is a moral principle, is embodied in customs and rituals as how we treat the old and the poor. But this close relation between culture and morality does not mean that culture cannot be criticized or that there are no universal moral principles (Parekh 2006: 145).

Finally, culture has a dynamic, it is not static or a passive inheritance but it constantly creates meaning, it does have a structure which defines the new meanings though its structure remains alterable. This is well expressed by Raymond Williams who argued that cultures carry interpretations of the world we inhabit, this gives us certain 'rules' learned by each individual through inheritance and culture, and this is for him a kind of creation. Thus, the human world as well as the ordinary reality, that his culture defines, are formed when the rules are learned. He states:

Particular cultures carry particular versions of reality, which they can be said to create, in the sense that cultures carrying different rules create their own world which their bearers ordinarily experience. But, further, there is not only variation between cultures, but the individuals who bear these particular rules are capable of altering and extending them, bringing in new or modified rules by which an extended or different reality can be experienced. (18)

One might suggest a conclusion that culture shapes human beings, it has a determinant influence on them and this is a true assumption. Still human beings are neither determined by their culture, nor remain unaffected by it; they are able to take a critical view of it.

2.2 Evaluating and Respecting Cultures

As culture is a system of regulation, it is able to accept or reject certain forms of behavior and ways of life. Some argue that the idea of judging or even grading cultures is obviously incoherent. In fact, cultures are multi-dimensional and therefore cannot be measured on a single scale. Admittedly, comparing whole cultures is difficult to achieve, one can only compare specific aspects of cultures such as their respect of universally shared human features. However, this comparison requires knowledge of cultural differences; thus, cross-cultural comparative judgments are made possible (Parekh 2006: 173).

Those who argue that cultures should be judged in their own terms are not actually right. On the one hand, it is true that understanding cultures is prior to judging them, and yet any external judgment do not affect their members or even have any impact on them, unless it resonates with their moral self-understanding. On the other hand, the idea of judging a culture in its own terms rests on a positivist view of culture, that culture is static; it has a fixed body of values carrying a fixed set of meanings. Of course, this is not true because values are of different levels of generality and systems of meaning, too, need to be interpreted for different and unexpected situations. In other words, every culture is open-ended and multi-stranded; it has no 'fixed strands' in which to evaluate it (Parekh 2006: 174).

However, cultural relativists react against ethical universalism and deny that any moral judgments are universally valid, asserting that there are no universally valid moral rules, only the codes and practices of particular cultures. Therefore, there is no culturally neutral or objective standpoint from which to compose and judge the divergent practices of different cultures, and so no way of legitimately criticizing a culture's morality from any perspective other than its own. We are often tempted to

judge other ways of life on the basis of our own cultural values, but this is 'ethnocentricity' the illegitimate judging of one culture according to standards imported from another. A cultural relativist can consistently criticize a culture's practices, but only on the ground of that culture's own norms. For example, where the culture's basic values are not adequately expressed or respected by its actual practices or institutions this is called 'immanent critique' or criticism 'from within' because it appeals to standards immanent in the culture itself rather than external to it (Crowder 21-22).

According to the cognitive relativist, different cultures have such divergent ways of seeing things that they inhabit different conceptual worlds. None of these is objectively more authoritative than any other. On this view, when we judge other cultures' practices to be irrational according to standards other than those of the cultures concerned, we are again being ethnocentric, projecting our own standards onto others. The idea of cultural relativism can be traced back to the ancient world. Among the Greeks, the dominant universalism of Plato and Aristotle was opposed by sceptical thinkers like Protagoras, for whom "man is the measure of all things" (Crowder 22).

The development of natural-law thinking in European thought is more evident in attitudes to alien cultures when Europeans were confronted by unfamiliar ways of life, the basic ethical question was always: how far do these cultures conform to the natural-law? Sometimes the answer was quite complimentary to the culture in question, which was judged to be superior, at least in certain respects, to its European rivals more rational, or more 'natural'; Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) for example, adopt the perspective of a sensible Persian visitor to a strange often absurd contemporary Paris, although Montesquieu was probably more interested in satirizing his own society (Crowder 23).

More often, however, critical comparisons between European and other cultures in natural-law terms worked to the detriment of the non-European; such cultures were often judged to be inferior because they plainly did not follow the natural law as

Europeans interpreted this in various respects. One dramatic example was cannibalism: the modern European horror of this ancient practice was famously captured in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (Crowder 23).

However, many cultural anthropologists departed from ethnocentric judgment and demonstrated that cultural patterns have their own underlying norms and rationales. Ruth Benedict in her classic *Patterns of Culture* (1935) describes cultures as not merely the sum of their traits, but internally integrated and externally bounded wholes, each with its own unique personality, "a culture, like an individual is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action with characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society." The implication again is that it is unfair, indeed irrational to judge one culture according to the purposes of another. Cultures are equally valid patterns of life (Crowder 25).

As seen earlier, judgments that 'primitive' non- Western cultures are inferior to advanced Western societies rest on unthinking ethnocentrism or on an evolutionary account of cultures as progressing by stages from the primitive to the advanced, assuming Western patterns to be more advanced. In either version, these judgments of superiority and inferiority are disrupted by the Herderian picture of cultures as incommensurables (Crowder 25).

Clearly, every culture is subject to comparison. Its members can borrow genuinely some other culture's beliefs and practices or reinterpret its own culture to justify possible foreign import. Parekh argues that every community lives in the midst of others, thus cultures are shaped by almost several communities, concluding that almost all cultures are multiculturally constituted (Parekh 2006: 163).

Moreover, cultures are valuable not merely instrumentally, contributing to individual well-being as advocated by universalism, but intrinsically valuable for their own sake, so that they are equally valuable and must be equally respected. This is based on cultural relativism, the theory that moral rules are never universal in application or authority but only relatively valid from some particular cultural

perspective. On this view, each culture is its own moral authority, so all must be equals (Crowder 7).

Thus, it is widely expressed that one has a duty to respect other cultures and that all cultures deserve equal respect. Considering that a culture has two dimensions: a culture of a community and the content and character of that culture, respecting a culture entails respect for a community's right to its culture and also for the content and character of that culture. One should respect a community's right to its culture because every community has a right to its culture which is *per se* bound up with their history and identity. In addition, every culture deserves respect for itself since it holds its members together as a community and gives stability and meaning to human life. Yet, we might judge a culture and conclude that it does not deserve respect since the overall quality of life it offers its members leaves much to be desired (Parekh 2006: 176).

Arguably, all cultures deserve basic respect though they are not equally worthy. This is why we should not judge culture from our own view point but at the same time we should feel free to criticize them. If we admit that every community has the right to its culture, then we should respect that right. As we saw earlier, monists and culturalists failed to grasp this dimension. Monists argue that since some cultures are superior, they have a right to impose themselves on others, ignoring the community's right to its culture and even the basic respect owed to each culture (Parekh 2006: 177).

Culturalists though assuming that every community has a right to its culture, they feel free to criticize its beliefs and practices and when these are outrageous decide whether they should continue to respect the community's right to autonomy. Cultural relativism considers that truth or morality is relative to culture, and that all cultures are equal so they should be accorded equal respect. If multiple cultures are found in the same society no one is considered more authoritative than the others (Crowder 15).

One possible response to the culturalists is that no cultural community is devoid of reformist resources. Communities are wholly equipped with resources to be capable of changing or adapting practices from within. But we should above all respect its

autonomy. The assumption made by certain Western societies that others are all devoid of reformist resources and need western guidance is totally unfounded and a source of much colonial and neocolonial forms of violence.

According to Raz, all cultures should be treated with the respect due to what is valuable in them, that all cultures have something of value to offer their members, but that some are distinctly more oppressive than others in their effect on personal freedom; so, because of his autonomy- based approach to culture, Raz considers cultures as valuable and worth of public support only so far as they provide individual freedom. Culture should be respected to the degree appropriate but at the same time the liberal- multiculturalist state is entitled to intervene in such a culture to protect individual liberty (Crowder 164).

For value pluralists¹, cultures can usually be critically compared along particular universal dimensions. Then, liberal cultures can be critically compared with the alternatives in a way that brings out their advantages and disadvantages. Parekh acknowledges this point by implication, he is clear that cultures are not wholly incommensurable. This fits his view that “although all cultures have worth and deserve basic respect, they are not equally worthy and do not merit equal respect”; every culture enables its members to realize some human values, but these may be achieved at the cost of other values that we can see more fully enjoyed in other cultures. Some cultures are more egalitarian than others, while some may do better than their rivals on the score of individual liberty; further we may conclude of a culture, that compared to the alternatives, “the overall quality of life it offers its members leaves much to be desired” (Parekh 2006: 177). This approach is clearly distinct from cultural relativism according to which cultures cannot be judged from the outside, but it is in line with a Berlinian pluralism of values, in which incommensurability is a relation among goods rather than whole ways of life (Crowder 158).

¹ Berlin is associated with value pluralism which reacts against the notion of moral monism.

2. 3 A Case for Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity, which means the presence of a variety of cultures and cultural perspectives in a given society, has been fully developed by J.S. Mill, Humboldt and Herder; and has been more recently restated with important modifications by Berlin, Raz and Kymlicka. Indeed, the principal task facing a theorist of cultural diversity is how to identify the importance and power of culture.

These writers advanced four arguments in support of cultural diversity. First, cultural diversity increases the available range of options and expands freedom of choice. However, this argument seems too restrictive because it gives no reason to value other cultures such as those of indigenous peoples or even to cherish cultural diversity. Individuals might be happy with their own culture, not willing to know about other cultures (Parekh 2006: 165).

Second, since everyone as a human being has a right to his culture, cultural diversity is an inescapable and legitimate outcome of the exercise of that right. However, this argument does not explain why one should have access to others' cultures or that cultural diversity is made possible. Therefore, society should create conditions allowing the exercise of their right to culture. Third, Herder argued that cultural diversity creates a rich, varied and aesthetically pleasing world; he considers that cultures represent different expressions of the human spirit and form a harmonious whole. He appreciates a culturally plural world especially its aesthetic and moral value but not a culturally plural society. However, this aesthetic case for cultural diversity is not sufficient because culture is not merely an aesthetic object of contemplation; it is a moral system (Parekh 2006: 166).

Finally, J.S. Mill and Humboldt argued that cultural diversity encourages healthy competition between different systems of ideas and ways of life; however, the argument Mill made ignores the intrinsic value of cultural diversity. Moreover, competition prevents the defense of the rights of indigenous peoples. On the other hand, Kymlicka favors an instrumental approach to cultural diversity. Indeed, he fails to explain human beings' need to have access to other cultures. He argues that cultural

diversity increases a range of options, meaning that other cultures are important to us just as options of choices and have no value or lose it when no longer options for us (Parekh 2006: 167-68).

But other prominent pluralist thinkers do emphasize the importance of cultural diversity. Indeed, Isaih Berlin¹ believes that human cultures are valuable and that cultural diversity is desirable. He also stresses the role and value of ‘national’ cultures which provide human beings with a strong sense of belonging that is ‘national identity’, which is basically good for all human beings. Obviously, a case for cultural diversity is implicit in Berlin’s account of pluralism. Indeed, Berlin who has been influenced by Vico and Herder argues that since cultures represent particular value rankings² this entails that many human cultures are morally valid. Another important pluralist, John Gray believes that pluralism implies a commitment to cultural diversity that is the validity of many “worthwhile forms of life”; but he defends a certain kind of diversity, or toleration rather than of multiculturalism because the latter requires the active promotion of cultural diversity as a political goal within a single polity (Crowder 151-54).

Although these writers have in mind the promotion of cultural diversity, their approaches to this subject is definitely incomplete. Indeed, Parekh suggests another approach which sees cultures as complementing and correcting each other. He argues that the value of cultures is not dependent on whether or not they are options for us; and that others’ values challenge us both morally and intellectually and remind us of our limitations (Parekh 2006: 167).

Furthermore, cultural diversity is an important constituent of human freedom otherwise human beings remain imprisoned within their culture, thinking it to be the only natural way to understand and organize human life. They can from the standpoint of other cultures view their own culture, and even its assets and weaknesses. Ultimately, cultural diversity fosters not only human freedom but also self-knowledge, self-transcendance and self-criticism. Besides, when seeing differences between

¹ He is an enthusiast for cultural diversity but he is not a multiculturalist.

² Berlin believes that there is not a universally correct way of ranking values.

cultures, we become aware of the different influences within our own culture. Cultural diversity permits beneficial dialogue between different cultures (Parekh 2006: 168).

Nevertheless, critics of cultural diversity may object to the arguments made above. They may say that they prefer a culturally homogenous society since they are perfectly happy with their culture and even if they live in a plural society, prefer to live with their own cultural tradition. Therefore, we have to consider respectively both a culturally homogenous society and a culturally plural society.

A culturally homogenous society creates a sense of community and solidarity; it also facilitates communication between its individuals. Charles Taylor¹ argues that a morally coherent community with “its strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human agency”, and its absence a threat to “human personhood”. But this form of society tends to become closed, intolerant and even oppressive, it discourages differences and experiments in living. And more importantly, it does not allow for the development of intellectual and moral virtues such as intellectual openness and tolerance of differences (Parekh 2006: 170).

In contrast, a culturally plural society can provide the creative tensions of an intercultural dialogue, and is more likely able to offer better conditions for individuals especially in an age of liberalism and democratization in which minority groups are seeking continually recognition. Therefore, cultural homogenization is unconceivable since no society can remain culturally self-contained in an era of cultural globalization (Parekh 2006: 171).

It is not easy to conclude that a culturally plural society is better than a homogenous one, though we may consider its strengths and the current historical context, and conclude that whatever the form of society retained, it must above all suit the traditions, needs and psychological and moral resources of the people involved. All in all, multiculturalism does not support only the culturally plural society that prescribes culturally open way of life; this would mean supporting the monist view.

¹ See *Sources of the Self* (1989).

On the contrary, multiculturalism is definitely committed to the view that several different ways of life do exist, each has its virtues; one has only to respect each choice.

3. Towards a Definition of Multiculturalism

Seen from a broader historical perspective, multiculturalism as an idea and practice was unconceivable under pre-modern conditions. On the contrary, multiculturalism has come to prominence in states in Western Europe and states dominated by white settlement from Europe, despite some gestures towards multiculturalism in nationalist Europe of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

At a theoretical level, multiculturalists have offered justifications in favor of multiculturalism as a consequence of the natural development of mainstream liberal-democratic thought. Kymlicka is certainly the most prominent political philosopher who has constructed a systematic case for multiculturalism on a liberal basis. His seminal theory of minority rights remains a remarkable achievement. There is also a recurrent question in the academic literature about what is meant by multiculturalism. In fact, it seems that opponents and proponents of multiculturalism could not agree on a definition of this concept.

Hence, the importance in this last section to consider first the historical manifestation of multiculturalism focusing on liberal democratic Western states established as nation-states; and then to deploy some preliminary arguments in favor of multiculturalism; and finally to investigate some definitions of the term 'multiculturalism' assuming the fact that it remains a difficult task.

3.1 The Emergence of Multiculturalism

It is well-known in pre-history as well as in recorded history that human groups knowing about the existence of other groups, and seen as different from themselves think about their own group identity by contrasting themselves with others. Each group having distinct attributes central to the framing of group attributes are what we might call notions of culture (Eade *et al.*7).

Many anthropologists in the early twentieth century have depicted the culture of a society which is very different from their own culture. But much arguably this tradition went back to Herodotus' accounts. For instance, in the *Histories*, he recounts an anecdote in which the Persian King Darius questions the Greeks and the Callataie about their funeral practices. The former prefer to cremate their dead, the latter to eat them, and each is revolted by the other, "one can see by this what custom can do" writes Herodotus, "and Pindar in my opinion, was right when he called it 'King of all'." Besides, the European tradition can be traced in writings on the inhabitants of the New World from the early sixteenth century onwards or before medieval writers' depictions of the barbarians they encounter in Ireland and Wales (Crowder 22; Eade *et al.* 7).

One might think that the notion of multiculturalism did exist in pre-modern societies though it is not conceivable since pre-modern understandings of cultural difference were quite different from modern understandings even if similarities do exist between modern and pre-modern accounts. Most pre-modern accounts of other societies do not distinguish between 'culture' and other features of the observed society. However, conquest in pre-modern conditions led to assimilation. For instance, the Anglo-Welsh gentry of the twelfth century assimilated into the culture, economy and polity of their imperial conquerors (Eade *et al.* 9).

These accounts are definitely not based on any notion of distinct peoples belonging to 'whole cultures' because the subordinate could not ask for any cultural respect. But exceptions did exist: the practice of co-option included deliberate preservation of communal identity. A good example of this is the Ottoman conquests in Christian Europe which recognised Orthodox populations as distinct communities giving rise to the *millet* which can be regarded according to Nimni¹ as an anticipation of a certain kind of multi-culturality, if not multiculturalism. Nimni points that if the millet system took the form of a democratic institution, it would take easily the characteristics of what is practised in the name of modern multiculturalism. Of course the Ottoman Empire was not a multicultural society even if it accepted Christian and

¹ See *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics* (2005).

Jewish communities granting them greater autonomy and extensive cultural rights, Muslims alone possessed full political rights and citizenship. Another example is found in pre-modern imperial city where communities lived side by side; however, differences between communities are based on religion not culture. They live together but ignore each other's culture (Eade *et al.* 11-12; Parekh 2006: 7).

Accordingly, in pre-modern societies identity was not provided by culture but by religion. In addition, many pre-modern societies included several cultural communities though remain different from contemporary societies. Indeed, minority communities in pre-modern societies accepted their subordination to the dominant communities. The idea of multiculturalism would come in an age of nationalism which came to distinguish 'culture' as a distinct feature of groups (Eade *et al.* 12).

But before going further, one has to understand nationalism; I will simply take the modernist approach. Indeed, modernists see nationalism and nation as completely modern; they also question the conventional causality nation-nationalism, thinking that it is the actions of nationalists which form nations. They explain the emergence of nationalism on the basis of 'modernity'. There are also different variants on modernism which tend to offer a better view of nationalism in contrast with primordialist¹, perennialist² and post-modernist approaches. For instance, one economic form of modernism focuses on the role of industrialism in producing a standard culture for a 'whole society'. The cultural form of modernism considers nations as imagined communities based on secularisation in which communities are seen as cultural groups rather than communities of beliefs (Eade *et al.* 15).

What seems peculiar about the modernist approach to nationalism is that it is interested in culture and identity. Nationalism is seen as the official ideology of a nation state. This entails the adoption of policies of assimilation or repression or even subordination of cultures. Later, pluralism was accepted in the nineteenth century, but only between high culture nations. John Stuart Mill depicts this position as a high-culture or 'civilized' nation having its own territory to form a national culture. This

¹ It stresses the deep historical and cultural roots of nations and nationalism and sees them as old phenomena.

² It finds major continuities in ancient and modern concepts of the nation across different historical periods.

presupposes that a high culture could assimilate other less civilised cultures. Nevertheless, the proliferation of nation-states after the two world wars led to the decline of the 'national culture'; as a result, assimilation and expulsion became violent especially in Europe between 1918 and 1950 (Eade *et al.* 15-16).

The very idea of uniqueness advanced by Herder entails equality between nations; however, it was converted by nationalist ideology into superiority, and otherness became inferiority. Obviously nationalism was destructive of multiculturalism and increasingly violent in imposing assimilation and subordination and even exclusion in much of Europe and overseas during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. A good example of subordination is that of the African- American in the USA. Thus, if we consider that a form of multiculturalism did exist before the advent of the modern state, the idea of multiculturalism could not subsist in the era of nationalism because of the rise of political nationalism which involved the imposition of a set of cultural values upon diverse groups in a given territory (Eade *et al.* 16-17).

The idea of multiculturalism was first anticipated in the national cultural autonomy programme of the Austro- Marxists. In fact, the late Hasburgh Empire¹ was a modern state in which more than one language was spoken. For instance in the cities of Bohemia and Vienna the state could not pursue a policy of assimilation into the dominant ethnic group and culture in particular German- Czech relations. The state was expected to address the problem of permanent minorities, of increased levels of migration and to face the national demands expressed in territorial terms in order to avoid state collapse and fragmentation. The response to this came from the Austrian Socialist Party because Marxists were opposed to the break-up of the Hasburgh Empire. This led Otto Bauer and Karl Renner² into devising a programme of national-cultural autonomy conferring a degree of autonomy upon a concept of culture in which nationality, above all in terms of language, was seen as central (Eade *et al.* 19).

¹ It collapsed at the end of the First World War.

² Both were giants within the Austrian Social Democratic Party in the first half of the 20th century, Renner served as the first chancellor of republic Austria in 1918-1919 and was the first president of the second Austrian republic from 1945-1950; Bauer was the party's official leader throughout the inter-war-years.

This programme was really ambitious since it granted explicit recognition of national difference on individualism. Clearly, Bauer and Renner drew the conclusion that with democratisation and socialism, a large number of people would take part in national cultural life. Moreover, under the late Hasburgh Empire, language censuses were organized to identify both German and Czech. One might argue that the premises of distinct languages and cultures being unique and accorded equal respect were made manifest (Eade *et al.* 20).

Nevertheless, the Austro-Marxist theory of nationality as culture has been criticised especially by critics of multiculturalism though Bauer and Renner were not actually interested in multiculturalism in the modern sense, their principal concern was about depoliticising national difference, and thereby, to preserve a politics based on class rather than ethnic identity. Suffice it to say at this point that these early forms of multiculturalism were to de-politicise the national question, not to accord full recognition to equally valued and distinct cultures (Eade *et al.* 20-21).

It is worth restating that multiculturalism becomes manifest only when historical conditions were possible, and more precisely in liberal democratic Western states being wholly established as nation-states with homogenous cultures eclipsing therefore pre-modern cultural diversity. Thus, contemporary multicultural societies emerged as a reaction against the culturally homogenising nation- state.

More significantly, the second half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of intellectual and political movements representing practices and ways of life different from the dominant culture and that were united in refusing society's homogenisation and assimilation views. Despite their own differences as they represented diverse groups like the indigenous peoples, old and new immigrants and feminists, they were seeking recognition of their identity- related differences¹. They asked for the acceptance, respect and even public affirmation of their difference. Their claims represented a struggle for freedom and dignity and viewed by their critics as a cultural *laissez-faire* and self-defeating celebration of difference for its own sake. The

¹ The term identity refers to characteristics that define an individual or a group.

debate arising from these two views constitutes the discourse surrounding the politics of recognition (Parekh 2006: 2).

These movements preoccupied with the issues of identity and difference are more often included in the term multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism is clearly not about difference and identity; it encompasses movements that are embedded in culture. It is merely about cultural diversity¹; thus, it is part of the politics of recognition and also a distinct movement. Clearly, contemporary multicultural societies emerged thanks to the spread of liberal and democratic ideas; and more importantly since minority groups asked for equal political rights including the right to participate in shaping the cultural life of the wider society. If we consider the emergence of multiculturalism as a movement, it first appeared in the United States of America where different cultural groups lived. The American society had for a long time imposed a single national culture on its population. However, as a nation of immigrants, the United States could not assimilate distinct groups even if it offered “a great asylum for diverse people but it has not always been a great refuge for diverse cultures which ...at best have been kept marginal to the mainstream” (Parekh 2006: 5).

So, the 1960s were definitely characterized by the black struggle whose leaders were asking for the recognition of their distinct ethnic identity, later joined by other ethnic minorities declaring America multicultural. Other countries such as Australia and Canada were committed to multiculturalism in the early 1970s as a consequence of immigrants not able to assimilate. This was broadly the case in Britain where South and Afro- Caribbean immigrants refused in the 1960s to assimilate, placed multiculturalism on the public agenda. So, all these societies witnessed the emergence of multiculturalism as a political and ideological movement which rejects assimilationist views of the wider society (Parekh 2006: 5).

3.2 Defending Multiculturalism

Liberal culturalists are fervent advocate of minority rights essential to the protection of distinctive cultural communities whose survival is highly dependent on the freedom

¹ It means cultural differences.

and equality of their individual members. However, liberal culturalists are mainly concerned with the rights of national minorities¹. As stated earlier, Kymlicka developed his theory of national minority rights in his book *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989). His claim is that individual freedom is related to membership in a national community, and that group-specific rights are capable of promoting equality between dominant and non-dominant nations in a multinational state (Murphy 62-63).

Clearly, Kymlicka drew on the liberal thought of Kant who values individual autonomy, and John Stuart Mill who thinks that we should be free to revise our beliefs about how to lead a good life. Therefore, Kymlicka pointed out that individuals should be left free to choose valuable lives and be able to choose between different options since they have the capacity to understand the meaning and value of these options². He concluded that this is made possible when an individual has rights and freedoms and has access to a societal culture³. Societal culture offers its members cultural contexts of choice in order to re-evaluate the ways of life (Murphy 63).

This argument in favor of the defense of minority rights finds its application according to liberal culturalists in multinational states; it offers a defense of minority self-determination grounded in the principles of equality and individual autonomy⁴. Moreover, national minorities are often at disadvantage in comparison with the dominant culture, thus the solution is to grant them the right to self-government which would provide them with the means to sustain and protect their own languages, institutions and communal identities (Murphy 64-65).

For classical liberals the state must remain neutral with respect to questions of cultural diversity, this is referred to by Kymlicka as a policy of 'benign neglect', meaning that the state does not promote the identities of ethno-cultural groups, it is not even hostile towards them, but it leaves them free to pursue their interest within the private sphere. However, liberal culturalists react to the fact that liberal states already

¹ Kymlicka makes a difference between national minorities which include indigenous people and regional groups, and ethnic minorities who are immigrant groups.

² Kymlicka develops these ideas in *Multiculturalism Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995).

³ He means that the individual belongs to a national community that is a nation.

⁴ Liberals in the post-war period assumed that liberal states were mononational states, so they dismissed claims of national minorities.

promote the interests and identities of dominant culture; hence the necessity to grant in a multinational state national minorities the right to self-government and the right to defend their own distinctive societal cultures otherwise that would mean violating the principle of neutrality and fairness. A stronger argument advanced by liberal culturalists is that people are attached to their own culture, which serves as a key locus of their sense of identity, dignity and self-respect. However, Kymlicka's defense of national minority rights excludes thereby ethnic minority. Moddod argued that Kymlicka's 'multinational bias' yields a theoretical approach to multiculturalism that cannot speak to the experience of immigrant minorities in Europe (Murphy 65-66).

More significantly, Parekh suggested that Kymlicka has established a hierarchy of deserving and undeserving cultural groups, where only national minorities are granted cultural rights while immigrants because they voluntarily immigrated, are expected to forgo any claim to special rights (Parekh 2006: 102-03). Taking these critics into consideration, one has to acknowledge that though Kymlicka argues that immigrants should integrate into the societal culture of their host nation, he also refuses that immigrants should be expected to jettison every aspect of their distinctive cultural heritage. Moreover, Kymlicka just like Parekh and Modood advocates integration that encompasses special rights and recognize minority practices and identities. Again, integration is seen by the three thinkers as a process of mutual adjustment amongst host nation and newcomers, which helps ensure that common institutions provide the same degree of respect, recognition, and accommodation of the identities and practices of the majority group (Murphy 66).

Another argument in favor of multiculturalism is undoubtedly the value of cultural diversity. However, sometimes cultural diversity is regarded only as a source of entertainment that enhances our quality of life without changing our views about how our lives should be led. Cultural diversity for multiculturalists has a fundamental value since it provides us with resources that can change our views of life. Parekh is deeply committed to the flourishing of cultural diversity, he believes firmly that exposure to other cultures is beneficial since it not only enriches our knowledge of the human condition, but also offers us new perspectives allowing us to question and even

revise our cultural practices and preconceptions. This argument is rightly summarized by Parekh: “Access to a broad array of alternative cultural resources . . . is an important constituent and condition of human freedom . . . in that it encourages us to step outside the confines of our own cultural structure, to see their limitations and their contingency, and to explore alternative ways of living and of giving meaning to our lives”(167).

Though cultural diversity has been criticized by many critics in particular those who view only the aesthetic value of cultural diversity as Bannerji¹ who considers that multiculturalism “grounded in the value of minority differences is little more than an exercise in the politics of distraction and containment that keeps far more pressing issues of minority socio-economic and political marginalization safely off the agenda” (qtd. in Murphy 72). Despite these criticisms, there is much to be said in favor of cultural diversity as a source of personal enrichment according to multiculturalists. Indeed, multiculturalists advocate also politics of inclusion in order to address the issue of under-representation of ethnic, religious and racial minorities. Ann Phillips² recommends a variety of minority targeted representation policies. For multiculturalists, every citizen should enjoy an equal capacity for meaningful political self-determination. Moreover, representation rights help equalize the capacity for self-determination enjoyed by members of minority and majority cultures (Murphy 72).

Moreover, multiculturalists justify special representation rights on the grounds that it would increase inter-communal trust in societies coping with ethnic minorities and will enhance the perceived legitimacy of the democratic process. However, this argument advanced by multiculturalists has been profoundly criticized because of its limitations related to the realities of democratic majoritarianism and the constraints posed by party discipline and executive domination of the policy process (Murphy 73).

Another outstanding argument in favor of multiculturalism is undoubtedly the idea of the politics of recognition. Indeed, recognition is viewed to be partially constitutive of identity, in other words that our identities are partly shaped by their

¹ See *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (2000).

² See *Democracy and Difference* (1993).

recognition or non-recognition by others. Parekh sums up rightly this idea arguing that the recognition of the importance of our identity contributes significantly to our sense of well-being and that we are equally valued members of society (Parekh 2006: 8).

Charles Taylor¹ goes further stating that: “Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.” He adds that “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need”(qtd. in Murphy 79-80). Thus, a politics of recognition, as defended by multiculturalists means recognizing and respecting people’s distinctive cultural identities, it is a politics of recognizing and accommodating difference, also called by theorists a politics of difference. This politics of difference advocated by multiculturalists departs from a purely liberal- egalitarian vision of society where identity differences are neglected and all individuals are governed by the same rules. As other arguments in favor of multiculturalism, the politics of recognition has been criticized mainly for insufficiently guaranteeing the rights of vulnerable group members.

At this stage, it is difficult to make a case for multiculturalism relying only on its defenders or critics since the arguments advanced are neither sufficient nor fully developed as it might be. Moreover, I have to recognize that questions about multiculturalism are difficult to answer in the abstract, so I should provide a better understanding of multiculturalism as an ideological concept, and also as a policy in the following chapters before pretending to make a real case for multiculturalism.

3.3 A Tentative Definition of Multiculturalism

The term ‘multiculturalism’ is undoubtedly a very controversial concept as it has different meanings; it has been highly discussed by academics and political theorists. Indeed, public debates about multiculturalism have revealed difficulties in defining it. According to Stanley Fish² “multiculturalism is an incoherent concept which cannot be meaningfully either affirmed or rejected” (qtd. Murphy 12). Even Kymlicka admits that

¹ See *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (1994).

² See *Boutique Multiculturalism* (1998).

the term is so broadly applied that it easily lends itself to misunderstanding and confusion. The literature on multiculturalism is so profuse that it also constitutes one of its greatest weaknesses.

Even some critics of multiculturalism have tried to demonstrate that it is a nebulous-power-word just as words like ‘racism’ and ‘equality’¹. They argue that multiculturalism is rationally inadequate, but since it can be used in communication, not in rational discourse, its irrationalities can only be explained from a social representation perspective². Moreover, multiculturalism has multiple meanings, it is an emotional and powerful word yet it is used frequently in public discourse, everyone in Britain uses this word, the government, politicians, academics, judges and even the United Nations Organization (Kneen 9-11).

It has been demonstrated that from a rational perspective³ the term multiculturalism is very vague since there are many different definitions of the term. For instance, the most popular definition is to be found in some dictionaries as being “the preservation of different cultures within one country or society.” Some experts express in defining multiculturalism a type of commonality that holds separate groups together. Some dictionaries define it as “celebrating diversity by promoting recognition of differences”; and others as being the existence of equality between different groups. For instance, *The Chambers Dictionary* defines it as “including the fact of there not being prejudice and discrimination.”⁴ Moreover, Parekh’s first definition of multiculturalism is what he terms the ‘relativist view’ of multiculturalism, it is the idea of there being separate cultures, all living by their own norms and that they cannot be judged by others (Kneen 18-22).

Therefore, the multiplicity of definitions reveal the presence of irrationalities especially when the term is used in discourse, it is difficult to know exactly what the person using the term is referring to. Hence, according to some critics it is better to define the term multiculturalism from a social representation perspective, which takes

¹ These two concepts will be deeply tackled in chapters two and three.

² Social representation theory views the meaning of terms as incorporating social aspects.

³ The meaning of the word is its definition.

⁴ One can note that these two terms are used to define racism.

an objective view of what is signified or represented, and to turn something abstract into something almost concrete and to transfer what is in the mind to something existing in the physical world. For instance, Marcuse¹ refers to ‘magic-ritual-language’ in which images have replaced concepts and can exert power over people. Thus, multiculturalism is frequently represented by a happy visual image of racially diverse children holding hands and singing together (Kneen 161).

Furthermore, a social representation analysis explains the emotional and social control that the term multiculturalism exerts on people and how social forces are contained within the very meaning of the term multiculturalism. This analysis constitutes clearly an attack on multiculturalism as a purely ideological concept and also as a political policy. Accordingly, it has to be definitely discarded as being non valid. Likewise, multiculturalism is a concept strongly linked to the concepts of assimilation and integration. First, integration represents the mid-point between assimilation and multiculturalism, both immigrants and indigenous people agree on the same political values, and adapt to each other’s cultural identities. However, it has been often employed in multicultural societies suggesting assimilation. Modood argues that multiculturalism and integration are complementary ideas and that integration should take a multicultural rather than an assimilative form (Baglieri Campo 17).

Sir Bernhard Crick² suggests a definition of the word integration which makes little difference about what is meant by multiculturalism. Indeed, for him integration is “the co-existence of communities and unimpeded movement between them, it is not assimilation” (qtd. in Von Meien 4). On the other hand, assimilation refers to a situation in which immigrants are expected to adapt completely to the values of the indigenous people. The term assimilation is, therefore, more radical since it requires complete adjustment to the host society and immigrants become as much as their new compatriots. For Modood assimilation refers to the situation where immigrants abandon their identity in order to merger with the host society. In other words, Modood describes the process of assimilation between social groups as ‘one-way’ and

¹ See *One-Dimensional Man* (1964).

² A British political theorist and adviser to Labour Party in the 1980’s.

that of integration as ‘two-way’. All in all, while integration requires a process of adaptation into society and acceptance of rules without completely surrendering one’s own background, assimilation is a process of complete adjustment (Eade *et al.*139; Baglieri Campo17).

Generally speaking, multiculturalism as a concept often related to integration and assimilation provides for the equal recognition of all cultures, whether indigenous or immigrated. Modood sees equal respect and social recognition as central to multiculturalism in order to achieve integration. Besides, multiculturalism, as an ideology, differs from integration since it recognizes that groups are different, and that they will change the society into which they are integrated in different ways. Multiculturalism is where the processes of integration are seen working differently for different groups; integration, therefore, cannot consist of a single template, hence the ‘multi’, ‘culturalism’ means that groups are rather marked by certain forms of group identities. This is why some suggested replacing the term multiculturalism by ‘pluralistic integration’ (Baglieri Campo17; Eade *et al.*140).

Furthermore, multiculturalism has to take into account the equal-respect approach. Indeed, Taylor argues that the idea of equal respect is the key idea of the politics of recognition that is of multiculturalism, meaning to grant group identities a public status. For Parekh the concept of equality has to be applied to groups and not just individuals. Thanks to equality in treatment and equal respect, the identity of the dominant group is universalized in the public space. According to this approach, multiculturalism can be defined as “the challenging, the dismantling and the remaking of public identities in order to achieve an equality of citizenship that is neither merely individualistic nor premised on assimilation” (Eade *et al.* 141-43).

Now, we have to consider the contribution of an influential British thinker to the debate on multiculturalism. Indeed, Stuart Hall¹ has been for a long time interested in questions of race and ethnicity². For him, multiculturalism is like race or ethnicity, a

¹ He was a cultural theorist, the founder of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, also known as the god-father of multiculturalism.

² I will tackle these concepts in chapter two.

much contested term which can only be deployed as Derrida would suggest ‘undererasia’. He argues that the term multiculturalism is embedded with negative meanings. For him multiculturalism is often equated with an essentialized notion of ethnicity in which ethnic groups are competing for resources while each individual is integrated into a pluralist space (Drew 171).

Stuart Hall just as Raymond Williams sees language as an unavoidable game of meaning-making. So, he uses language or what he calls ‘the discursive turn’ to circumvent the negative meanings embedded in the term itself. Considering this, Hall prefers the notion of an ‘adjectival multiculturalism’, that is the multicultural question. He prefers, therefore, to use the term adjectivally, not substantially to describe a society that has been ‘mongrelized’ by the variety of peoples, because as he said Britain has become a multicultural society, but not if it is organized in a hierarchical and essentializing way, that is between different ethnicities. Thus, multiculturalism has to be used in the sense that there are different cultures, this is why, Hall explains that nobody would object the use of the phrase ‘multicultural society’, so used adjectivally, multiculturalism refers to cultural diversity or cultural plurality (Hall 2000:8).

Accordingly, the term multiculturalism can operate in very different contexts and have very different meanings. It can be defined in different senses, as an aim, a value, a political policy or a description. Multiculturalism means public policy in a multiethnic society with respect and tolerance for cultural differences. This is prescriptive or normative multiculturalism which has become an important political concept in many countries in the process of forming their contemporary nation, especially in heterogeneous postcolonial societies (Von Meien 3).

Multiculturalism is also a “philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of its institutionalized structures but especially in educational institutions, including the staff, norms and values, curriculum and student body” (Hadjetian 24). The term has also a descriptive aspect, as it describes the current

situation in a country such as Britain which has cultural pluralism due to a tradition¹. Sometimes this descriptive definition is given as an alternative to theoretical or other definitions. Therefore, multiculturalism could be an aim, and in some contexts it is referred to as a policy, whereas the descriptive sense is the aim of the policy.

In view of all these definitions of multiculturalism, it is no wonder that attempting to retain one definition is a difficult task. Nevertheless, Parekh provides a definition which he terms ‘the interactive, dialogical or pluralist definition’ that all cultures can benefit from dialogue with others, and through this dialogue, the hegemony of the dominant culture is challenged. For Parekh² multiculturalism is “basically a celebration and philosophical justification of multicultural society” (qtd. in Kneen 25). And with such a definition, mostly derived from his approach to multiculturalism, we can very likely apprehend the sensitive issue of multiculturalism.

¹ It is in the descriptive sense that the adjective ‘multicultural’ is frequently used.

² See *Identity, Ethnic Diversity and Community Cohesion*, edited by Margaret Wetherell et al. (2007).

CHAPTER II:DEFINING MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN

Broadly speaking, ‘multicultural’ society refers to a society that is characterized by cultural diversity. Indeed, countries such as Australia and Canada have been committed from the early 1970s to multiculturalism just as Britain in the 1960s, as a consequence of immigrants not willing to assimilate. These societies clearly saw the emergence of multiculturalism as a political and ideological movement rejecting assimilationist views.

A distinction should be made between multicultural society and multiculturalist society. A multicultural society is made up of two or more cultural communities in which cultural diversity is reflected. It would evolve into a multiculturalist¹ society in the case cultural demands of its different communities are respected and fulfilled (Parekh 2006: 6).

From this distinction one might state that Britain whose ethnic minorities represent just over 13 per cent of the population² is multicultural but the questions facing Britain today are of course related to cultural rights of minorities and whether public recognition should be given to all cultures or should Britain privilege the dominant culture. These questions would find an answer in the context of multicultural Britain where there is still resistance from the Conservatives to see it as multicultural but in which there are strong political claims for cultural diversity.

Indeed, in a globalized world, both the individual and the nation-state are facing the challenge of diversity and are, therefore, seeking ways for creating an adequate society in which both social majorities and minorities are treated fairly. Britain has deliberately responded to the challenge of diversity by adopting mainly multiculturalism³. Given the presence of national and ethnic minorities, Britain has tackled the issue of diversity by taking into consideration claims for the recognition of

¹ Its antonym is monoculturalist society which tends to assimilate cultural communities into the dominant culture.

² According to the 2011 census; while it represented 6 per cent according to the 2001 census.

³ She has also responded to the challenge of diversity by adopting European integration and devolution.

ethnic, religious and cultural identities in the public sphere. This demand in identity politics has been coherently stated by Tony Blair and Anthony Giddens¹, who believe that identity politics is a way of achieving solidarity, and that a traditional British national identity can be compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism (Nam-Kook 14).

Discussion of multiculturalism cannot be separated from issues of immigration and race, and inevitably of the question of identity. Questions of immigration, race, ethnicities and national identity are hardly more relevant and prevalent than in Britain. The debate is highly relevant as Britain defines itself as a multicultural nation where cultural diversity and cultural pluralism are its defining features. The question, therefore, is how people of multiple cultures and ethnicities should manage to live together. Besides, one cannot fully understand multiculturalism without paying attention to the role of the notion of 'race' in the debates on immigration. Many attempts have been made to prevent race from becoming a socially divisive issue but paradoxically resulted in anchoring it strongly to the understanding of the challenge of immigration. However, beyond this question lingers the role of the state in defining the responsibilities of the individual and the whole society, and regulating race relations in a society that has always been since the post-war era racially constituted. The state has also to define what is meant by British culture and identity.

Discussing multicultural Britain, therefore, requires us to emphasize historical factors that explain the embrace of multiculturalism as a response to cultural diversity that resulted from post-colonial immigration. Indeed, the immigration debate gave rise to other related issues: citizenship and belonging and the racialization of the immigration debate. Questions of citizenship and belonging remained unresolved for decades, so an immigration policy could not actually be articulated. Although Commonwealth citizens were all granted the same rights and had an equal status, not all of them were equally desired as immigrants. Thus, the debates on immigration were about whether or not to accept 'coloured' people, and the main challenge for the British state was to establish good 'race relations'.

¹ He is a British sociologist who developed the *Third Way*, a political philosophy which seeks to redefine social democracy for a globalized era.

The objective of this chapter is twofold. First, to introduce a more theoretical level to explain albeit briefly key concepts related to multiculturalism, that is race, racism, ethnicity and finally identity. Second, to explain the way in which these key concepts have been used in the British context, I have chosen to draw on theories set out by Stuart Hall, Jacques Derrida and others in order to build a clear reasoning on questions of race, ethnicity and identity. My argument is that multiculturalism in Britain is too much intertwined with such concepts so that one cannot conceive a multicultural Britain without taking into account all the debates surrounding immigration, race and identity. Thus, this chapter addresses the question of cultural pluralism in post-war Britain and how Britain has responded to the challenges of immigration especially that in 1998 Britain celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the *SS Empire Windrush* which brought immigrants from the Caribbean to Britain and marked significantly the beginning of the post-war black immigration to Britain.

In what follows, I will focus on questions of race and racism from historical as well as ideological perspectives; but since our concern is not to outline a theory of race and racism, I suggest to scrutinize the political practices which developed around these issues, looking at the ways in which these practices have been reproduced inside the state. The first section will be devoted to the immigration debate which took place after the war, and of course the racialization of this debate which marked the 60s and 70s. The next section will discuss how the notion of race has framed the debates, how racism became legitimized and the role inscribed to anti-racism in this framework. Finally, this picture of multicultural Britain would be very incomplete without giving some attention to national identity as an essential component of multiculturalism, and of course the question of Britishness. Accordingly, this chapter has the ambition to clarify and answer key questions though some of them will be elaborated in the next chapters.

1. The Immigration Debate in Britain

Britain has always conceived of itself as culturally homogeneous but the impact of globalization and immigration has simply blurred its homogeneous origin. Britain was formerly an empire and as a European nation-state, she faces simultaneous challenges from immigration and devolution. Since 1945 Britain has addressed the issue of cultural diversity through rationales. In fact, the United Kingdom is made up of national minorities: the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish in Northern Ireland; and ethnic minorities: the Caribbean African and South Asians¹. Obviously, national minorities are different from ethnic minorities since the latter claim the right of multiculturalism in order to preserve their cultural identity while national minorities claim the right of multiculturalism as well as the right to represent their group in the territory in which they reside (Nam-Kook 13).

Britain has been characterized by its openness to migrants. It has been deeply affected by migrants throughout its history and many of them have helped create the complex tapestry that today is seen to be 'Britishness'. However, Britain treated post-war immigrants from its former colonies and many that were still colonies until the 1960s as if they were 'natives'. Indeed, Favell² explained that, "Britain ruled by letting the natives be as they were, civilizing them through...institutions that were... often modifications of the ones they found in the native culture...Britain saw its Empire as a dominion of generic British civilization in which all the cultures of the world could flourish under the never-setting sun" (qtd. in Rattansi21).

Statistics reveal that today Britain has more than 5 million immigrants both from European Union and non European Union countries³. Between 1945 and 1951 European refugees entered Britain since she privileged the entry of Europeans in order to maintain a 'white continent'. There was a second wave of immigration between 1953 and 1961 as Britain experienced an economic growth. New comers were from

¹ They came from the New Commonwealth as opposed to the Old Commonwealth which included Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

² A sociologist whose research on migration studies have contributed to debates on citizenship, multiculturalism and integration.

³ Eurostat, Population by citizenship foreigners 2003-2010.

European countries like Italy and Ireland, and later immigration from Commonwealth countries started especially from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, West Africa, Hong Kong and Cyprus (Baglieri Campo 10).

It is worth mentioning that from 1948 to 1962 Britain adopted a very liberal migration regime ever seen in the world. Indeed, it caused considerable criticism among politicians who saw the problem posed by black and Asian immigrants in terms of 'race' and 'colour'. This led to the introduction of migration controls. What marked even symbolically the migration of 'coloured' people was the arrival on June 1948 of the *Empire Windrush* which brought around 500 hundreds immigrants from Jamaica. Then, immigrants from South Asia started after the partition of India in 1947 (Baglieri Campo 11).

However, immigration has become a major issue by the end of the 1950s which marked the end of the post-war consensus and the racialization of the immigration debate by the New Right. Favell claims that in the immediate post-war period immigration was largely uncontrolled and was not seen as a disrupter of national identity. The turning point for the immigration debate in terms of problematisation of 'race' was what became known as Notting Hill race riots of 1958. These riots between white working class people and immigrants were interpreted as 'race riots' and the political conflict became defined along the skin colour lines. The politicisation of 'race' reached a climax during these riots.

1.1 The Impact of Post-War Consensus on Immigration

In the post-war period the issue of immigration control was not really on the political agenda of Britain. Indeed, the British Empire was rather a symbol of multi-racial unity and cooperation. Thus, Britain would not have taken the risk to undermine its relations with commonwealth governments. Moreover, Britain was deeply committed to fair treatment for minorities; therefore, she adopted a policy of welcoming immigration as a consequence of the labour shortage. Accordingly, the Conservative and the Labour Parties agreed upon a consensus which prevented immigration from becoming an issue. They reached a broad consensus on economic and social policies. In fact, this

consensus was essentially based on Beveridge's social plan and Keynesian economics which established a mixed economy, full employment and the welfare state (Nam-Kook 25). Thus, I will show that the legacy of the post-war consensus and the philosophy of the welfare state did have an influence on immigration and multicultural issues. A central starting point is the Beveridge's report of 1942 *Social Insurance and Allied Services* which constituted the foundations of the welfare state and was accepted in the 1944 White Paper of the Churchill Government.

Generally speaking, the post-war consensus included three pillars of social policies: Beveridge's Social Insurance Plan (1942), Butler's Education Act (1944), and Aneurin Bevan's National Health Service (1948). Interestingly, all these policies were meant to improve conditions of living and make of Britain a prosperous nation. Indeed, the 1944 Education Act made education compulsory through government inspection and the National Health Service secured medical aid for every citizen. These social policies, undeniably, did constitute the spirit of the post-war era which inspired to a considerable degree immigration policy. The post-war consensus was mainly built on the British welfare state which was imbued by a sense of social solidarity and induced by the war. All the changes taking place in wartime and the social reforms were grasped by the Beveridge's report. Indeed, Beveridge's social plan was meant to attack five giant evils: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness which destroy wealth and corrupt men (Nam-Kook 26-28).

Beveridge's conception of health service and full employment is clearly derived from his definition of liberty. For him "liberty means more than freedom from the arbitrary power of government. It means freedom from economic servitude to want and squalor and other social evils. It means freedom from arbitrary power in any form" (qtd. in Nam-Kook 30). Beveridge's vision was neither capitalist nor socialist, nor even particularly liberal but classical republican. His conception of society is one in which all citizens would actively participate in regular work, modest rewards, moral cohesion, family life, communal provision against need, stoic virtue, and mutual self-policing.

The question at stake here is whether Beveridge when writing his report had in mind Commonwealth countries. Apparently, he did emphasize the common heritage of British culture without recognition of differences though he argued in *Why I am a Liberal* (1945) that “in seeking security against all these evils, the plan can be combined with the British community and those who in other lands have inherited the British tradition, which have a vital service to render to human progress” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 30). What seems evident, too, is that the post-war consensus did have a positive effect on people coming in the 1950s and early 1960s who were treated equally as members of the British race or nation. Therefore, we can hazard a conclusion that Beveridge’s ultimate aim was making the British nation prosper regardless of colour and race, hence his use of the words ‘British nation’ and ‘British race’. This is clearly his republican ideal of a British nation. One can notice that later Beveridge became deeply committed to movements for the settlement of refugees, and also movements against apartheid and encouraged mixed marriages as a means of dissolving colour prejudice (Nam-Kook 31).

Immigration to Britain started determinedly by the end of the 1940s. Indeed, almost 500,000 coming from the New Commonwealth immigrated to Britain. This number of new immigrants did bring substantial change to British society if compared to the number of 30,000 ethnic minorities that already settled in Britain for a very long time. Those new comers entered Britain as British subjects thanks to the 1948 British Nationality Act which recognised the right of commonwealth people to enter the United Kingdom as ‘Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies’ (Fomina 2010: 63).

Some have commented that Britain imported immigrants to increase the labour force during the post-war reconstruction, and that it had fostered notions of Britain as the ‘mother country’ through the introduction of the 1948 British Nationality Act. In fact, the 1948 British Nationality Act did have a consequent effect on British society and politics. It operated a considerable transformation of the United Kingdom which became a multi-racial society, though its effect ceased when the British government issued the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act which imposed restriction on

immigration (Rattansi 22). It is important at this stage to understand the legal status provided by the 1948 British Nationality Act for immigrants from the New Commonwealth and try to see whether the government and the parliament at that time expected the effects of this Act on immigration.

One can expectedly find an answer in the parliamentary debates taking place between May and July 1948. In fact, the British Nationality Act came as a response to the 1946 Canadian Citizenship Act which declared a Canadian citizen to be a British subject. Therefore, the Canadian legislation gave up the feudal concept of subjecthood¹ and replaced it by the new concept of citizenship acquired by the individual; whereas subjecthood meant allegiance of crown and subject. Moreover, what characterized subjecthood was indivisibility which presupposed free movement of subjects throughout the Empire and the Commonwealth. Accordingly, the Canadian citizenship legislation made a break with the principle of indivisibility of subjecthood which guaranteed the indivisibility of identical rights and privileges between British subjects. This new development led the British government to issue a legislation which would review the principle of indivisibility of subjecthood under the name of ‘Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies’ (Nam-Kook 37).

Ultimately, the British government through the introduction of this new concept of citizenship in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Countries wanted to emphasize the tradition of *Civis Britannicus Sum*², which is translated into “I am a British citizen”. It was first used by Lord Palmerston in a speech to Parliament in 1850 he delivered in defence of his foreign policy, stating that a British subject just like a Roman saying *Civis Romanus Sum*, in whatever land shall feel confident that the watchful eyes of England will protect him against injustice and wrong.

Thus, the issue of immigration from the New Commonwealth was not at all a concern for anyone in Britain. The legislation permitted to any British subject regardless of race and colour to enter and settle freely in Britain. However, some

¹ All those born within the Empire were British subjects.

² This Latin phrase was taken from Cicero ‘*In Vereem*’ when he described an event of a man being beaten who defends himself with the word ‘*Civis Romanus Sum*’; he believed his claim to Roman citizenship was enough to protect him from torture and death.

members of Parliament such as Viscount Maughan did hint to eventual immigration problem. He declared, “One other matter I wish to discuss is the right of entry into this country. That may, in the future, be of great importance”(qtd. in Nam-Kook 37).

It is probable that problems linked to immigration occurred later since this Act considered a citizen of the UK and Colonies as one category. This question too was debated, but Labour Lord Chancellor Viscount Jowitt answered:

We are responsible for the peace, order and good government of our colonial territories. In a sense we are trustees for the people of those territories. In those circumstances, is it right that we should differentiate between our people and the people for whom we are trustees? We think it is not right. Of course, as a colony achieves responsible government, they will have to be a new species of citizenship. (qtd. in Nam-Kook 38)

Other members of parliament opposed the original draft of the Bill on the question of ‘Citizenship’. Indeed, Conservative Lord Altrincham opposed the concept of citizenship preferring to retain the status of ‘British Subject’ as he believed in the superiority of subjecthood over citizenship in keeping the principle of indivisibility (Nam-Kook 39).

In addition, citizenship of the UK and Colonies suggested an assimilation of the Colonies with the UK, and for MP Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe, “the creation of a separate citizenship is an encouragement to differentiation between various classes of British subjects, in contradiction to the metropolitan tradition of giving hospitality to everyone from every part of the Commonwealth” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 42). Nevertheless, after all these debates around the concept of citizenship, an agreement between all the Parties was reached upon maintaining the tradition of *Civis Britannicus Sum* and keeping the principle of indivisibility of the British Empire under ‘The Citizenship of the UK and Colonies’.

All in all, immigration from the New Commonwealth was not an issue at that time since the ideal of *Civis Britannicus Sum* prevailed and continued until the 1950s under the Conservative government. The attachment to this cherished ideal was clearly expressed by the Conservative Colonial Secretary Henry Hopkins in 1954 before the

House of Commons:“In a world in which restrictions on personal movement and immigration have increased, we can still take pride in the fact that a man can say *Civis Britannicus Sum* whatever his colour may be, and we take pride in the fact that he wants and can come to the Mother Country” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 43).

However, by the end of the 1950s Britain witnessed economic and political decay which culminated with the 1958 race riots. Indeed, approximately 4,500 people were involved in the Nottingham riots between August 23 and 30. Then, the riots moved to West London in areas such as Notting Hill and Notting Dale. It is worth mentioning that there were about 40,000 ‘coloured’ people in London in 1958 and that 4,000 coloured people lived in Nottingham which represented 1.2 per cent of the total population of the city. This area was once a white, working-class but the neighbourhood changed when West Indians settled there (Nam-Kook 43).

The riots started out of discontent, the white population suffered from unemployment, knowing that in 1958 unemployment was almost half a million on a national level. These riots were perpetrated by white residents against West Indians who retaliated; the consequences were damaging since extreme right movements fuelled these riots particularly the Mosley’s movement¹, such movements were inciting white population especially in South London areas to take actions against black population and calling to stop coloured immigration.

In 1958 West Indians were astonished to see such violence directed towards them because they did really see themselves as British citizens having a common language and religion. Moreover, the social and cultural differences were not evident at that time between West Indians and the British. Still, West Indians did have organisations in Nottingham such as the Indian Workers’ Association and the Afro-Asian West Indian Union which criticised the city council’s effort at integration and which claimed the right to participate at Council meetings (Nam-Kook 45).

The government did, of course, respond to these riots by reinforcing an integration mechanism through a local Citizens’ Consultative Committee and the

¹ It targeted Jews in the 1930s and supported Hitler during the war.

appointment of one ethnic liaison officer though both the Conservative government and the Labour Party were unable to see the racial dimension of these riots, and instead were keen to retain a republican colour-blind policy emphasizing the violent side of the riots. These riots revealed certainly the dark face of some people in Britain who supported anti-immigration stance; for instance, the *Daily Mirror* on 2 September 1958 asserted that: "Our law must be amended so that they can be thrown out of Britain. In the West Indies people take for too rosy a view of the Mother Country. They have heard about milk-honey welfare state, with its golden pavements, pensions for all and false teeth on the cheap" (qtd. in Nam-Kook 45).

As mentioned earlier, the reinforcement of the Citizens Consultative Committee permitted to tackle housing shortage, discrimination in employment and youth problem in Nottingham city. The result was obviously satisfying as the integration mechanism was a success and later praised by the West Indian High Commissioner in 1961 and the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants in 1967 for its racial harmony and progress in the settlement of 'coloured' people. Finally, the race problem which aroused in the end of the 1950s was rather tackled in terms of erasing differences rather than recognising them. Integration was privileged to overcome any future problem linked to immigration as formulated by Sheila Patterson¹:

It will be facilitated by the relatively small numbers involved and by the fact that Britain has a unified and democratic social structure which permits of no formal differentiation of minority groups. Accommodation and ultimate integration or assimilation is also likely to be facilitated as the British society adapts itself to its changed role and status within the new multi-racial Commonwealth. (qtd. in Nam-Kook 46)

However, this reasoning proved difficult to sustain at the beginning of the 1960s and more intensively in the late 1960s when British social structure could no longer stand before the flow of new immigrants and the forceful anti-immigration campaign held by Enoch Powell.

¹"A recent West Indian Immigrant". *Race and Class*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1959.

1.2 Immigration Control: Shifting Agenda

Admittedly, the question of immigration control was already in the agenda of the Attlee government in 1950. However, it was the Churchill's government which started between 1951 and 1954 discussing about people coming from the colonies to benefit from the welfare state. Thus, in 1955 the government drafted an Immigration Bill¹ which put restrictions on immigration, and more explicitly the Bill restricted entry to Britain for all those who had a job and a place where to live. Still, there were voices against immigration control; for instance, the *New Statesman*² warned in 1954 that restrictions represent a discrimination against 'coloured' people (Nam-Kook 46).

Therefore, in 1955 British government could see that the number of immigrants had not yet increased significantly to a degree that could harm British social structure. Besides, Britain at that time needed workers for low-paying manual jobs. More significantly, Prime Minister Anthony Eden did not allow such a bill to become legislation as he liked the rhetoric of a new multi-racial Commonwealth.

But the reintroduction of the Bill was justified later as a consequence of the 1958 riots; and then Butler, the Secretary of the Home Office explained that the Commonwealth Immigration Bill³ was meant for preventing social tensions linked to the existence of unassimilated immigrants to happen. Moreover, Indian and Pakistani immigrants entered Britain between 1958 and 1961, so British policy-makers feared to see their number increase in the future⁴. Furthermore, because Britain wanted to join the European Economic Community⁵, immigration control would be made necessary.

Finally, the Bill was published in November 1961 but was criticized by both Parties. Indeed, Gordon Walker, Labour MP for Smethwick, criticized the Bill as a hypocritical one, "It is clothed and cloaked as if there was no racial discrimination

¹ It was adopted only in 1962.

² A British political and cultural magazine founded in 1913 by members of the Socialist Fabian Society as George Bernard Shaw.

³ Britain had enacted Alien Acts in 1905, 1914 and 1919 which regulated the influx of foreigners who were judged undesirable, but these measures were the product of a wartime emergency.

⁴ Knowing that the population of India and Pakistan was 550 million.

⁵ In 1961 the UK applied to join the three communities but President Charles de Gaulle saw British membership as a Trojan horse and vetoed membership.

involved...The net effect of the Bill is that a negligible number of white people will be kept out and almost all those kept out by the Bill will be coloured people.” Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the Labour Party was particularly vehement in his criticism. He believed that the future of world peace was in danger since Britain had to continue to be a world power and keep a wider Commonwealth that would secure this position to Britain. He proceeded that immigration control would put the Commonwealth in danger and thus turn Britain away from worldwide responsibilities. He also argued, “It is a plain anti-Commonwealth Measure in theory and it is a plain anti-colour Measure in practice...I beg the Government now, at this last minute, to drop this miserable, shameful, shabby Bill. Let them think, consult and inquire before they deal another deadly blow at the Commonwealth” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 48). On the other hand, other politicians supported the introduction of the Bill such as Conservative MP Cyril Osborne who argued that, “control is inevitable because of the attraction of our country to the coloured people because of their immense poverty and their low standard of living... We have neither the room nor the resources indefinitely to take all who would like to come. That is a fact which has got to be faced...” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 49).

Ultimately, the Bill passed with 277 to 170 votes as the Conservative government had a majority¹. In the 1964 election, the Labour Party revised its position as its new leader Harold Wilson was more interested in winning the election after thirteen years in the wilderness. In fact, in the 1965 White Paper the government proposed further immigration control through the introduction of some measures like deportation at the Home Secretary’s discretion without a court recommendation, immigrant’s registration with the police, and health checks at the port entry (Nam-Kook 49).

In the meantime the government enacted a series of race relations acts in 1965, 1968 and 1976 in order to promote integration and to outlaw racial incitement and discrimination. Clearly, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act marked the end of post-war Consensus, and more significantly Labour’s shift in 1964, and the 1965

¹ As a consequence of the 1959 election.

White Paper confirmed the end of the republican era. Britain did abandon its traditional and strong ties with Commonwealth Countries and moved towards adopting a 'Little England' stance.

One can argue that this Act marked the end of the second phase of immigration into Britain which started from 1953 to 1961. However, as stated by Spencer¹, the Act did contribute significantly to the creation of a multicultural Britain. If the Act was intended to restrict immigration of 'coloured' people, it did stimulate the growth of Asian and Black communities. In fact, rumours about the enactment of the Act boosted immigration between 1960 and 1962². Moreover, the Act pushed immigrants that came temporarily to Britain to settle down, and led ultimately to the family reunification process. Furthermore, under the Act between 30,000 and 40,000 immigrants entered the country each year. But the Act in itself did for the first time in Britain regulate immigration (Baglieri Campo 12).

In the post-war era, Parties agreed to see immigration from the New Commonwealth as a realization of the ideal of *Civis Britannicus Sum*. Nevertheless, Britain's stance as a multi-racial country did change after the 1958 race riots revealing difficult race relations that policy-makers in the 1940s did not foresee. Some observers would argue that in the 1950s and early 1960s immigrants coming from the New Commonwealth were entitled to residence and political and social rights; therefore, they would claim that race was not a relevant political category. In contrast, radical multiculturalists did see that immigrants were treated in a paternalistic way preventing them from participating in society as equal citizens. In order to resolve problems linked to assimilation of immigrants, two committees were set up in 1962 and 1965, the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee and the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (Baglieri Campo 13-14).

Therefore, integration of immigrants did occur effectively with the help of voluntary associations at the local level rather than national level. Indeed, in the early

¹ *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-racial Britain* (1997).

² Approximately a quarter of a million of Asian and Black immigrants entered Britain according to the Home Office.

1960s settlement of immigrants was considered as a voluntary segregation since it meant a concentration of immigrants in the same places. It was first considered as positive since it prevented frictions with the local population and permitted immigrants to live in a familiar environment; however, later this kind of segregation became a problem for the inhabitants who did no more wish for it and culminated in other problems in the 1980s (Nam-Kook 52).

Finally, 'coloured' immigration was restricted by the implementation from 1962 onwards of the Commonwealth Immigration Acts and Nationality and Citizenship legislation. This legislation made clearly a distinction between the 'coloured' post-colonials and the white from the Old Commonwealth. This shows clearly that British multiculturalism has always had this double approach which married integration of immigrants and further restrictions on 'coloured' immigration (Rattansi 25).

1.3 The New Politics of Immigration: A Citizenship Discourse

It can be said *a priori* that Thatcher's Britain dealt with immigration and multicultural matters according to the challenges posed by economic conditions, but the main question is what ideas did provide the justifiable grounds for laws and policies about immigration. Of course, the economic situation of Britain did influence immigration policies though the role of politics was more important in shaping the politics of immigration and multiculturalism. Indeed, it can be said that the Thatcher era was marked by a citizenship discourse that reflected the politics of immigration and multiculturalism (Nam-Kook 53).

In Britain, the role of the State had always been determinant in terms of immigration. In fact, the State's immigration policy and its institutions reflect the preferences and attitudes of native citizens in addition to economic conditions. For instance, Britain's cultural connection with Commonwealth Countries explained better the flow of immigration than economic cost and benefit. Until 1962 the British economy developed rapidly and witnessed important labour shortages; therefore, the state invited South Asians and Caribbean Africans from the New Commonwealth. But

from 1962 to 1971 a voucher system was imposed to limit the immigration quota to only skilled labour and which were mostly white collar jobs.

Then, the period from 1971 onwards, it can be said that most of the immigrants were asylum seekers and those reuniting with families. Thus, immigration control consisted of limiting asylum seeking from all over the world during the 1990s. This shows clearly that political conditions in explaining immigration policies are more relevant than economic conditions. Policy makers had been more concerned with controlling immigration to reduce racial tension than to solve economic problems (Nam-Kook 54).

New Right politics played a major role in exploiting people's anxieties about minority immigrants. For instance, in 1991 one third of white people thought that the ethnic minority population in Britain was over 10 million¹. Analysts explained this situation by the responsible political elite hypothesis according to which political elites took into account public's concerns and interests while exploiting their anxieties. This perfect combination between political elite interests and mass concerns fostered immigration control in Britain and made it work. Thus, for understanding the British case, one needs to look at how New Right citizenship discourse did influence immigration and multicultural practice.

The New Right rejected ideas of the Consensus era which mainly guaranteed social rights by state intervention. For the New Right the development of social rights would undermine citizenship. In fact, the New Right's ideology is a combination of neo-liberalism² and neo-conservatism³. The New Right ideology was, indeed, directed against the post-war era and was meant as a crusade against the inertia of that period. The New Right supported free market economy as well as the libertarian concept of the individual. Authority, too, is important for the New Right's project which focuses on the nation and the family as essential for social cohesion (Nam-Kook 55).

¹ About four times the actual figure.

² Limited government, free market economy and the libertarian concept of the individual.

³ Social authority, family values and patriotism.

Clearly, the ideas of the New Right seem contradictory as they are based on two opposed concepts: libertarian individualism and republican nation-ism. Libertarian individualism implies that the role of the state is limited to protecting the voluntary contract of individual. For instance, the libertarian state could not restrict immigration unless people violate the rights of the individuals. However, in practice the libertarian state guarantees an equal way of life for every individual regardless of birth place. On the contrary, republicanism supposes that the state should protect the values that a political community wants to preserve. Individuals achieve their liberty when they participate in public activities as citizens of a political community. It supposes that identity would bring social justice and democracy (Nam-Kook 56).

Therefore, regarding multiculturalism and citizenship, libertarianism is less restrictive than republicanism. However, the latter tends more to neglect racial and cultural differences than recognise it in order to guarantee equal rights for all citizens regardless of their origin within a political community. The contradictions, embedded within the New Right citizenship discourse, are as we shall see reflected in immigration and multicultural policies. Thus, analysing the New Right citizenship discourse will certainly explain, the rationale for the British immigration and multicultural policy during the Thatcher era.

Enoch Powell¹, as a prominent figure of the New Right, was the first to connect identity crisis with an immigration issue. He chose to tackle immigration issues by campaigning publicly against a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. He made public addresses in which he criticised politics of immigration. His address given in 1968 coincided with the enactment of the second Immigration Act² and the Race Relations Act³, though as Secretary of the Ministry of Health from July 1960 and September 1963 he had advertised for nurses in Caribbean countries.

His most vehement address was the one given on 20 April 1968 in Birmingham, and which was later known as *The River of Blood* speech, in which he declared, “We

¹ He was a populist who believed in English nationalism and free market economy.

² It restricted entry to East African Asians who held UK passports issued by the British government.

³ It enlarged the scope of racial discrimination, but still had weak enforcement, relying on the new Community Relations Council to take up individual complaints.

must be mad, literally mad, as a nation, to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependents, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.” He also attacked the Race Relations Act, saying:

Here is the means of showing that the immigrant communities can organise to consolidate their members to agitate and campaign against their fellow citizens, and to overawe and dominate the rest with legal weapons which the ignorant and ill-informed have provided. As I look ahead I am filled with foreboding. Like Roman, I seem to see “the River Tiber foaming with much blood!” That tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic by which there is interwoven with history and existence of the State itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. (qtd. in Nam-Kook 58)

It is interesting to see in Powell’s speech that, while accepting that the ‘race problem’ of the United States was rooted in the country’s history of slavery, he was as if absolutely blind to Britain’s imperial past. Clearly, Powell adopted a populist position in his approach to immigration which did reflect the responsible political elite hypothesis, as he argued in his speech in Hanwell¹ on 25 May 1967, “The politician is a voice... We do not stand outside the nation’s predicament...All we can do is to speak out what we feel, to try and identify and describe the contradiction, and the phobias which we see around us...we may make a chord that will reverberate” (qtd. in Fomina 2010: 73).

It is worth noting that Powell was a strong believer in English not British nationalism. According to him, British Empire and Britain as a work shop of the world were myths; in the 1950s he considered that his English nationalism with its distinctive cultural origin had no multi-racial ties to the British Empire. Then, he had to adapt his English nationalism and find a new enemy to mobilize people around the fear of immigration through eventually the use of forms of racism. Moreover, Powell criticised the Race Relations Bill of 1968 on the ground that it was another state intervention. He was for a tight control of immigration assuming that immigrants from

¹ West of London where there is a high coloured immigration.

the New Commonwealth countries should enter Britain as alien according to the Alien Act of 1919. According to him what was needed was “a suspension of immigration and encouragement of remigration, logically and humanly, as two aspects of the same approach” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 59).

Powell’s populist and even racist stance is clearly reflected in his 1968 Birmingham speech, he declared “In this country in a fifteen or twenty year time the black man will have the whip-hand over the white man.” Of course, one has to show the irrelevance of Powell’s view since the number of white workers entering Britain exceeded that of minority workers. For instance, in 1963, 39,683 white workers entered Britain, minority workers were 30,125; and in 1964 the difference widened as there were 42,554 white workers and 14,705 minority workers. Thus, his stance also represented a challenge to the republican citizenship of the Consensus era. Indeed, he believed in the undiscriminating play of market forces. Conversely, he opposed any granting of social rights or any cultural space for ethnic minorities (Nam-Kook 59).

Ultimately, the Immigration Acts of 1962, 1968 and 1971 were meant to control and restrict drastically the number of immigrants, the 1962 Immigration Act introduced a voucher system which was issued to three types of would-be immigrants: those who had a job, skilled labour, and unskilled labour. The 1968 Immigration Act came as a reaction to Kenyan Asian Crisis¹, a UK passport holder was subjected to immigration control unless they had a patrial connection with the UK². Naturally, this Act made a distinction between citizens who were not exempted from immigration control and citizens of the Old Commonwealth. Another Act was passed in 1971 which continued the patriality of birth or descent rule but introduced, too, a work permit to replace the employment voucher that granted the right of application for permanent residence. The 1971 Immigration Act’s aim was to put an end to all new primary immigration from the New Commonwealth³ (Fomina 2010: 64-65).

¹ It was caused by the Africanization policy of the Kenyan government.

² He had to have been born, adopted, or naturalized in the UK.

³ Only family reunification became the principal source of continuing settlement in Britain.

At the end, all the provisions of the Immigration Act were included in the 1981 Nationality Act which repealed the 'Citizenship of the UK and Colonies' that was first introduced in the 1948 Nationality Act. In fact, the 1981 Nationality Act marked definitely the abandonment of Britain's imperial relations with Commonwealth countries. This Act was also a reflection of citizen's concerns and fear of minority immigration in the 1980s. The Act was more a translation of citizen's preference to put an end to immigration from the New Commonwealth countries in the 1980s. The particularity of this Act is that it introduced a definition of citizenship based on three categories: the 'Patrial' who had the right to enter and settle in the United Kingdom, the British Dependent Territories Citizenship and British Overseas citizenship (Nam-Kook 61).

A central figure of the New Right is definitely Margaret Thatcher who just as Powell, for whom she admitted having sympathy and sharing arguments on immigration, was convinced of the need for the politicization of immigration, she declared, "it had been the mark of civilized high mindedness among right-of-centre politicians to avoid speaking about immigration and race at all, and if that did not prove possible, then to do so in terms borrowed from the left of the political spectrum, relishing the multi-cultural, multi-racial nature of modern British society." Clearly, Thatcher did not recognise the multi-cultural and multi-racial characteristics of British society. She introduced the famous concept of 'one nation' to emphasize the ethnic homogeneity and cultural homogeneity of British society. Her primary concern was about the threat from ethnic minority¹. In fact, in 1978 just before the 1979 General Election, Thatcher targeted directly and openly the ethnic minority in her famous '*Swamping statement*', she said:

People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture...If you want good race relations you have got to allay people's fears on numbers...Everyone who is here must be treated equally under the law and that, I think, is why quite a lot of them too are fearful that their position might be put in jeopardy, or people might be hostile to them, unless we cut down the incoming numbers.(qtd. in Nam-Kook 63)

¹ She also spoke of the threat from youth culture though she admitted that it was less important than that of ethnic minority.

Many politicians criticised Thatcher's statement as irresponsible such as David Steel, the Liberal Party leader. Even Edward Heath, her predecessor as the Party leader reprimanded her for using this issue for electoral purposes. However, the public response was different since opinion polls following her swamping statement showed a net advance which was confirmed in the 1979 General Election additionally to effects of the 'Winter of discontent'.

Clearly, the Conservative party adopted from 1979 onwards a hard line on immigration. Indeed, Thatcher introduced libertarian individualism associated with republican one nation-ism. Her stance on immigration was reflected in the 'one nation' and 'active citizen' discourses of the New Right. She advocated a redefined national identity without imperial ties in a strong nation. Her citizenship discourse was highly influenced by two prominent thinkers, Friedrich Hayek¹ and Keith Joseph². Indeed, Thatcher was deeply influenced by the work of Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) in which he criticised socialist planning, and by Joseph who campaigned against collectivism of the Consensus era (Nam-Kook 64).

Therefore, from Hayek, Thatcher borrowed the primacy of the individual's role and responsibility and the importance of inequality in providing incentives to people; she argued "It was part of my credo that individuals were worthy of respect as individuals, not as members of classes or races; the whole purpose of the political and economic system I favoured was to liberate the talents of those individuals for the benefit of society." She saw herself as individualist who believes that individuals are ultimately accountable for their actions; she declared in 1987 "There is no such thing as society" (qtd. in Nam-Kook 65). She also criticised the state's intervention in the post-war era which was the cause of Britain's economic decline, instead she regarded the state as a necessary evil as it was in classical liberalism.

¹ He was an Austrian- British economist and philosopher known for his defence of classical liberalism; he won the 1974 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic sciences for his work in the theory of money and economic fluctuation.

² He was Industry Secretary between 1979 and 1981 and Education Secretary between 1981 and 1986.

Besides, she advocated a return to voluntarism that characterized the Victorian age and praised Victorian values of self-reliance, thrift and charity. She said, “I never felt uneasy about praising ‘Victorian values’. The Victorians had a way of talking that summed up what we were now rediscovering. They distinguished between the deserving and the undeserving poor” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 66). This was clearly a direct criticism of the welfare state which according to Thatcher had failed during the Consensus era to remember that distinction. The notion of Victorian virtues later found expression in the slogans ‘one nation’ and ‘active citizenship’ promulgated by the Thatcher government. Indeed, the term ‘one nation’ was to be found in the novel *Sybil* written by the Conservative Prime Benjamin Disraeli in 1845 in which he described Britain as two nations, the rich and the poor, and argued for a kind of one nation Tory paternalism.

In retrospect, in the early 1950s, the One Nation Group was formed by Enoch Powell, Keith Joseph and Edward Heath who criticised the post-war Consensus in their pamphlet ‘One Nation’. The latter showed a striking balance between the welfare state’s role on social provision and the need to foster competition and freedom. However, Thatcher’s one nation embraced in the 1980s was based on the libertarian concept of the individual and a colour-blind market economy. While Powell attempted to build a new nationality through the exclusion of black otherness in his English nationalism, Thatcher tended to deny that race was a meaningful category (Nam-Kook 67).

All in all, the New Right’s claim that immigration control fostered good race relations was contradictory. Indeed, Britain through the enactment of successive immigration acts revealed its stance towards immigrants while she claimed equal treatment of minorities through British race relations policy. This dual approach did ultimately create a contradictory attitude towards immigrants as the population refused to be perceived as racist while they actually refused to consider immigrants as equal members of British society.

2. Race and Ethnicities in Britain

Race and ethnicities are recurrent issues in Britain. Indeed, many theorists have been interested in questions of race and ethnicities. But the most influential theorist of race and ethnicities is undoubtedly Stuart Hall. His writings have redefined the ways in which race and ethnicity research is thought and done; he explored through his writings the shifting boundaries of racial and ethnic identities in British society. This is why I will draw extensively on his theories in order to engage critically with these questions in the British context, reflect on the historical approach to race and racism, and finally consider the changing politics of race and ethnicities. Hall's inclination to view 'race' and 'ethnicity' in their social and cultural contexts perhaps also explains his reluctance to use the term 'multiculturalism'.

It is undoubtedly difficult to understand the politics of race and racism in contemporary history independently of multiculturalism. Indeed, multiculturalism relates to the existence of cultural difference in terms of race, ethnicity or religion. This seems to be the main characteristic of modern societies today so that it is difficult to return to socially homogeneous societies.

Thinking, therefore, of multiculturalism means describing a socio-political reality in which cultural difference has become a defining feature. Conversely, thinking about multiculturalism leads us to thinking about race politics. In fact, contemporary politics of race and anti-racism are strongly connected to multiculturalism as a social practice. It is worth mentioning that the issue of multiculturalism was racialized from its inception. In fact, it was said that multiculturalism was a response to immigrants who left previous European colonies and were regarded by the white population as racially distinct and innately inferior races. This clearly explains why in Britain 'multiracial' and 'multicultural' are used interchangeably (Rattansi 9).

What seems important is to understand how marginal and oppositional set of beliefs and practices have been institutionalized within dominant discourses of race, identity and belonging. I will show, as stated by many, that the 1970s were a decade of

decline dominated by the notion of crisis which saw the extension of Race Relations legislation to manage the crisis.

2.1 Locating the Politics of Race and Racism

Anti-racism has shaped significantly race discourse and determined what is acceptable in the politics of race. Indeed, politics tend to use the term ‘political correctness’ to refer to what is acceptable in public debate in term of politics of race and racism discourse. In other words, it describes the parameters of public debate. The question at stake is, therefore, what role multiculturalism plays in contemporary politics of race. In fact, multiculturalism describes how the politics of race and racism happens (Pitcher³). This explains that multiculturalism is perceived as a social practice which would help to the expansion of race politics. Thus, considering multiculturalism as a social practice does highlight the role of the state as a social actor in the politics of race. What is at issue is demonstrating how and why multiculturalism is used in constructing and even inventing contemporary race discourse. We must locate the pertinence of race within a hegemonic struggle and its articulation to secure political and ideological power and domination.

First of all, the politics of race in Britain is obviously connected with the nation’s past as an imperial power and its continuing ties with Commonwealth countries and their Diasporas. It is also important to understand the changing conditions of racial practice in Britain taking into consideration the social, cultural and political contexts in which this change is taking place (Pitcher 5).

Anti-racism has also played a significant role in shaping the politics of race. Anti-racism tends to make the diagnosis of racism on the basis of its own anti-racist credentials, it has moral force making a clear distinction between the ‘racists’ and the ‘anti-racists’, failing to understand practices that fall outside its limits. This suggests that anti-racist discourses cannot understand what underlies the contemporary politics of race unless it comprehends its own influence on racial discourse; that is a kind of self-critique that needs to be done (Pitcher 11).

The politics of anti-racism has been constructed in terms of a contestation of multi-ethnicity or multiculturalism. So, it is important to consider the longstanding historical relationship between racism and anti-racism especially how anti-racism has shaped and modified racist practices. Interestingly, some social and cultural conditions of contemporary western society have changed over the last fifty years. Cultural diversity is reflected in different aspects of cultural and social life. These general transformations in social and cultural life have been the result of anti-racist struggle which rejected racism in the public sphere and advocated egalitarian commitment to 'racelessness'. Of course, anti-racism's struggle does not mean that racial discrimination has ceased but rather that these anti-racist practices have deeply shaped the way of thinking about race and racism. But if there is a widespread commitment to anti-racism as a means to address problems of racism and discrimination, the premature embrace of anti-racism can effectively serve to conceal and perpetuate racist practice (Pitcher 14).

Moreover, adopting liberal positions on matters of race leads simultaneously to perpetuate racist practices. For instance, the state is committed to diversity and anti-racism while maintaining racist practices. Thus, it is this disavowal of racism which represents the paradox of anti-racism's success. If some tend to believe that 'racism' has vanished, others on the contrary believe that it has been re-appropriated in discourses of racial disavowal as 'notracism'. Obviously, racism has been morally condemned, however the anti-racist struggle is still continuing as race discourses continue to reject the existence of race as such, therefore, anti-racism can by no means challenge or deconstruct racist practice (Pitcher 14-15).

Stuart Hall writes: "No doubt there are certain general features to racism, but even more significant are the ways in which these general features are modified and transformed by the historical specificity of the contexts and environments in which they become active." He explains that there has never been one or the other logics of racism in the discourse of racism but both biological and cultural inferiorisation. For instance, biological racism tries to provide a scientific foundation for treating people differently. This gives rise to demand for greater social equality and justice.

Conversely, the discourses of cultural inferiorisation degrade those who are culturally different and this gives rise to demand that all differences should be accorded a proper recognition. In other words, people have to be treated equally, but they also have to be treated as if they are different. For him, anti-Semitism began as cultural, i.e religious discrimination; then it evolved into physical discrimination as the Jews have physical characteristics that enable to recognise their differences. This is why he speaks of racisms in the plural. This is his own conception of what racialisation means in the modern world (Hall 2000: 8).

Historically speaking, the European discourses of racism and difference were first elaborated in the New World where Amerindians were seen as lacking civilizational institutions. It is also correct that the origins of modern British racism lie in the nation's imperial past though the past is not always causally paramount. For instance, the term 'black' was used to refer to the common experience of racism and marginalization in Britain and gave rise to a new politics of resistance within communities with very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities.

It is important to note that racism constructs boundaries between racially constituted categories and its system of representation which naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness; and along this frontier arises what Gayatri Spivak¹ calls the 'epistemic violence' of the discourses of the Other – of imperialism, the colonized, Orientalism...etc. This explains the fact that the discourse of anti-racism had often been founded on a strategy of reversal and inversion. But it is important to note that the epistemic violence as argued by Fanon is both outside and inside, this is why he refers to 'Black-skin, White Masks' or the internalization of the self- as- other. This is how racism constructs the black subjects and which complicates definitely the politics of racism (Hall 1988: 445).

Stuart Hall has rightly claimed that the effects of racist practice are specific to the present organization of society, to the present unfolding of its dynamic political and cultural processes, not simply to its repressed past. Hence, racialized and

¹ See her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988).

ethnicised difference has legitimised practices of racism, and racialised exclusion. It is true that race and ethnic difference are social, cultural and political mechanisms, not biological or genetically grounded but they have real social effects. Interestingly, those who have been stigmatised transcode their negative figuration into a positive resource rather than struggle for a race-blind or colour-blind alternative (Pitcher 57). But before going further, I would like to analyse the term 'race' relying mostly on theories of race as developed by Stuart Hall.

- *Analysing Race*

Definitely race is not a scientific category; it is rather a political and social construct. Indeed, Hall argues that, "Race is the organising discursive category at the centre of a system of practices of socio-economic power, exclusion and exploitation. That is to say racism." He explains that this discursive practice grounds the distinctions on scientific or genetic foundation. Furthermore, as genetic is not visible, difference has to be materialised in the discourses of racism through signifiers such as skin colour or other physical characteristics. Hall refers to this process as 'naturalisation', he argues that this is not nature, "it is a discursive or ideological process it is not a scientific one." For instance, Frantz Fanon refers to this process as 'epidermalisation' or the writing of difference on the skin of the other (Hall 2000: 7).

Race is for Hall "a discursive system, which has real social, economic and political conditions of existence and real symbolic and material effects."¹ His notion of race as a discursive system was precisely based on the notion that race is never purely ideological or cultural but situated in every day social and economic relations. It also signals his discomfort with reducing his writings on race to the cultural turn, to the idea that "race is purely ideological or cultural." In other words, race does not exist as such, it is an empty meaning (qtd. in Solomos 2014: 1670).

¹ See S.Hall "Reflections on Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance', *Race Critical Theories* (2002).

It is interesting to go through the concept of ideology as conceptualized by Althusser¹ to shed some light on race. Indeed, I will demonstrate that Althusser's theory of ideology² is relevant to the analysis of race and ultimately enriches debate about race. Therefore, the question is to what extent is Althusser's theory pertinent for the study of race. If we take Althusser's first assertion that ideology is opposed to thinking or is pre-scientific, opposing therefore theory to philosophy, many scholars have been obsessed with scienticizing racial categories especially blacks reaffirming old racist beliefs that White are more genetically intelligent than Blacks. For them, race was all too real; but others as Franz Boas deemed 'race' as unscientific. Therefore, race has become an ideological concept but unscientific. Even scientific Marxism dismissed the concept of 'race' and invokes instead terms like 'racialism', 'racialization' or 'racism' so that racism was seen as a subcategory of class exploitation based upon the antagonism found in capitalism. Following Althusser's theory of ideology, ideologies such as race have an autonomous, and even material existence but it is not determining as economy despite the presence of race in several modes of production such as capitalist, communist and mixed economies. All in all, despite its unscientific status, race is a structural formation; it is not a scientific concept but science is necessary to determine its effects (Leonardo 400-01).

Secondly, according to humanists race is an illusion. Following Althusser's theory of ideology we can wonder how race can be an illusion if it has real effects. Humanist ideology as asserted by Althusser fails to deal with the 'race question' because it sees 'racial experience' as something other than 'human experience' not as an organizing principle for society. In other words, humanist's quest for human experience is betrayed when the latter appears cultural or racial and not universal (Leonardo 404-05).

Thirdly, Althusser's assertion that ideology is unconscious with no history and eternal is probably the most relevant one for the study of race and racism. Indeed, it

¹ He was a French Marxist philosopher who supported a structuralist view of Marx's work interpreting his theories as an 'epistemological break'.

² He provides a materialist understanding of ideology arguing that the latter does not exist in the world of ideas but exists in institutions and the practices specific to them.

has been suggested that racism, and therefore race seem to have a permanent status just as the unconscious for Althusser. Accordingly, the ideology of race and race discourses interpellate every human individual into the racial formation, everyone is labelled White or Otherwise, that is part of self-recognition or misrecognition. As racial ideology is unconscious, the racist is always the other never the self. Racial ideology also represents the racialization of reality and the realization of race. According to Lacan's theory of the imaginary and unconscious, one cannot experience the unconscious, but it does exist through its effects, racial ideology just like the unconscious is not real but its manifestations are real. The racial unconscious produces functions so does the ideology of race produce racial discourses (Leonardo 406-08).

Finally, it seems safe at this stage, drawing on Althusser's theory of ideology, to assume that race is not a scientific concept though its study is necessary from ideological and materialist perspectives. Race was invented by the Occident that is White Europeans to rationalize their place in the world and justify the treatment of others. This clearly makes inequality central to the concept of a racial order. However, as Althusser refuses to reduce philosophy to the status of a mere ideological illusion, so one may conclude that race as an ideology cannot be devoid of material underpinnings.

- Managing Race Relations

'Coloured' and 'black' are commonly used in Britain which reveals an explicit racialization of the vocabulary and attitudes towards minorities. Britain has always governed the minorities in terms of 'race relations'. For instance, an important report directed and commissioned by the Institute of Race Relations was issued in 1969 and entitled *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations*, it constituted the first survey of race relations in Britain (Rattansi 23).

But what is peculiar to Britain is that the racialization of public discourse, which indeed gave some legitimacy to the discredited idea of 'race' and therefore the

development of a racial ideology¹, has been accompanied by strong anti-discrimination measures known as Race Relations Acts². In fact, Britain did make considerable effort at integration with the enactment of the 1965 Race Relations Act which was meant to prevent public order chaos rather than protect immigrants' rights, and also the 1968 Race Relations Act which was meant to protect second generation immigrants against employment and housing discrimination (Baglieri Campo 14).

Perhaps, the most important one was the Race Relations Act of 1976 which recognised unintentional and indirect discrimination as requiring reform and redress. Britain has also to face the problem of how to define 'racial groups'. It decided to adopt the race-inflected category of 'black' to unite both South Asians and African Caribbeans; however, because races do not actually exist, Asians organised themselves into ethnic associations to address immigration issues and other more specific concerns (Rattansi 24).

As mentioned earlier, multiculturalism serves at describing the contemporary politics of race and racism; the politics of race and racism have been shaped by the anti-racist struggle. This suggests that social and cultural diversity are part of dominant discourses of race and that race discourse is embedded with ideas about tolerance and coexistence. Accordingly, it is worth noting that the politics of race and racism is plural not mono-cultural. Furthermore, multiculturalism constitutes the terrain in which contemporary politics of race finds expression. It has probably replaced other frameworks that considered racial politics as presenting conflicts and which proposes solutions that ranges between or across such exclusive categories of identity and belonging (Rattansi 19).

One can ask the question of why does multiculturalism provide a description of the contemporary politics of race and reflect better the influence of anti-racism on race discourses. Any answer to this question must take into consideration the very nature of multiculturalism. Indeed, here multiculturalism is used as a politically agnostic concept; it implies a basic recognition of the facticity of social and cultural diversity.

¹ It claims the innate white superiority.

² The first Act was passed in 1965.

Therefore, multiculturalism describes the contemporary politics of race in which race has remained a category of social identification where cultural and social differences still persist (Rattansi 21).

The use of the term multiculturalism here is then as a social practice not as an ideology, it aims at describing politics of race. Even Stuart Hall approaches multiculturalism from this perspective when, as I mentioned in chapter one, he draws a distinction between an adjectival ‘multi-cultural’ and a substantive ‘multiculturalism’. In fact, Hall considers that used adjectivally, multiculturalism describes the culturally heterogeneous social landscape of contemporary societies in which “different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their ‘original’ identity...multiculturalism... references the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up” (qtd. in Pitcher 21). This righteous distinction permits to see multiculturalism as it exists in the political spectrum and to understand it as a practice that obtain significance in the context of its application rather than on its own terms. Yet, some critics especially those that conceive of the concept as a category of political theory such as Kymlicka would argue that this understanding of multiculturalism serves only to empty it of any theoretical content. On the contrary, one could advance the idea that the theory of multiculturalism can only meaningfully describe the strategies and policies that constitute that social practice.

One has to focus on the role of the state in the politics of race to understand multiculturalism as a form of social practice. Historically, the state’s role was important in shaping the politics of race and racism. The very idea of race was definitely the result of state practices. Indeed, it was suggested that:

The modern European nation-state was founded on nationalism, and race provided its organic ideology. It was the irrational, fictitious, quasi-religious idea of race that unified diverse populations and served to maintain the cultural, political and economic structures of developing nation-states. It was the idea of race that mobilized the necessary labour power to supply state war machines, and that turned sedition against the bourgeois state into an act of treason against the nation itself. Later, race came to be shaped by the colonial encounter,

consolidating ideas of superiority and inferiority that legitimated the enslavement and exploitation of millions. Race came to be inscribed even in the rationalism of scientific endeavour that underwrote the superior self-conception of Western nations. (Pitcher 23)

Charles Mills has argued, in his book *The Racial Contract* (1997) that “race is in no way an ‘afterthought’, a ‘deviation’ from ostensibly raceless Western ideals, but rather a central shaping constituent of those ideals.” Accordingly, this analysis suggests that race has always been central to nationalist projects through misrecognition of the importance of race discourse in modern states. Furthermore, racialized nationalism recognised as a state project was only challenged after the Nazi’s Holocaust. The term ‘racism’ came into being in the early 1930s as suggested by Barnor Hesse, “a Eurocentric formulation of the concept of racism preceded decolonization, and has remained conceptually delimited by the status of the Holocaust as a paradigm case” (qtd. in Pitcher 24).

Nevertheless, some tended to diminish the role played by nationalism in racist practices. This seems to be the case of Hannah Arendt¹ who was a representative of the racism-as-exception thesis. Her aim was to exempt racism from the democratic tradition, and by doing so she emphasized its incompatibility “with all the Western political and moral standards of the past.” She even dismissed the relationship between nationalism and racism as “an old misconception”. According to Arendt, “nationalism describes an integrative mechanism, while racism is “the most powerful weapon for the destruction” of European nations (qtd. in Pitcher 25).

However, Arendt’s view is historically unconceivable because if we admit the role played by nationalism as an integrative mechanism in the modern nation-state, we cannot deny its exclusion of racialized others. On the other hand, liberal democracy confines racialized nationalism to the extremes of ‘totalitarianism’ ignoring therefore that it was the traditions doctrines of liberalism that have contributed to the strengthening of the relation between racism, nationalism and the state. Besides, as argued by Phillip Cole², “liberal political theory addresses the problems of the

¹ See *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1986).

² See *Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration* (2000).

distribution of freedom and welfare within bounded political communities, but rarely addresses the question of how membership of these communities is to be fixed” and that “the development of liberal democracy within bounded nation-states is ultimately dependent on the exclusion of those understood to fall outside membership of the liberal polity.” For instance, Britain’s control on immigration was mainly based on common sense ideas of racialized nationalism (qtd. in Pitcher 25).

Therefore, immigrants were seen to come from beyond the naturalized boundaries of the nation. As David Goldberg¹ points to the exclusion of the racialized others from the boundaries of the nation-state, “the commitment of liberalism to principles of universality is practically sustained only by the reinvented and racialized exclusions of racial particularity.” This proves that any historical development of racism cannot be detached from the development of the nation-state and the ideology of nationalism. Accordingly, racism derives its legitimacy from nationalism. Even if the terms of racial reference change, the relationship between race and nation does not disappear. What is suggested here is a clear departure from this longstanding correspondence between race and nationalism and an embrace of the notions of diversity and cultural pluralism (Pitcher 26).

One has to recognise the role of the state in articulating racial difference² and contributing to the socio-historical process of racial formation. As a powerful social actor, the state has a leading role in identifying difference and reproducing ideas of race. This power derives from its ability to legislate on every aspect of social and economic life such as national belonging. So the state with the advent of globalization is more than ever concerned with the politics of race and racism (Pitcher 30).

Now, if we consider the British state’s approach to the politics of race, it seems important to focus on New Labour’s politics since the Labour Party has always been considered as the natural home of Britain’s minority communities. Indeed, according to the Parekh Report, Labour secured four out of every five black and Asian votes

¹ See *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (1993).

² Cultural, ethnic and religious.

between 1974 and 1997. Moreover, Labour has passed all of Britain's Race Relations legislation and has been a principal site of struggles for minority representation.

So, New Labour did certainly provide an interesting understanding of the contemporary politics of race and multiculturalism because the Party's record in government in matters of race has been particularly uneven. Indeed, as Back et al.¹ have argued:

The racial politics of the British state under New Labour have been Janus-faced, serious attempts to implement progressive legislative change – the 1998 Human Rights Act, say, or the 2000 Race relations (Amendment) Act- have been accompanied by the pursuit of a disturbingly retrograde agenda. Draconian asylum and immigration legislation, a racialized security agenda, and an aggressive discourse of assimilation all call into question or substantially undermine the Labour government's avowedly anti-racist credentials.(qtd. in Pitcher 32)

Many contradictions have been noted; it concerned mainly official denial occurring in spite of their prevention of certain types of racism while creating other forms of racism. Interestingly, the British state's attitude towards minority communities has ostensibly changed. This admission of minorities has definitely redefined British society. This also clearly contrasts with the state's race discourses of the twentieth century which were characterized by a formal commitment to racial equality and within a social and political system in which they were considered as outsiders. So, race was dividing between members and non members of the national community (Pitcher 32).

However, the recognition of social and cultural diversity has undoubtedly shaped recent state discourses. Furthermore, the race issue was now being approached differently in a new register that claims an ethos of cultural, religious and racial pluralism as its own. Now, race has become constitutive of the identity of the political establishment. Despite the new established relation between the state and Britain's minority communities based on a new configuration of identity and belonging to

¹ See "The Return of Assimilation-ism: Race, Multiculturalism and New Labour". *Sociological Research Outline*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2002.

replace anachronistic models of monoculturalism and racial exclusivity, the politics of nationalism still define the territory upon which this change has taken place. Historically nationalism creates racism. Therefore, if the state's politics of race continued to rely on nationalism as a primary locus of racist practice, the embrace of multiculturalism would mean rethinking a new nationalist ideology (Pitcher 33).

All in all, it is possible to imagine a multicultural society in which multicultural discourses will no longer necessarily mark out as 'other' racialized groups through mechanisms of rejection or exclusion. What is needed as suggested by S. Ahmed¹ is "the differential inclusion of racialized others... to consolidate existing modes of nationalist belonging, whereby, the 'we' of the nation is affirmed through the difference of the 'stranger cultures' rather than against it" (qtd. in Pitcher 34).

2.2 Race Crisis

Stuart Hall has rightly described the crisis which occurred in Britain in the 1970s, he stated that, "Race has come to provide the objective correlative of crisis- the area in which complex fears, tensions and anxieties, generated by the impact of the totality of the crisis as a whole on the whole society, can be most conveniently and explicitly projected and, as the euphemistic phrase runs, 'worked through'" (Hall *et al.* 1978: 333). It is salient that theorizing the crisis has been the task of theorists from all boards. Indeed, a theory of crisis demonstrates the basic contradiction between the socialization of production and the private accumulation of capital; and in managing the crisis the regulatory role of the state is certainly important. Indeed, the state's role is to ensure that this contradiction does not jeopardize the social relations of production.

Indeed, Marx's Theory of Crisis is certainly the most elaborated one as it is grounded on an investigation of the Commercial Crises of the 19th century and in particular the great crises of 1825 and 1836. The first was a stock market crash starting in the Bank of England and caused by speculative investments in Latin America, and the second was caused by speculative lending practices which lasted

¹ See *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000).

until the mid- 1840s in the United States. For Marx the real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. The crisis develops in a capitalist society and cannot be resolved within it, but it can be modified in order not to imperil the social order. Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz¹ have argued that “the crisis occurs when the social formation can no longer be reproduced on the basis of the pre-existing system of social relations”(qtd. in Pitcher 35). From this understanding of the crisis, the state has to intervene in order to reduce the impact of contradictions and to preserve the social order.

Therefore, it is interesting to consider how academics dealt with the issue of crisis from a theoretical stand point and regarding British society in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Of course, Hall was the first scholar who sought to produce a critique work of race relations. Indeed, his substantial work, *Policing the Crisis* (1978) did influence scholarly debates about race and racism in the late 1970s. *Policing the Crisis* was a study of the moral panics about the phenomenon of street mugging closely tied to ideas about race, culture and identity; Hall sought to explore the public and political debates about this phenomenon and the way it was amplified by the media coverage. This book influenced scholarly debates about race and racism in the late 1970s and 1980s; it led to the production of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) which sought to produce a critique of race relations and outline an alternative conceptualization of race and racism in British society (Solomos 2014: 1668).

In *Policing the Crises*, Hall describes thoroughly the crisis of the 1970s and the government response using law and direct force to suppress groups challenging the stability of the state and the threat of ‘mugging’. Hall claimed that the police created much of the mugging that was later to appear in the official statistics and that there were no victims in some cases. He did not claim that the reactions to crime, ‘mugging’ and other violence were the result of a conspiracy by the ruling class; the government and the media did not consciously plan to create a moral panic about street crime, but the panic developed as they reacted to changing circumstances (Solomos

¹ See “State and Society 1880-1980.” *Crises in the British State 1880- 1930*, edited by M. Lang and B. Schwarz (1985).

2014: 1669). For Hall economic problems produced part of the ‘crisis’. He definitely accepted the Marxist view that capitalist economies tend to go through periods of crisis when it is difficult for firms to sell goods at a profit. But for him, the crisis of British society went beyond economic problems. It was a crisis of ‘hegemony’; here he clearly took a Gramscian’s view¹ as the authority of the state and the ruling class is challenged.

In the 1970s the British state faced both economic crisis and a crisis of hegemony; whereas between 1945 and 1968 there had been an interclass truce, there was little conflict between the ruling class and subject class. Full employment and the expansion of the welfare state secured support for the state and acceptance of its authority by the working class; but as unemployment rose the interclass truce was undermined and it became more difficult for the ruling class to govern by consent.

Hall also provides examples of the challenge to the authority of the state notably problems in Northern Ireland, the rise of black power movement and the threat posed by trade unions. Since the government was no longer able to rule by consent, it turned to the use of force to control the crises. It was in this context that street crime became an issue; mugging was presented as a key element in a break down of Law and Order. Violence was portrayed as a threat to stability of society, and it was the black mugger who was used to symbolize the threat of violence. The public could be persuaded that society’s problems were caused by ‘immigrants’ rather than the faults of the capitalist system; the working class was effectively divided on racial grounds, since the white working class was encouraged to direct its frustrations towards the black working class.

Another example is *The Empire Strikes Back*² which drew to some extent on Hall’s work. In fact, Solomos et al. brilliantly set out a Gramscian theory of crisis in relation to a state politics of race and racism. Indeed, they consider that crises are “the

¹ Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society, so that the dominant ideology justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural and beneficial for everyone rather than artificial social constructs.

² The political landscape of the 1970s Britain that the book describes was one that saw the labour movement on the defensive.

combined effect of economic, political, ideological and cultural processes.” For them, “organic crisis describes a crisis of hegemony or general crisis of the state” (Solomos *et al.*1982:11). This clearly reflects Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony. They added that the state is a factor in the reproduction of the organic crisis. They also explained how organic crises were perceived as crises of race relations:

To show the mechanisms through which the presence of black people in Britain has become constructed ideologically as a national problem, thereby rendering them subject to specific and intense forms of control and repression. These themes must be related to the ways in which the developing organic crisis has been expressed as, and defined by, a ‘crisis of race relations’. The power of racial symbols and signification has had a profound impact on how the ‘crisis of society’ is perceived. (Solomos *et al.* 1982: 21)

Obviously, the crisis is deemed ‘organic’ meaning that it is the result of the combined effect of economic, political, ideological and cultural processes although as shown earlier Marxism has demonstrated the deep economic roots of the crisis. The crisis is also insoluble, hence the use of ‘race’ to manage the effect of the organic crisis; the authors also pointed out that the crisis was directly related to the state’ politics of race. So, they explained how hegemonic crisis and the politics of race may operate. They said that racialized difference is seen as a problem for society and racialized minorities as an ‘enemy within’, and also how race is referred to in discourses as synonymous of lawlessness and violence (Solomos *et al.*1982:24).

These are undeniably constructions of race rather than reality used by the state to conceal the real economic crisis. In addition, the state uses the racialized as a surrogate for other social contradictions that are themselves insoluble. Thus, race is presented as a problem in discourses and as a problem-solving in the social crisis. Accordingly, race becomes an element in the organic crisis; it also gives expression politically and ideologically to specific forms of control aimed at black people. For instance, Keith Joseph has explained the relative decline of the inner cities through ‘race’. Race is present in every discussion about unemployment; this has been rightly expressed by a critical Tory thinker, Keith Middlemas who said:

What will Britain look like after even three years of 2 million unemployed? Divisions, which for half a century governments have tried to abolish will show nakedly, between the two geographical Englands, with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the periphery, like the Italian Mezzogiorno, between those in work and unemployed; between the mature and the young, between white and black. (qtd. in Solomos *et al.* 1982: 28)

This reflects how race was thought in the 1970s; it suggests that any solution to the problem of division between white and black must be found in the transformation of the wider conditions which produce consensus.

Again, in *The Empire Strikes Back* state discourses of race are presented as a form of politics of diversion in which racialized are constituted as a problem in the context of social decline, chronic unemployment and economic liberalization in order to explain and solve a deeper structural crisis. Clearly, the authors consider the crisis of race presented by the state as constructed within state practices in order to put an end to the ‘organic’ crisis of British capitalism. Of course, the state has to respond to an ‘authentic’ crisis of race or an ‘imaginary’ construction of race as a social problem. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, the authors view that the actions of the state modify the grounds on which the crisis manifests itself. The emergence of a new racism is not the result of autonomous racial conflicts anymore, but rather the outcome of laws of capitalist development. Therefore, any contextualization of racism should take into account racial as well as non-racial elements (Solomos *et al.* 1982: 27).

One may suggest that a crisis of race has no power to jeopardize the social order or even to call into question the legitimacy of the state; and specifically the crisis of race in Britain the state has institutionalized the tools of its management and reproduction yet it remains a continuing phenomenon. However, Hall and Schwarz¹ point out that “each moment of crisis is also a moment of reconstruction: crises are the means by which social relations are reconstituted” (qtd. in Pitcher 38). Indeed, the British state has always managed and responded to the race crisis by using tools that developed with the changing social conditions. Ultimately, multiculturalism as a social

¹ See again “State and Society 1880-1930”. *Crises in the British State 1880-1930* (1985).

practice and a racial project in Britain could propose normative conceptual and ethical structures that organize the politics of race and manage a crisis of race.

2.3 Ethnicity: A Contested Concept

Properly understood, ethnicity is different from race, it is grounded in cultural and religious features and customs. It is therefore often on these grounds counter-posed to race, and there has been a growing tendency in recent scholarly discourse to speak of two distinct types of discrimination: biological racism and cultural inferiorisation, with a sort of implication that the first is in decline and that the latter is growing. However, often ethnicity is not devoid of a biogenetic reference because cultural transmission of difference across generations is often underpinned by kinship and intermarriage. Equally, biological racism has never been separated from cultural inferiorisation. Besides, the term ethnicity “acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual” (Hall 1988: 446).

Stuart Hall has definitely provided the most important analysis of the concept of ethnicity as he announced the ‘ethnic turn’ since the term ‘black’ became a pluri-signifying category that was destabilized by other cultural affiliations such as ethnicity. Indeed, he argues that every body has an ethnicity because everybody comes from a cultural tradition and a cultural context. He even sustains that Englishness is an ethnicity though this idea is actually contested. Because Englishness is hegemonic, it therefore does not represent itself as an ethnicity at all, it is unmarked whereas black or even ethnic minority groups are marked. He reaches the conclusion that ethnicity in the form of a culturally constructed sense of Englishness and a particularly closed, exclusive and regressive form of English national identity, is one of the core characteristics of British racism today (Hall 1988: 446).

Moreover, Hall draws attention to the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experience of Black subjects. He explains that race is a “floating signifier” that changes its boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in different historical circumstances as for the Jews who have been considered non-white.

Therefore, for Hall race becomes problematic as an identifier while he insists on the necessity to avoid essentializing unstable racial identifiers. Yet this has resulted in the spread of a post-race view that diminishes the lived reality of racism (Prince 18).

Besides, Hall believes that ethnicity has been appropriated in the dominant discourse to disavow the realities of racism; thus, this assumption has to be contested and the term “dis-articulated from its position in the discourse of ‘multi-culturalism’ and transcoded, just as we previously had to recuperate the term ‘black’ from its place in a system of equivalences” (Hall 1988:446-47). Obviously, S. Hall situates ethnicity in the new politics of representation which is grounded on the contestation of the very term ‘ethnicity’ while re-considering the concept of difference in order to achieve a cultural construction of new ethnic identities and ultimately displace the dominant discourse. On the other hand, there is a huge contestation around the question of the nature of ethnicity and about its essentialist character. Following this thinking, one can turn to Rogers Brubaker who argues in *Ethnicity Without Groups* (2005) that, “ethnicity, race and nation are not things in the world but perspectives on the world; ways of seeing, interpreting and representing the social world” (qtd. in Modood 83).

One can interpret this formulation by stating that there is something fictitious and false about ethnicity. This anti-essentialist stance does not contest the reality of such concept as ethnicity. Brubaker states again that denying that ethnicity, race and nation are things in the world is “in no way to dispute their reality” but rather to argue that their reality “does not depend on the existence of ethnic groups or nations as substantial groups or entities” (qtd. in Modood 83).

According to Modood, Hall’s seminal work *New Ethnicities* (1988) marked a shift in black cultural politics. In fact, while black people represented a singular group in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, they have recently to be understood in a much “more plural and nuanced way, as bearers and creators of multiple cross-cutting identities.” Even research evidence have shown that traditional conception of ethnicity with its strong internal uniformity has become less apparent as there is considerable internal diversity and overlap between members of different ethnic groups (Modood

96). One might suggest that this of course does not mean denying the social reality of ethnicity because it is certainly more than a human product. Yet this anti-reification or anti-essentialism stance makes definitely of ethnicity a sociallogically real concept.

In this sense, Stuart Hall believes that ethnicity has come under erasure; it can no longer be thought in the paradigmatic position of its theoretical construct, this is what he called the 'deconstructive moment'. The essentialist notion of ethnicity is extremely damaging because it does not allow for pluralization and hybridization. But since ethnicity as a concept is necessary, there must be a contestation around the very term itself. So, he prefers the diverse version of ethnicity, its multicultural i.e.adjectival version of ethnicity. He proposes to disarticulate the term 'ethnicity' from its older discursive configuration. He explains that concepts of the post-Enlightenment science such as 'ethnicity' need disentangling from negative notions as they cannot be thought in the paradigmatic position of their theoretical construct (Drew 188-89).

On the other hand, both Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall have criticised the increased usage of terms such as 'ethnicity' and 'culture' which while shifting away from fixed biological notions of race, did not circumvent the old problems of the race concept at all. Indeed, ethnicity for Hall was becoming as rigid as the old notion of race; and both 'race' and 'ethnicity' are two different registers of racist discourse. Gilroy¹ too has denounced 'ethnic absolutism' which he defined as, "a reductive, essentialist understanding of ethnic and national difference...separating people from each other and diverting them into social and historical locations that are understood to be mutually impermeable and incommensurable" (qtd. in Warmington 103). Evidently, those who favoured ethnicity and culture as ways of understanding social antagonisms have argued that a 'non-essentialised' approach to ethnicity allows us to understand ethnic identities as forever 'in process', constructed through the social, cultural and discursive, and integrally tied to the construction of identity (Warmington 130).

¹ See *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (1993).

3. Britishness and Questions of National Identities

A recurrent question in Britain is the one about national identity. Indeed, this question is prevalent in Britain because of its colonial past, in addition to the British patriotism revealed during the Second World War. And the very existence in Britain of separate national identities raises, more than any other time, the question of the future of the United Kingdom. Indeed, national identity and Britishness are issues highly debated in the British academia and media. The very meaning of Britishness remains unsettled though it clearly suggests the inclusion of all the different peoples of the United Kingdom. The question, therefore, is about the existence of a common British national identity in a society marked by post-war immigration, globalisation and devolution. The ultimate question is, accordingly, about the future place of Britishness in the modern multicultural Britain.

Clearly, the future of Britishness is linked to immigration, devolution and the Brexit or withdrawal from the European Union¹. Indeed, immigration from the New Commonwealth has constituted a threat to cultural homogeneity; devolution has endangered the Union and was to cause the break up of the UK; and of course European integration has led to conflicts between British common law tradition and European written constitutional tradition. Contemporary debate about Britishness is justified because of the impact of immigration and multiculturalism. There is also the new political assertiveness from the constituent nations of the multinational kingdom, and Europe as a political association has changed national sovereignty. Britain is seen as an exceptional, even providential, oceanic and freedom-loving nation, this can explain the choice of the Brexit. But many have argued that Britishness is a much weaker cultural identity than Englishness or Scottishness, it is a political identity resting above all on a set of political institutions, and there is no ethnic element to it. This is why H.G Wells could say that “The great advantage of being British is that we do not have a national dress” (qtd. in Willets 57).

¹ Britain has been faced for decades by further integration into the European Union.

Therefore, discussing Britishness is examining the future of Britain which has long been challenged by devolution, immigration, multiculturalism and further European integration. Today this last challenge has worsened by the Brexit which would have different consequences on the future of Britain. It is, undoubtedly, a difficult task to define Britishness across geographical and political divides. So, one has to discuss Britishness in the light of multiple identities of Britain today and taking into account historical antecedents. Britishness still divides people in general and scholars in particular. Indeed, some of them consider that Britishness is devoid of substance and will soon disappear in the face of devolution and European integration. According to Marquand¹ since the British Empire has been dissolved, Britain is now just an administrative structure that is “bloodless, historyless and affectless” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 140).

More significantly, official statements and initiatives to do with Britishness have magnified since 9/11 and 7/7 especially under the Prime Minister Gordon Brown. The reason why Britishness seems now so much in question are in fact various and profoundly historical, so the scale of division and debate over identity happening in the United Kingdom today is not a consequence merely of developments taking place in recent years as since the war the scale and the diversity of inward migration have expanded substantially².

In contrast, for other scholars Britain has positively contributed to the development of democratic solidarity since 1707. It has now a collective identity and common interests amongst the four nations such as the National Health Service. According to Colley, Britain was a historically political construction neither based on cultural nor on ethnic homogeneity. It was formed from the early 18th Century by the union between four nations namely England, Scotland, Wales and later Ireland. What has prompted Britishness was undoubtedly Protestantism, wars against European others and the pride of the British Empire. Then, the construction of the British identity was completed in the 19th Century and concluded in the First World War.

¹ See “Democracy in Britain.” *Political Quaterley*, vol. 71, no. 3, 2000.

² The 2001 census revealed that about 10 per cent of the population was made up of ethnic minorities.

However, the four nations have always been in conflict because of the dominance of England. Some accepted being British, or accepted having multiple identities of British and one's nationality of origin; others refused being British and chose their nation's exclusive identity (Colley 22).

Moreover, Britishness is above all the liberal legacy of the British Empire that promoted individual freedom, the rule of the law, and tolerance of difference. However, Welsh and Scottish nationalists have asked for a more radical form of self-government and further European integration unlike the majority of English, called British, have campaigned against European integration in the name of protecting Parliamentary sovereignty. Furthermore, Britain as a nation was founded on the patriotic allegiance of the people to the monarch. Therefore, all subjects whatever their regional, cultural or national differences were members of the nation (Nam-Kook 141).

According to Tom Nairn¹, the construction of Britain presupposed the existence of an enemy in and outside the nation. According to Colley it was France and sometimes the British black minority in Nairn's view. But Britain had lost its one significant other as European integration furthered. The role of ethnic minority as the remaining other is more crucial; thus, what would be the role of multiculturalism, is it a threat or a chance for reinforcing Britishness?

This section explores the very notions of national identities and nationalism as perceived by the Welsh, the Scottish and English as well as by the two major parties with a particular focus on New Labour's project of reinforcing Britishness. Finally, the future of Britain and Britishness is considered from the viewpoint of ethnic minorities. This section explores also whether Britishness has been shared or denied and reinforced or weakened among these different groups.

¹ He is one of the key thinker of the British New Left, and an advocate of European integration and the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales.

3.1 The Rising of National Identities and Nationalisms

- *Analysing identity*

The concept of 'identity' has been in recent years highly discussed and criticized. There has also been a process of deconstruction of this concept and critique of the notion of an integral and unified identity. So, there seems to be still debate about 'identity'.

Stuart Hall proposes a deconstructive approach to identity, but not to supplant this concept by a 'truer' one rather to put it 'under erasure'¹, that is to continue to think with it in its deconstructed form because as explained by Derrida it signifies that a word is inadequate yet necessary, that a particular signifier is not wholly suitable for the concept it represents, but must be used as the constraints of our language offer nothing better. So, Hall took from Derrida² the theory of deconstruction; Derrida has explained that deconstruction means:

thinking at the limit, thinking in the interval, a sort of double writing...by means of this double, and precisely stratified, dislodged and dislodging writing, we must also mark the interval between inversion, which brings low what was high, and the irruptive emergence of a new 'concept', a concept that can no longer be and never could be included in the previous regime. (qtd. in Hall 1996: 1-2)

Moreover, Hall described identity as 'a production', a matter of becoming as well as 'being'. Identity is always in the making. There is no fixed identity, no final, finished identity position. Any cultural practice plays a role in the construction of identity. Accordingly, Hall assumes that identity is a concept operating 'under erasure' in, "the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (Hall 1996: 2).

Secondly, the concept of identity is central to the question of agency and politics because of its relation to a politics of location and as Foucault, Hall does not

¹ A philosophical device originally developed by Martin Heidegger. It involves the crossing out of a word within a text, but allowing it to remain legible and in place.

² A French philosopher who challenged Western philosophy with his concept of Deconstruction arguing that meaning is unstable and that all possibilities should be considered.

want to return to a theory of the knowing subject or identity but rather a theory of ‘discursive practice’, that is a reconceptualization of the subject, displaced within the paradigm. What is at stake is to stress the process of subjectification to discursive practices that is the question of identification¹, to rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices that the question of identity recurs (Hall 1996: 2).

Broadly speaking, identification is “constructed on the back of recognition of some origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.” This ‘naturalist’ definition contrasts with the discursive approach which sees identification as a construction, a process never completed, always ‘in process’, it is never determined it can always be ‘won’, or ‘lost’, sustained or abandoned. It is conditional since it needs resources to sustain it. It is a process of articulation, an over-determination not a subsumption. But from a psychoanalysis view, Freud calls it “the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person”, and it is through identification that Freud made the distinction between ‘being’ and ‘having’ the other (qtd. in Hall 1996: 3).

So, identification serves to comprehend and understand the concept of identity and other related concepts. Indeed, identity is being inflected by other connotations. The concept of identity is not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional one because it “does not signal that stable core of the self –this is the essentializing conception- nor is it that collective or true self hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (Hall 1996: 4).

Interestingly, Hall² proposes two models of the production of identities³. The first refers to the existence of an essential content to any identity by offering a distinct and fully constituted identity through the struggle against negative constructions to discover the ‘original’ content of the identity. The second model denies the existence

¹ Identification draws meanings from the discursive; it is as identity difficult to understand.

² See “The Local and the Global: Globalisation and Ethnicity.” *Culture, Globalization and the World-System*, edited by A. King (1991).

³ It is not a theoretical distinction but rather a historical one.

of fully constructed and authentic identities because identities are always in the process. Hall explains that “identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself. It entails the existence of multiple identities and differences” (qtd. in Grossberg 89-90).

Hall views identities as ‘fragmented’ and ‘fractured’ constructed across different and antagonistic discourses and practices. They are constantly in the process of change and transformation. According to him, identity should be apprehended in relation to the processes of globalization, of forced and ‘free’ migration. Moreover, identities “are about question of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.” Identities are also constructed within, not outside representation¹; they are constructed through not outside difference (Hall 1996: 4).

On the other hand, Laclau² explains in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990) that:

The constitution of a social identity is an act of power since if ...an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by repressing that which threatens it. Derrida has shown how an identity’s constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles –man/woman, etc. What is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black-white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to ‘human being’. ‘Woman’ and ‘black’ are thus ‘marks’(i.e. marked terms) in contrast to the unmarked terms of ‘man’ and ‘white’. (qtd. in Hall 1996: 5)

This entails that the unity and the internal homogeneity which seems foundational for identity is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure within the play of power and

¹ It means discourse.

² An Argentine political theorist and philosopher known as the inventor of post-Marxist political theory which rejects Marxist economic determinism and the view that class struggle is the most important antagonism in society.

exclusion. Hall uses 'identity' to refer to the meeting point or what he calls the point of 'suture' between on the one hand discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be spoken. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us (Hall 1996: 6).

Drawing on post-structuralist theory and especially on the works of Laclau and Derrida, identities are constituted through relations of difference, for example, Britishness is constituted through relations of difference with other identities like English or Scottish; they are contingent since there is nothing essential about them, they can be rearticulated even if they could appear sedimented and fixed. They are not the result of human nature, cultural essence or underlying structures of capitalism. By contingency post-structuralists do not mean accident or the absence of structures, nor does contingency oppose necessity; on the contrary, it can be conceptualized differently. For instance, Derrida refers to it in terms of undecidability whereas Lacan in terms of the real. Thus, relying on Lacan and Derrida, Laclau makes reference to 'radical contingency' because it cannot just be opposed to necessity. In fact, Laclau argues that "we are dealing not with a head-on negation of necessity but with its subversion." Accordingly, identity cannot be fully constituted because of this radical contingency (Thomassen 7).

Parekh too provides his own understanding of identity that is his well-known taxonomy of identity drawing mainly on Hegel's work though distancing himself from him as he rejected Hegel's metaphysical position towards the normative priority to humanity. Indeed, Parekh makes a distinction between three dimensions of identity: the individual, the collective and the universal. The three dimensions are to be held together in order to have a full account of identity, what Hegel calls a 'concrete universal' (Plant 183).

Influenced by Hegel, Parekh's three dimensions of identity¹ are related dialectically as identities developed throughout human history and the various cultural forms that this history has created. Ultimately, this dialectical view of identity facilitates the understanding of the complexity in the modern world though there will be no final knowledge, as would Hegel suggest about the three moments of identity, that is individuality, collectivity and universality. Parekh did realize the absence of a final resolution of these moments into one coherent whole at any moment in human history. These moments have a dynamic nature, so are the ways in which the identities are realized, they are also subject to change and development (Plant 184).

First, the individual identity relates to the individual person and how he sees himself, his sense of values, his interaction with others and his relation to various forms of social and cultural life. Some take the form of cultural, collective or specific identity that has not been chosen by the individual like the family; other forms of identity are unchosen such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Others are on the contrary chosen and self-assumed. Moreover, individual identity is conceived as something that we develop and achieve depending on the cultural context in which an individual is embedded (Plant 185-86).

Forms of collective identity are either a matter of choice or a matter of fate. In other words, some would join a cultural community, others would remain in the one into which they are born. Nevertheless, one is not just an individual or a member of a community or a group; he belongs also to the whole humanity. Therefore, a comprehensive account of identity must take into account these three dimensions of identity: as an individual, as a member of different social identities and as sharing common universal human values (Plant 186).

Of course, Parekh insists that the Universalist aspect of identity has to be achieved through the individual's development in his participation in cultural forms and mediate between the individual and the universal. He also emphasizes the link between the forms of social and collective identity and a universal standpoint. Parekh

¹ Hegel would call them 'moments'.

is concerned with a universal aspect of our identity which provides a normative standard for our approach to collective and communitarian forms of identity. This universal perspective provides normative standards in terms of which to judge cultural communities. He believes that changes in the attitudes of cultural communities can come through dialogue rather than through the law (Plant 187-88).

Parekh is definitely rejecting Hegel's absolutist view that a form of social, political and legal order exists in which all the complex aspects of identity could be reconciled, and therefore considers that all identities are part of a harmonious hierarchical whole and presents a political theory for analysing identity. Moreover, Parekh is strongly committed to a global ethic rooted in the idea of humanity. Indeed, in *A New Politics of Identity* (2008) while recognising the importance of communal and individual perspectives, he argued, "we should respect these identities but redefine and restructure them in the light of and bring them into harmony with the universal human identity. The two are no longer conflictual but complementary" (qtd. in Plant 190). However, Parekh's reasoning seems to suggest a kind of hierarchy in the forms of human identity. Besides, individual identity relates to cultural communities and in turn these communities must conform to the universal requirements of humanity.

Besides, universal or global ethics advanced by Parekh can be invoked to reshape the beliefs and practices of cultural communities who would resist. But Parekh believes that attitudes would change overtime by dialogue and consensus on global ethics. Parekh is definitely ambivalent about this question though rejecting a Rawlsian approach to universal value¹. For him, a consensus should emerge from pluralistic values. Parekh recognises the weight of pluralism as a value, indeed he says, "When one appreciates the ontological and epistemological importance of plurality and difference, one sees other cultures, religions and so, not as threats or rivals but as controversial partners, indeed as the very condition of one's own growth" (qtd. in Plant 191). Again for Parekh, a social identity is a construction so it can be subject to critique from a universal perspective and that some forms of social identity should not be recognised because they are incompatible with universal values. He added that

¹ That is the compelling nature of the universal values by using law and coercion.

political and legal recognition of identity can only work if the identity is clear and has a certain definite character in the public realm (Plant 201).

This legal recognition of identity will benefit marginalized members of society who share common identities. For Parekh, the aim of a diverse society would be one in which individuals can have “the freedom to explore, reconstitute and express our individual and collective identities in an environment free from obsession with uniformity”, and he argues that this position requires that “the state should under appropriate circumstances, recognise, respect, cherish and support legitimate identities” (qtd. in Plant 203). Those legitimate identities must be compatible with or reconstituted to become compatible with universal values. So, Parekh wants an identity suitably reinterpreted in the light of universal values.

- The Making of National Identities

Many thinkers have noticed that national identities are becoming dangerous when equated with race but valuable at the same time. Indeed, Bhikhu Parekh as a political theorist did succeed in depicting national identities showing how they should be valued and related to other ideas of nationhood such as ‘nations’ and ‘nationalism’. Likewise, other political theorists have examined national identities, they are referred to as Conservative Nationalists like Roger Scruton or Liberal Nationalists like David Miller though their thinking about national identities remains different from that of Parkeh as for them ideas of nationhood are shaped by Conservative or liberal traditions of thought (Uberoi 2015: 75-77).

Yet, for Parekh national identities can be thought in two ways: the identity of a political community like Britain and an identity of a person such as being ‘British’. National identities depict people that make political communities like Britain or France what they are. Therefore, an identity refers to features like people’s race or culture in order to discern what the members of a political community are. They are what they are thanks to the history in which they created their political institutions and ideals. So political community helps to shape and constitute what they are. People cannot say that they feel British without some conception of Britain. This conception

is often more vague than clear. Again, this conception may focus on the race, culture and history of a political community, their political ideals and institutions, all of which are often interpreted in different ways. National identities as conceived by Parekh entail a conception of a political community (Uberoi 2015: 80).

However, these political communities that were morally, ethnically and culturally uniform are no longer and have become as Habermas calls it ‘post-national’; this is the case of Britain as suggested by Parekh. While liberal nationalists assert that what makes an identity ‘national’ is surely a nation, therefore they define national identities by first defining nations, one can argue that ‘national’ does not imply a ‘nation’, it can simply refer to a political community. So, speaking of national identities is referring to the identity of a political community (Uberoi 2015: 81).

For Parekh, unlike Conservative and liberal nationalists there are two ways of thinking of national identities, for example, the identity of Britain and someone having a British identity. For him national identities are important not that he is an advocate of nationalism or is a nationalist. National identities are important since they are identities that people exhibit when they say they are ‘British’, when a person acknowledges such an identity, helps people to describe themselves to others. British are shaped by their political community and this makes these identities politically important. For instance, The English¹, Scottish and Welsh identities pre-date the British one. But it was only after the Union that being English or Scottish began to associate themselves with, and indeed encouraged to associate themselves with being British (Uberoi and Mclean 2009: 43).

- The Rise of Regional Nationalisms

The significance of devolution and European integration is different to national and ethnic minorities. If devolution means a realization of self-government to national minorities, it would mean exclusion for ethnic minorities because they could not easily embrace Scottish, Welsh or English identities. Therefore, with the rising of regional

¹ Note that the term ‘Englishness’ was first used by William Taylor of Norwich in 1805 imitating the term *Deutschtum* of the early German Romanticism.

nationalism, they would lose a haven that a multinational Britain has provided. The European integration also would benefit the national minorities but could mean an erosion of the British identity upon which ethnic minorities have traditionally relied (Nam-Kook 142).

To begin with, Welsh cultural nationalism is mainly a culturist movement committed to the preservation of language even though less than twenty per cent in Wales now speak Welsh. This can explain the rejection of devolution in 1979 and reveals also the limit of Welsh nationalism. Nevertheless, there were two major attempts at devolution in 1886 and 1893 when the Liberal leader Gladstone introduced unsuccessfully Irish Bills. Other attempts failed¹ until 1974 when legislation was introduced for Scotland and Wales and referenda were held on March 1, 1979. Thus, Wales rejected devolution with the votes split 20.2 per cent in favour and 79.8 per cent against² (Nam-Kook 143).

Devolution was achieved only in 1999 after the referendum held in 1997 though the approval rate was low as only 50.3 per cent voted in favour of executive devolution not a legislative devolution, since the Welsh people did choose an Assembly without a taxation right³. This clearly reveals the political limit of cultural Welshness on the one hand, and on the other hand the realism of the Welsh that Britishness is still advantageous. Besides, Welsh nationalists favoured considerably further European integration. In fact, they considered that Wales would be better represented in the European Union than through the British state because regional disparities did exist in Britain, and the European Union has a better regional policy and that national self-government would be guaranteed within the European Union (Nam-Kook 144).

In contrast, Scottish nationalism as stated by Nairn tended to be philistine⁴. It was a political movement as opposed to the culturist Welsh nationalism. The Scottish

¹ A Bill was introduced in 1912 and became a Law in 1914 but was suspended with the outbreak of the war, and in 1968 it was asked for Home Rule.

² There was a 58.8 per cent turnout.

³ The Government of Wales Act provides the devolution of secondary legislation and other executive powers.

⁴ It means indifferent to culture.

Nationalist Party (SNP)¹ has a deep electoral base winning 11.8 per cent of the vote in the 1983 general election and 20.06 per cent in 2001. Significantly, Scotland has created the Scottish Constitutional Convention in March 1989 in order to present proposals for devolution. However, the SNP withdrew from the Convention since it would not recommend independence and the Scottish Conservatives refused to join it because they believed that the convention already shared an independence mindset (Nam-Kook 145).

In the 1997 referendum 74.3 per cent to 25.7 per cent voted in favour of a Scottish Parliament, and 63.5 per cent to 36.0 per cent in favour of tax-varying power. Thus, power was devolved to the Scottish Parliament except five matters reserved exclusively to Westminster². What characterized Scottish nationalism is an anti-English sentiment; it rejected ‘The Thatcherite Revolution’ with its libertarian approach³. Even Thatcher described Scotland as the only place where libertarian revolution did not work. Note that later in September 2014 Scotland voted against Scottish independence as the No side won with 55.3 per cent⁴ (Nam-Kook 145).

Interestingly, both Scottish and Welsh nationalists supported European integration which fostered their national self-government. Conversely, British opposition to Europe is rather an English opposition. According to Timothy Garton Ash, writing in the *New York Times* in June 2001: “Europe and federalism could be the only way to save Britain and that a continued Conservative opposition to Europe could end up destroying the very thing it claimed to defend: the UK” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 146).

Now, if we turn to Labour’s devolution policy, we can state that national solidarity⁵ promoted by Labour during the Consensus era could no longer work with the emergence of global economic circumstances, as stated by Anthony Giddens. Thus, New Labour opted for the social solidarity of citizenship in one nation, which is

¹ It was founded in 1934.

² Macro-economic policy, social security, foreign affairs, defence, and constitutional matters.

³ The SNP supported a social democratic policy.

⁴ 44.7 per cent voted in favour of independence with a high turnout of 84.6 per cent.

⁵ Through redistributive taxation, full employment and welfare provisions.

described as multicultural, multiethnic and multinational citizenship through devolution policy. According to Tony Blair, devolution is neither some quasi-nationalist form of government, nor a watered down form of separatism, or a form of federalism. Devolution is asymmetrical in which Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own Parliament, but England does not because, as stated by Blair, “England has four-fifths of the population and the sense of national and regional identity and the desire for autonomy varies greatly” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 147). In order to solve this problem of asymmetry, New Labour first introduced a directly elected mayor, the election was held in 2000; and then proposed the establishment of eight regional assemblies to replace regional development agencies.

As far as European integration is concerned, New Labour’s stance on this question changed since in the 1950s Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell refused to join the European Common Market¹, New Labour argued that the only way that Britain can regain true sovereignty is through its committed participation in the European Union. For instance, Blair argued in a speech to the European Research Institute at the University of Birmingham in 2001, that joining the European Union does not bring the loss of British national sovereignty, “when Britain isolated itself in the past, we squandered our sovereignty leaving us sole masters of a shrinking sphere of influence...it is time for us to adjust to the fact...Europe is in Britain’s economic interest. Nearly 60 per cent of British trade is with the rest of Europe...Britain has no economic future outside Europe” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 148).

Labour’s British nationalism has always remained faithful to Britain though the shift of power from Old Labour to New Labour has brought a new approach which proposed asymmetrical devolution instead of ignorance of geography. So, New Labour did succeed in providing a new environment for both ethnic and national minorities. Asymmetrical devolution provided a different level of self-government to national minorities without causing the break up of Britain. Even if devolution seemed disadvantaging ethnic minorities, the strategy of multi-level governance did reinforce

¹ Europe at that time was seen as capitalist, and Labour was committed to Commonwealth.

Britishness as a central value allowing ethnic minorities to embrace Britishness as well as their own identity in a devolved Britain (Nam-Kook 149).

On the other hand, for the Conservatives, Britain has four core values: parliamentary sovereignty, individualist society, homogeneous culture, and an independent Island without commitment to Europe. Then, Conservative British nationalists rejected devolution of power to Scotland and Wales since its means giving power to anti-parliamentary groups that would destroy the identity and unity of Britain and also further integration into the European Union because it goes against the principle of parliamentary sovereignty¹.

In Thatcher's view a sovereign Parliament requires sovereign individuals, so British citizens cannot be members of minority groups. Regarding devolution, Thatcher recognised that Scotland and Wales have a right to national self-determination but which had to be exercised within the Union; she believed that demanding devolution as a right of nationhood inside the Union was absurd. This explains that New Labour challenged conservative nationalism which proclaims that the unitary nation must reign supreme, and that one nation inherited from the past must be protected from cultural contamination (Nam-Kook 150).

On the other hand, Conservatives have always campaigned against European integration. Indeed, in the 2001 general election, William Hague who was then Conservatives leader called on Eurosceptics outside of the Conservatives to back them at the election so that they could preserve an independent Britain and allow British people to remain sovereign in their country. He expressed during the campaign their fear to see Britain becoming a foreign land under Labour's government.

This can be seen as a premise to what happened in 2017 with Britain deciding to leave the European Union as on 29 March 2017 the countdown to the UK formally leaving the EU also known as the Brexit began². In fact, Hague declared to the *Guardian* on 6 March 2001, "It is time to bring it back, it is time to bring Britain home.

¹ It means that Parliament in which all subjects are represented has unlimited legislative authority and its decision cannot be disputed.

² The referendum was held on 23 June 2016.

Above all, the people of Britain believe in their country. They are not narrow nationalists. They are not xenophobes. But they take pride in what our country has achieved” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 150). Clearly, Hague opposed further European integration in order to preserve Britain and Britishness.

The notion of Englishness is an increasingly salient one in contemporary political and cultural life without becoming a vehicle for mainstream political mobilisation. Indeed, there are a growing commitment to English nationalism and deeper and wider identification with Englishness as opposed to Britishness, but this commitment to Englishness and the desire to articulate and explore English national identity is by no means a novel feature of British cultural life, nor is it necessarily an indication of the demise of Britishness. Indeed, we can consider for instance the words of former minister, David Blunkett who sees the chance to develop a new progressive form of Englishness that is not seen as a threat to Scotland but is “compatible with a civic value-led sense of Britishness” and “is strengthened from its position in a multinational Union” (qtd. in English *et al.* 122-25).

Of course Englishness has always been the dominant strain within Britain as stated by Krishan Kumar¹, “The English always remained the dominant group in the making and the maintenance of the empire. Hence they could think of it, rightly or wrongly, as ‘their’ empire or at least, they could take pride in what they could consider a predominantly English creation, in the sense that it was mainly English culture that was spread worldwide through the empire” (qtd. in English *et al.* 126-27). Furthermore, nationalism emerged in England in the late Victorian period out of a need to distinguish it from other forms of nationalism stirring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; this is why as suggested by Georges Orwell, it must be viewed as a typology of nationalism against British, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish nationalism (H. Brown 8).

However, in 2000 the then Home Secretary Jack Straw warned of the “potentially very aggressive” nature of English nationalism, and the leader of the

¹ See “The Making of English National Identity.” *Political Identities and Public Intellectuals in Britain Since 1850*, edited by Julia Stapleton (2001).

Conservative William Hague described it as “the most dangerous of all forms of nationalism that can arise within the UK” (qtd. in English *et al.* 129). Such fears have informed the unwillingness of politicians to engage with Englishness. In its place, there is a strong case for a concerted re-evaluation of the relationship between British and English identity, and a consideration of how a positive vision of Englishness can complement, rather than threaten a rejuvenated civic Britishness.

There were also calls from English nationalists for the establishment of an English Parliament considering that both Scotland and Wales are sources of trouble. The rise of English nationalism during the 1990s was a reactionary movement against further European integration. English nationalists also oppose multiculturalism considering that the increasing number of ethnic minorities undermine a homogeneous Anglo-Saxon society. The ‘new Englishness’ is associated with the ‘Little Englander’ populism of Mrs. Thatcher in her most Europhobic form, and is regarded as a contingent, opportunistic and potentially dangerous political force.

But other moderate nationalists as Roger Scruton asked in his book *England: an Elegy* (2000) about what should do England in a time of Scottish, Welsh and Irish nationalism and when the English customs and institutions are being dismantled and English nationalism disappeared. Scruton ultimately criticized European integration and the transfer of sovereignty to the European Union. English nationalists’ stance is clearly that of preserving the Englishness of the white majority, rejecting therefore both a multinational tradition of Britain and a multiethnic legacy of the British Empire (Nam-Kook 152).

One can consider the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and specifically the results of the Brexit referendum¹ nationally across the four nations. Clearly, there were differences which reveal that the vote in England was decisive². It has been suggested that one major factor which affected seriously the result of the referendum is the rise of English nationalism since the latter has always

¹ It took place on June 23, 2016.

² 51.9 per cent voted to leave the EU: 53.2 per cent in England, 38 per cent in Scotland, 52.5 per cent in Wales and 44.2 per cent in Northern Ireland.

been interconnected with Euroscepticism. But more generally the impact of immigration upon the United Kingdom economy is robustly linked to voting in referendum (H. Brown 3).

It is true that Scottish, Welsh and English nationalists seek more exclusive identities, and have always been reticent to accept British identity, however devolution can definitely meet the need of national minorities while seeming disadvantaging ethnic minorities who do not fit neatly into the ethnically defined national identities. This situation has been corrected by New Labour's efforts to reshape Britain as a multi-level governance through asymmetrical devolution and European integration. The apparently disadvantageous situation for ethnic minorities due to devolution has been aptly countered by locating Britain as a center of multi-level governance and reinforcing Britishness as a central value of that entity.

3.2 Britishness: A Project Discourse

Britishness is, undoubtedly, a contemporary issue because devolution has highlighted the question of the future of Britain and ultimately the nature of Britishness; another challenge facing Britain is of course the diversity of society and the search for social cohesion and solidarity. Against this background, Gordon Brown has launched his Britishness project aiming at producing a statement for British values.

Being British today is not easy because the British identity is no longer the confident structure of earlier times. British people are more aware of their separate identity, as Scottish, or English or Welsh, this other national identity is regarded as a primary identity, and the British identity only a secondary identity or even an identity they no longer want. As a consequence nationalists believe that this primary national identity should determine the boundaries of the state and call for the break-up of the United Kingdom into its component nations. They also think that the British state as well as the British national identity was a political creation which served the interests of some groups (Gamble and Wright 2009: 1).

Britishness as an idea and a set of loyalties emerged markedly from at least the eighteenth century, it was superimposed over, and had to co-exist with other identities.

According to Manuel Castells ¹ Britain is a communal entity “constructed in people’s minds and collective memory by the sharing of history and political projects” (qtd. in Colley 22). The very existence of Britishness was due to mainly ideological, governmental and economic forces, in addition to internal trade, migration and intermarriage between people from the four countries of the United Kingdom. There were also other influences in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries mainly Protestantism as the majority religion which allowed for commonalities of culture, language and belief; wars with other European powers such as Spain and France though there was no longer an accepted foreign enemy perceived as ‘other’ against which Britannic solidarities can be rallied as was the case in the past. Britain’s monarchy too persisted as a focus for allegiance, but the royal family has lost much of its former capacity to focus a sense of British national unity (Colley 22).

Moreover, the Union suffered its first major blow with the separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom in 1922. The allegiance to the British state remained strong and the roots of Britishness went deep especially with the advent of democracy in the twentieth century which increased ideas of Britishness through the creation of British institutions such as the BBC and the National Health Service. The war also had an immense impact on the British regarding the sacrifices made to defend the British state and the British Empire. However, attachment to Britishness began to diminish with the weakening of the two enterprises that symbolized really Britishness in the twentieth century, that is Empire and welfare as both were sustaining support for the British state in the four nations (Gamble and Wright 2009: 2).

Therefore, Gordon Brown decided to revive the idea of Britishness² because support for Unionist parties diminished considerably particularly in Scotland, he saw the spectre of Scottish secession from the Union as a political threat and an existential one; and that the British state is no longer the focus for the unquestioned loyalties of the society, that is no longer sustained by what Abraham Lincoln called ‘the mystic chords of memory’. That realisation has been fundamental to the whole New Labour

¹ See *The Power of Identity* (1997).

² Note that his interest in Britishness has not been constant in his political life as in the 70s he was for a third way between an unconditional Scottish nationalism and British unionism.

project; and the weakening of the Empire conjugated with the strength of nationalism has made the purpose of the union, and therefore of Britishness less obvious (Marquand 14).

The Britishness project launched by New Labour was seen as a challenge to 'One Nation' conservatism. It was with Blair that the concept of Britishness took a new meaning to become a significant feature of the nation's political discourse. Indeed, New Labour's Britishness project was undoubtedly thought by Mark Leonard¹ who explains in a Demos pamphlet written in 1997 *New Mechanisms for Renewing Our Identity* that: "It is precisely because nations have been recreating their identities throughout recorded history that logos and branding techniques, advertising campaigns and festivals, speeches and trade fairs become the new tools with which national identity may be manipulated by the contemporary British state" (qtd. in Pitcher 47). George Orwell's long 1940 essay *The Lion and the Unicorn* can also be seen as a precursor of this new concern for forging a strong national identity.

Brown's own contribution has been whiggish based on freedom and evolutionary progress. He also mentioned in his speech the British tradition of liberty. He has attempted to provide a good story of Britishness, about culture, civilisation and enlightenment. He connected Britishness with the story of free health care, education for all and widening opportunity. So, he regarded institutions such as the NHS, BBC and British Council as having a vital role in transmitting progressive values synonymous with Britishness. His perception of Britishness emphasized and celebrated the uniqueness of the United Kingdom and stresses the multicultural, multinational basis of the United Kingdom. Indeed, Brown states in an interview in 1999:

I see Britain as being the first country in the world that can be a multicultural, multiethnic and multinational state. America, at its best, is a multicultural and multiethnic society, but America does not have nationalities within identifiable political units in the way that Britain does. We have a chance to forge a unique pluralist democracy where diversity becomes a source of strength. (qtd. in Hassan 90)

¹ He was a policy advisor to New Labour and the inventor of the term 'Cool Britannia'.

Brown's ultimate aim was to tell a people's story rather than a traditional account. Brown decided to embark on this journey because of the damage that the Thatcherite revolution has inflicted on the beliefs and confidence of social democracy. Therefore, Brown's account of Britishness was an attempt to combine a synthesis of the Labour story of Britain which reached its apex in the 1945-70 period with an embrace and advocacy of the post-Thatcherite view of the world. This uneasy and conflicting alliance mirrors the strange mix within New Labour itself that is elements of social democratic policy within a wider neo-liberal polity (Hassan 91-92).

Moreover, the asymmetrical union that characterizes the United Kingdom has to some extent shifted its inconsistencies and anomalies from Scotland and Wales to England. Therefore, to resolve the English Question known as 'the West Lothian Question'¹, that is calling for "English votes for English laws" as it seems unfair to allow Scots MPs to vote English laws, then Brown although not directly did chose Britishness as an attempt to identify a set of values and stories which unite the English into the United Kingdom (Hassan 93).

Interestingly, Brown is the only politician to have devoted sustained attention to the implication of devolution for 'Britishness'. In his series of speeches on Britishness extending back to the late 1990s, he has generally noted that while devolution might seem to offer a challenge to the cohesion of state and society in the United Kingdom, that challenge is contained by shared values of Britishness. His British Council Annual Lecture in 2004 put the point forcefully:

Take devolution and nationalism. While the UK has always been a country of different nations and thus of plural identity...the issue is whether we retreat into more exclusive identities rooted in 19th century conceptions of blood, race and territory, or whether we are still able to celebrate a British identity which is bigger than the sum of its parts and a Union that is strong because of the values we share and because of the way these values are expressed through our history and our institutions. (qtd. in Jeffery 113)

Then, he proposed a refreshed British identity, once again celebrating something that is bigger than the sum of its parts. For him Britain used to be defined by certain

¹ It was raised in 1979 by West Lothian Scotland, MP Tam Dalyell.

achievements in particular its empire, its military victories, its tradition of liberty, and its vibrant civil society. But all these achievements are part of the past, so his new idea of Britishness was that it should express Britain's economic success which allowed the development of a new sense of national purpose (Gamble and Wright 2009: 4).

The reconstruction of the British state to take account of non-English national aspirations was a crucial part of the New Labour project; asymmetric devolution to elected assemblies combined with the supremacy of the Westminster Parliament which was also the English Parliament was intended to take the sting out of the varied nationalisms of the British periphery. New Labour saw that the state was losing legitimacy, the devolution settlements were supposed to halt the drain, unfortunately they did not so, Brown's talk of Britishness was a response to that failure (Marquand 19).

So, he built his concept of Britishness on a number of key values: liberty for all, responsibility by all, fairness to all, and also a number of key qualities: creativity, innovation, enterprise, and internationalism. Brown is for an inclusive British identity, this explains his search for a set of British values; Britishness for Brown is inclusive, it is "a strong sense of shared patriotism", he argued, "Patriotism... defines a nation not by race or ethnicity, but by seeing us all as part of a collective project from which we all gain and to which we all contribute. Society is – as the great thinkers have long told us – a contract, even a covenant, in which we recognise that our destinies are interlinked" (qtd. in Thomassen 224).

However, Brown's conception of 'British values' is more contested than aspired for. In fact, it has been suggested that instead of seeking a version of Britishness that identifies it with social cohesion or political union, it is better to choose procedural values such as tolerance towards the views of others and living together so that to find a common ground despite of cultural differences. Cameron too criticises Brown's willingness to institutionalise Britishness, though the state has to take a role to clarify what British people share (Thomassen 6).

Moreover, critics argued that talking of Britishness in terms of values rather than policies or institutions is rather nebulous. Moreover, Brown's reliance on shared British heritage and shared British values to keep the Union held together ignores that many of these values are not specific to Britain or to British culture. Furthermore, people in different parts of the United Kingdom do not have to share the same values and sense of purpose to support remaining British. So the future of Britishness may rest on supporting institutions that embody the Union. Brown's response is that Britishness is the sum of the mutual articulation of the three values and this articulation is the result of a particular British experience (Thomassen 25).

Parekh too has responded to those who wrongly argue that these values¹ are not uniquely British, affirming that they are indeed so since they "are the products of the struggles of the British people and are embedded in and draw their vitality from their unique historical experience." These are collective achievement and the British prioritise these values differently from the way other societies do which make of Britain a moral community (Parekh 2009:38).

We have asserted earlier that there is nothing essential or natural about identity, so is the case of Britishness, the question is therefore why certain discourses of Britishness have become dominant. One can answer this question drawing on Laclau's theory of hegemony². Indeed, Brown's discourse on Britishness³ is clearly a hegemonic project to create a collective identity that will include different particular identities by making the latter identify with, and prioritise the common identity. Brown's Britishness discourse is a contemporary example of identity politics, it is an alternative to other discourses or other representations of Britishness⁴; his discourse aims to articulate a collective identity which would integrate an increasingly diverse society (Thomassen 21).

¹ He means individual liberty, equality of respect and rights, tolerance and the spirit of moderation and fair play.

² His theory was articulated in 1985, it was a deconstruction of the concept of hegemony in Marxism.

³ In which he distances himself from Old Labour discourse based on a class analysis of British society.

⁴ An alternative to Thatcherite discourse that there is no need for national identities in a globalized world.

3.3 Re-designing Britishness in an Age of Ethnic Diversity

The question is how are devolution and European integration perceived from the view point of ethnic minorities. It may seem that there is no direct relationship between devolution and ethnic minority since according to the 2001 census, of the 4.6 million ethnic minorities in Britain, 96 per cent, that is 4.4 million live in England, only 2.1 per cent in Scotland and 2.1 per cent in Wales. But if one looks at the level of national identity that ethnic minorities would choose to join, the future development of devolution does have implications for the survival of ethnic minorities.

One can consider the view point of multiculturalists in interpreting Britishness from the controversy surrounding the Parekh Report, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. In fact, the Commission on the Future of Multiethnic Britain, chaired by Bhikhu Parekh, which was established by the Runnymede Trust¹, published its report in October 2000². The report argued for the urgent need of re-imagining Britain as a multicultural nation, it also suggested some policy recommendations, such as the abolition of asylum vouchers, full appeal rights against deportation, an establishment of human rights commission, and government's official declaration of Britain as a multicultural society.

The Parekh Report was decidedly an attempt to open up Britain's history to scrutiny; however it was largely dismissed by much of the British press. Indeed, a severe controversy was born because of two chapters in the report: Chapter 2, 'Rethinking the National Story' and Chapter 3, 'Identities in Transition'. Broadly speaking, it is argued that for ethnic minorities, Britishness is a reminder of colonization and that it has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations. The report added: "whiteness is nowhere featured as an explicit condition of being British, but it is widely understood that Britishness is racially coded. Race is deeply entwined with political culture and with the idea of nation; and underpinned by a distinctively British kind of reticence" (CFMEB 38-39).

¹ It is a famous UK Race Relations think tank.

² The project was launched by the Home secretary Jack Straw in January 1998.

The report clearly stated that the deep rooted antagonism to racial and cultural difference has to disappear otherwise the idea of a multicultural post-nation remains an empty promise. The report also described Britain as ‘a community of communities’. Consequently, many media reported that the report suggested that the term Britishness has racial connotation and was no longer appropriate in a multicultural society (Nam-Kook 153). Indeed, heavy attacks came from the media; for instance, Anatole kaletsky, a columnist for *The Times* said: “They have forgotten Britain’s remarkable records of openness in absorbing minorities.” Boris Johnson, editor of *The Spectator*, asserted that, “They want to fragment and balkanize our country, to produce...segregated minorities whom they can represent at the taxpayers expense” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 154).

On the other hand, the governmental reaction came from Jack Straw who declared, “Unlike the Runnymee Trust, I firmly believe that there is a future for Britain and a future for Britishness. I am proud to be British and of what I believe to be the best of British values.” He even accused the Commission of ignoring what Britain had achieved in race relations, claiming “Indeed, last year I spoke publicly about how the concept of Britishness has become an inclusive plural one with people happily defining themselves as black British, or Chinese British” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 154). Clearly, Straw through his statement denounced a libertarian approach which described Britain as a community of communities and a conservative approach which refuted an inclusive plural Britain.

Parekh was forced to respond to all these attacks, explaining that the report was not an attack on Britain or British history, “we do not denigrate British history and ask instead for a just and balanced view. Too many members of the ethnic minority community were seen at best as welcome tenants in the UK rather than common owners of the country.” Lord Parekh published a letter to the editor of *The Times*, in which he mentioned again an official opinion of the Commission:

All we suggest is that, given the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales and eventually in English regions, Britain’s nationhood is best secured by seeing itself as a community of communities, we say racial not racist. For centuries the British population was

overwhelmingly white, and hence it is perfectly natural that Britishness connotes whiteness. Things are now changing. We warmly welcome the increasing deracialization of the new Britishness which allows blacks, Asians, and others to accept it with enthusiasm. (qtd. in Nam-Kook 154)

However, David Coleman declared in a letter to *The Times*, “Despite the Runnymede Trust report’s many ill-advised proposals and the misguided assumptions; its recommendation that Britain should be declared officially multicultural may be helpful” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 155). Clearly, all this controversy about the Parekh Report reveals that Britain and Britishness still have supporters and have a future especially when faced by otherness on the form of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Still, Britishness seems more positive from the viewpoint of ethnic minorities because of its republican connotation¹ whereas for national minorities their identities seem more exclusive and tend therefore to discard ethnic minorities. So, devolution as well as the break up of Britain is less advantageous for ethnic minorities who can hardly be ethnically defined as English, Scots or Welsh. For instance, a General Household Survey in 2001 showed that 57 per cent of ethnic minorities chose their identity as British, while only 11 per cent chose their identity as one of English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish. Not surprisingly, only 44 per cent of white British chose their identity as British, while 54 per cent chose their identity as one of English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish (Nam-Kook 155).

Britishness according to many liberal writers seems to be more attractive to ethnic minorities as they have found space within the broad set of values, laws and attachments which the British identity encompasses. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown warned against the negative effects of ethnic nationalism on ethnic minorities, and called for embracing Britishness as a civic device to bind people together without recourse to ethnicity (English *et al.* 29).

Linda Colley, who was interested in the future of Britain and the subsequent question of Britishness, argued in a lecture delivered in 1999 at 10 Downing street,

¹ Ethnic minorities could be British regardless of colour or race.

that: “Since so many of the constituent parts of the old-style Britishness have been dismantled or have ceased to function effectively, is it possible successfully to re-design and refloat a concept of Britishness for the 21st century?” (qtd. in Bryant 5). Colley’s aim is to convince all the inhabitants of the islands that they are equal and valued citizens irrespective of whatever identity they may individually select to prioritise. It is important for her to “pillage the past selectively and engage with the present, to evaluate heritage and draw upon cultural capital.” All Britons could agree to commemorate the abolition of the slave trade, the Reform Act of 1832 and she suggested why not commemorate the independence of India in 1947 since it is part of Britain’s history too. For her Britishness “is a synthetic and capacious concept with no necessary ethnic or cultural overtones, capable of sustaining the multinational, multicultural and infinitely diverse Britain of today” (qtd. in Bryant 5).

It is worth noting that Britishness is a cluster of attributes and tendencies constantly being reshaped, it is also the expression of common experience always and forever on the move. Thus, discussing Britishness poses the question of whether Britain is in the process of breaking up. Of course, the future of Britain is a matter of choice, its shape has already changed because this union state is no longer a uniform state and it will inevitably change further. This is why the distinction between Britishness as identity and Britishness as political association is so important. Most people carry with them a collection of identities and loyalties, in an often disorderly mixture, and this is perfectly compatible with membership of the same civic association. So, Britishness is about both but they are not the same. An independent Scotland will have made a decision about political association, but it will carry the historical and cultural baggage of Britishness. A Scotland that rejects political independence will not have diminished its Scottishness. So, Britishness enables the flourishing of multiple identities and loyalties (Parekh 2009: 36).

Moreover, Britishness is not only about institutions and interest because central British institutions are being denationalised or renationalised as devolution develops, this can represent an opportunity to combine commonality and diversity. Ultimately there are competing versions of Britishness, the challenge remains to make of

Britishness a comfortable accommodation with plurality and diversity. In March 2000 the then Labour Chancellor Gordon Brown declared, “Instead of a bland Britain, Britain is buzzing with difference; no longer a state in monochrome, but a nation in living colour.” Brown’s metaphor suggests that contemporary Britain is diverse in both colour and custom. Parekh states that, “Britain is made up of four ethno-cultural communities...it is a distinct political community with a recognisable identity. Over the centuries its constituent nations have interacted so as to modify the condition of one another’s existence and created a common political culture” (qtd. in Pitcher 39).

The destiny of Britishness continues to be debated. New Labour as the ruling party from 1997 to 2010 focused on the core values of Britishness as essential to the development of democracy. According to New Labour, Britishness suited both national and ethnic minorities. So, they successfully dealt with the challenges facing Britain namely devolution, European integration and multiculturalism. Indeed, New Labour acknowledged the constitutive character of national identity which is compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism. New Labour argued that a traditional British national identity can be compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism. New Labour succeeded in including ethnic minorities in the political community especially after the 2001 race riots that swept northern England cities (Nam-Kook 156-57).

In the light of these observations, Britain and Britishness seem still to have a future. It is worth recalling to those who have predicted the demise of British identity that for many inhabitants of the British Isles some sort of dual pattern of identification to nation and state has for a long time been the norm. Moreover, while many of the elements of traditional British identity have been eroded or greatly altered, this seems to have produced a refashioning rather than disintegration of what it means to be British.

The best hope for the survival of the Union and ultimately the political concept of Britishness is to be found certainly in the promotion of national and ethnic identities as complementary rather than conflictual identities. Such layered or hyphenated identities might be seen as practical means of reconciling the tensions of political

organisation and cultural identity within a liberal framework. Parekh argues that the wider British identity and the narrower national identities do not compete in the same political space, and since each generally respects the other, every Briton can be British without ceasing to be Scottish, Welsh or Irish (Parekh 2009: 37).

Britishness has never been a fixed entity but rather a fluid one and even contested for centuries starting with the Irish who were frequently considered racially different in the nineteenth century and also in the 1880s with the Jewish immigration. So, there is an urgent need to unite around a shared set of values which would define a common British identity that includes ethnic minority cultures. For instance, a MORI poll conducted in 2002 revealed that the majority of British people were in favour of defining Britishness in an inclusive manner and that ethnicity was less important than attitudes and behaviour in defining Britishness. Even the Policy Exchange Report revealed that Muslims are well integrated and do not regard their religion as a barrier of being British. So this is clearly the position of those who think it possible to reconstruct a national identity in a cosmopolitan Britain (Kallevik 9).

Parekh is convinced that Britain just as it has learned to respect the diversity of its four nations should be able to respect the diversity of its immigrants. For instance, the Indians just as Scots can be British without abandoning the valuable components of their cultural identity; immigrants can even shape the wider British culture, and reinterpret their cultures accordingly. He has aptly argued that, “Britain is constantly in the making, it is not a fixed entity, it is an ongoing political project, and to be British is to participate in this project of commitment and critical sympathy” (Parekh 2009: 39).

To conclude one can say that British identity is a global identity and certainly multicultural, constituted of national and ethnic cultural communities. Britain’s image of a providential and an exceptional nation as well as the quest for Britishness have definitely influenced the whole stand of the British nation which is today facing a very difficult withdrawal from the European Union without a prospect of return.

CHAPTER III: GOVERNING THROUGH MULTICULTURALISM

Britain has faced the challenges of multiculturalism as she dealt with the issues of integration and immigration since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, Britain has clearly adopted an 'open door' policy which was meant to guarantee a trans-national British identity; however, Britain has to control the unexpected mass immigration from the New Commonwealth instead of promoting integration of different cultures. Therefore, Britain was faced by the end of the 1980s with the reality of a multicultural society which needed the adoption of policies to promote integration and equality, and ultimately to tackle the problems of discrimination and racism.

The question at stake is the policy response to diversity in multicultural Britain. Indeed, multiculturalism in Britain has been perceived as relating to immigrants rather than concerning the whole society. This has led some commentators to argue that the perception that multicultural policies are only concerned with non-whites has caused hostility and separatism. Moreover, the development of multiculturalism coincided with the acceptance that ethnic minorities have the right to retain their cultures within of course limits which has ultimately given rise to debates about cultural rights (Baglieri Campo 22).

The struggle for cultural survival concerns both natives and immigrants. This leads ultimately to the development of multicultural policies whose aims are the recognition of minorities' cultural rights and integration of minorities into the wider society. Indeed, Britain responded uniquely to multicultural challenges which reflect its historical legacy as an Empire, having immigration from the New Commonwealth and having implemented devolution to Scotland and Wales. British multicultural policies are deeply embedded in the history of the British Empire without which Britain would not have become a multi-ethnic and diverse state, and are undoubtedly linked to immigration policy adopted by Great Britain. Accordingly, many commentators have noted the discrepancy between Britain's restrictive immigration policy and the integration policy adopted as a result of a political consensus.

As discussed earlier, multiculturalism promotes cultural pluralism and seeks to redress the inequalities between majorities and minorities. However, multiculturalism does have another meaning when it refers to policies adopted by the state to manage cultural diversity as the result of non-white immigration after the end of the Second World War. Hence, in this chapter, one needs to retain a policy definition of multiculturalism that proposes an approach for dealing with cultural diversity in a multiethnic society. Multiculturalism means a public policy which aims at managing cultural diversity; for instance, multiculturalism is the official policy of Canada and Australia¹.

Thus, multiculturalism will be used as a prescriptive term, meaning the policies reinforced by the government as an acknowledgment of ethnic diversity. We should differentiate between ‘diversity’ which is simply descriptive and ‘multiculturalism’ which supposes government responsibility for designing policies meant for preserving and promoting diversity. One way of understanding multiculturalism as a policy is to consider Parekh’s contribution to this subject. Indeed, Parekh unlike other political theorists has been keen to appreciate the significance of multiculturalism as a major subject of public policy making the connections between the political philosophy and the public policy of multiculturalism.

Therefore, my aim is to tackle the range of policies that have been developed to govern cultural diversity in Britain, and to study multiculturalism from two different but overlapping perspectives. The first focuses on group identities or rights and the way they interact with individual rights; the second perspective is meant to analyse different policies developed to manage and govern ethnic minorities in Britain from the 1960s until the last Labour government. Of course, I shall make a connection between both perspectives as policies rely definitely on laws that guarantee respect of individual rights on the one hand; and on the other hand, frictions may arise between individual rights and group rights as in the Salman Rushdie controversy². Moreover, I will analyse multicultural policies while identifying their shortcomings and the new

¹ Although a controversial debate has taken place about whether that policy failed or is still the right one.

² It will be tackled in section 1.

policies that developed on the basis of the governmental reports following the 2001 riots.

1. The Politics of Difference

Thatcher's one nation discourse, as seen in the previous chapter, assumed clearly nations to be culturally homogeneous communities. Indeed, Thatcher's concept of one nation was to be found in her 1988 Education Reform Act which emphasised the prioritization of British history, the use of Standard English, and the prioritization of Christianity in religious education and celebration. Obviously, Thatcher's one nation discourse rejected cultural and racial characteristics of minorities (Nam-Kook 69).

The New Right ideology drawing on libertarian individualism ignored the quest for cultural survival and adopted a colour-blind ideal, it considered only one aspect of the minorities' need that is respect for the identity of each individual regardless of gender, race or ethnicity, but failed to recognise cultural traditions of the individual as a member of minority groups. Hence, Michael Oakeshott¹ argued that Thatcher's one nation was a strong plan which did not consider customs, and thus imposed homogeneity over diversity (Nam-Kook 69).

The New Right philosophy combining characteristics of neo-liberalism and those of neo-conservatism allows no space for multiculturalism. The New Right argued that erasing rather than recognising difference brings better justice for minorities as well as majorities. The conservative authoritarianism of the New Right clearly does not tolerate cultural diversity nor cultural difference. Yet, this New Right discourse has been supplanted by a genuine commitment on the part of multiculturalists as well as New Labour to tackle ethnic disadvantage and integration of ethnic minorities via policies responding to the fact of diversity, what explicitly

¹ A British political theorist and philosopher best known for his critique of modern rationalism; his philosophy is a form of objective idealism. His work had an immense influence on his former student Bhikhu Parekh.

Charles Taylor¹ calls the ‘politics of recognition’, that is the struggle for reciprocal recognition among equals (Olssen190).

This section aims at identifying cultural rights as essential to the cultural survival of minority groups and ultimately to the politics of recognition. Another interrelated theme pertains to the discourse of citizenship embodied in the Crick Report that clearly undermines the principle of difference. It has been suggested to be replaced by the concept of ‘differentiated citizenship’ which makes room for substantial cultural difference. Finally, the politics of difference would lead to accommodating minorities on the grounds of equal respect, equal treatment and equal opportunity.

1.1 Situating Cultural Rights in the British Context

The major question is related to the importance of cultural differences and thereby the significance of cultural rights in a multi-ethnic society. Indeed, there are groups who are for cultural survival, recognising the legitimacy of cultural groups, and others who criticize cultural pluralism, considering the individual as an agency of culture. Accordingly, there are supporters of cultural rights who argue that we should respect the cultural identity of individuals as well as groups since culture is an important element of an individual’s life; and those who criticize the role of culture but recognize the value of culture for human beings only instrumentally and provisionally (Nam-Kook 14). A central starting point is to define cultural rights. Indeed, cultural rights mean the right an individual or a community has to express, maintain and transmit their cultural identity. Since “culture is an integral part of an individual’s sense of identity, cultural rights are parts of human rights” and should be granted to the minority communities (Parekh 2006: 211).

Now, it is interesting to consider these questions in the British context, but we have first to consider two different positions embodied in the well-known debate

¹ He is a Canadian philosopher who has been dubbed a communitarian for emphasising the social nature of selfhood and the obligations that individuals have to the communities in which they live.

between Parekh and Barry¹. From these two conflicting positions one can demonstrate the quest for cultural survival within the British context through privileging mutual dialogue and respect which would guarantee political rights for minorities.

On the one hand, Barry supports individual equality over cultural rights. Indeed, Barry argues that culture is not the problem or the solution as groups can suffer from discrimination or material deprivation, but culture is far from being responsible of this situation. He is, therefore, against the devolution of special rights to cultural minority groups because it would threaten the principle of egalitarian impartiality; it would be also non sense to privilege the cultural survival of groups over the individual bearers of that culture (Barry 68).

On the other hand, Parekh emphasizes the importance of cultural rights as a way to achieve equality; and unlike Barry who negates the role of cultural groups, he argues that human collectivities² are made up of individuals who are shaped by groups “neither can be reduced to the other, nor declared either self-subsistent or fictitious.” Furthermore, according to Parekh equality is important still other competing demands have to be taken into consideration. Thus, equality has to be defined in a culturally sensitive way so that equal treatment can be achieved only by considering all cultures’ differences (Parekh 2006: 215).

In contrast, Barry criticizes openly the devolution of cultural rights to groups. He supports a priority of the individual as the ultimate agency of culture. However, he recognizes the importance of culture but only as it prevents instability that would be caused by an extreme form of pluralism. He argues that culture has no moral value; it is an instrumental method which would be meaningful when it contributes to enhance individual rights of fair liberty and equal opportunity. Barry explains that there is no reason to explain the protection of majority or minority cultures since the individual cannot be dominated by one culture as he can choose another culture (Barry 285,315).

¹ Brian Barry provided in his book *Culture and Equality* (2001) a case against group rights.

² They represent the beliefs and practices of their members.

Finally, Parekh acknowledges the importance of culture¹ in shaping the individual's identity as human beings can enjoy freedom through cultural interpretation; thus cultural rights of individuals and groups should be respected. He emphasizes again the fact that cultural communities may demand rights to maintain their collective identities, these are called 'collective or communal rights' though they remain difficult to accommodate and are not easily granted, as according to some opponents, only the individuals can be primary bearers of rights and that all collective rights are reducible to them². Though as suggested by Parekh, human collectivities do exist, they are made up of individuals and are equally shaped by them. Thus, Parekh successfully made the case for these collective rights explaining that the latter protect individual rights because communities are better able to defend the rights of their members than the latter can do individually (Parekh 2006: 213-16).

As a final point, one can highlight Barry and Parekh's conflicting positions in the British context through their reactions to the Rushdie affair.

- *The Salman Rushdie Affair*

In the Rushdie affair, the British Muslims who were against the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988) made two claims, that the book cease to be sold and that the author of the book must be prosecuted under the British blasphemy law.

I will start by explaining briefly the features of the controversy including the actions and reactions to the publication of the book. Parekh did see clearly the entails of the Rushdie affair at the very beginning of the controversy. He wrote in *The Independent*³, "A political crisis is likely a magnifying mirror reflecting some of the deepest trends and tendencies developing in society. A wise nation meditates on it, and uses it as a means for self-knowledge. The Rushdie affair has raised issues likely to preoccupy us for a long time"(qtd. in Weller 2).

¹ Each culture has its own *raison d'être* and cultures have equal value.

² It is argued that only individuals are real whereas collectivities are fictitious.

³ 23 February 1989.

It was a *fatwa* of the Ayatollah Khomeini calling on the assassination of the author that propelled the controversy into the public sphere. Broadly speaking, *The Satanic Verses* deals with themes of migration and exile, but what really caused this controversy are indeed the references made in the novel that deeply touched the sanctities of Islam as the author uses allegory and satire in criticism of Islam, though literary critics responded that the book was not history, it was a fiction (Weller 17).

Interestingly but unsurprisingly, Parekh and Barry handled this controversy in two distinct directions. Indeed, Parekh tackled this question through freedom of speech, declaring, “imagine a novelist writing about the tragic victims of Auschwitz! Suppose he mocks and ridicules them and trivializes their suffering.” According to Parekh, one would be right to express his disapproval and even outrage against such a novel, for he explained in this affair the author misused his freedom in a society that is tolerant. Consequently, Parekh argued that an author’s freedom of expression has to be balanced against the right of others to their individual and collective self-respect (Nam-Kook 16).

Along similar line, Naguib Mahfouz¹, who published in 1959 a controversial book, *Children of the Alley* portraying God of the Old Testament as dying, and which was banned, made a very interesting comment on the Rushdie affair. Though he recognised that he did not read the book, he argued that, “we must accept the freedom of authors. Only this is not a small thing. Freedom is not to do what you want. There must be some rules, if only from the conscience” (qtd. in Weller 17).

In contrast, Barry claimed that the freedom of speech, which includes the right to mock, ridicule and lampoon, should be defended on a universal human rights level. In fact, he endorsed the British government’s decision which refused to punish Rushdie. This explains the fact that Muslims who campaigned against the book were seen as threatening freedom of expression. For Barry, it is not, “this is the way we do things here”, as Charles Taylor describe it, but rather, “this is the way things ought to be done everywhere: we do things that way here not because it is a part of our culture but because it is the right thing to do” (Barry 284).

¹ He was a famous Egyptian author, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1988.

On the other hand, the Muslim campaign against the book embodied in the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance explained that their campaign was not for censorship but rather to ask the publishers to insert ahistorical and factual erratum in the book. Politically, Ken Hargreaves, MP introduced a motion in the House of Commons on 1st December 1988 expressing regret of the distress caused to Muslims by the publication of the book. This of course was a first sign of sympathy on the part of politicians (Weller 25).

Eventually, there was Muslim discomfort which culminated into disturbances and even the burning of the book in Bradford on 14 January 1989. Some authors explained this act as a reaction from Muslims because of their frustrations and inability to achieve wide publicity for their case. For instance, Anne Devlin writing in *The Guardian*¹ explained that, “while published authors all have a platform, the Muslims demonstrating have no platform”, and that “street demonstrations are therefore a legitimate form of expression for people who wish to voice their opinions and have no other means of expression in public” (qtd. in Weller 28).

As far as the Blasphemy Law² is concerned, on 27 February 1989, under the leadership of Teddy Taylor, Conservative MP for Southend, a delegation of British Muslims from the Islamic Defence Council when visiting John Patten, the Minister of State at the Home Office, asked for equal treatment under the blasphemy laws. However, this request was not accepted as the government was neither going to extend, nor abolish the current law. But ultimately, the British government under Thatcher admitted that the book was offensive to Muslims (Weller 32).

Finally, all this controversy about the novel of Salman Rushdie shows clearly how it is difficult to strike a balance between individual rights and group rights. Indeed, in a multicultural society one has to bear in mind that offending or hurting a religious group cannot be entirely justified on the grounds of an individual right to freedom of expression as groups too have the right to dignity and equal respect.

¹ 22 April 1989.

² It is defined as something concerned with the publication of scurrilous, offensive or abusive matters concerning God, Christ, the Christian religion, the Bible or a sacred subject.

1.2 Marshall's Citizenship and the Politics of Difference

As stated in the previous chapter, post-war Britain has seen the development of different citizenship discourses during the two periods of the Consensus and the New Right eras¹. Then, a Third era followed with the election of New Labour in 1997, namely the Third Way era². Of course, each discourse differs on the principles. For instance, according to liberal principles, the state should remain neutral whereas the individual occupies a central place in the political discourses. Accordingly, liberalism does not allow governmental policies which establish group rights. On the contrary, according to republican principles, the state engages in shaping and protecting the values that a political community wants to preserve, the republican state guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of their origin (Nam-Kook 78).

With hindsight, during the Attlee Consensus era the inequalities associated with social class faded away. Consensus emphasized solidarity over diversity as ethnic minorities benefited from national solidarity of the welfare state as they were supposed to be assimilated. Therefore, Britain maintained the tradition of *Civis Britannicus Sum* and immigration was a proof of the diversity of the Empire. However, later in the 1960s racial problems coupled with economic difficulties threatened the post-war Consensus which led to the emergence of the New Right era characterized by increasing diversity over solidarity, anti-immigration policy and demands for individual freedom from increasing state intervention. Thatcher as the executor of the New Right introduced the concept of one nation which meant not only ethnic homogeneity but also cultural homogeneity even among native-born British (Nam-Kook 79-80).

Moreover, the New Right did not admit that inequality might have more to do with ethnicity and cultural difference than with individual ability in free market. Thus, it did not tolerate cultural diversity reducing significantly social rights of ethnic minorities. The neo-liberal conception of citizenship is merely based upon a notion of

¹ The two periods reflected respectively republicanism and libertarianism.

² It reflected liberalism.

individual who promotes his own rights without harming the rights of others¹; whereas the Crick's Report's² conception of citizenship seems to have a communitarian approach as the very notion of citizenship entails both 'rights' and 'duties' which were meant for promoting the 'common good'. Clearly, the Crick Report seeks to educate young people in civic virtue as well as autonomy and personal self-fulfilment. This strong conception of citizenship is more than needed in a minimal liberal state. Crick aims at promoting civic participation as an important 'end' or 'good' in society (Olssen 179).

Interestingly, Crick's conception of citizenship draws mainly on the conception of citizenship developed by T.H Marshall in his well-known article, first published in 1950, *Citizenship and Social Class*³. Indeed, Marshall conceived citizenship as a 'right' and a 'duty', defining it as an institution that developed from the latter part of the 17th Century, its growth coinciding with the rise of capitalism. He explained that the conception of citizenship which developed later in the 19th Century and known as the new 'Rights of Man' was conceived as a positive freedom to supplement the negative rights of 'Life, Liberty, and Property' advocated by the classical liberals since the 17th Century⁴. Therefore, citizenship becomes a basic principle of equality as it encompasses greater rights⁵ such as rights to work, to health and to security. This clearly expresses the new positive role of the state as the embodiment of social democracy (Olssen 180).

According to T.H Marshall there are three aspects of citizenship: civil, political and social. The civil element refers to "rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech...the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice." The political element refers to granting "the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with

¹ It is the same as the classical liberal conception.

² In 1997 David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education appointed Bernard Crick as chair of an advisory group to provide advice on the teaching of citizenship and democracy in schools. The report was published in 1998.

³ It was a product of wartime consensus.

⁴ This conception was built on the philosophical ideas of John Stuart Mill and the New Liberals such as T.H Green and L.T Hobhouse.

⁵ While earlier Liberals saw rights as limited.

political authority or as an elector of the members of such body.” Finally, the social element includes “the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share in the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (qtd. in Olssen 180).

The Crick Report both endorsed this distinction as well as the views of the Commission on Citizenship’s *Encouraging Citizenship*.¹ In fact, some modifications were introduced as the Report notes that:

with reference to the civil element, a greater stress than in Marshall should be placed upon the reciprocity between rights and duties, and also to a greater extent than Marshall did, on welfare not just being provided by the state, but also concerning what people can do for each other through the voluntary groups and organisations of civil society, at the local or non-state level.(qtd. in Olssen182)

Obviously, the Crick Report endorses the notion of ‘active citizenship’ as it modifies the civil element and endorses thoroughly the political and social elements². Indeed, the active citizenship discourse was first introduced by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd and was adopted at the 1988 Conservative Party Conference. As a discourse of the New Right, active citizenship was a mixture of self-help and voluntarism whereby the competition and rigor of the market relations would supposedly be civilised by concern for one’s community and country. Clearly, the individualism associated with a free market is not sufficient to hold a society together, hence the importance of individual moral values and voluntary responsibility such as charitable works in one’s local community (Nam-Kook 70).

Thus, the New Right’s aim was to introduce active citizenship to replace the social citizenship of the post-war Consensus. Nevertheless, the New Right citizenship discourse was criticised by many scholars who clearly could see no possible combination between individualism and the values of community and caring; in addition, the concept is rather exclusive as it is linked to property ownership and wealth (Nam- Kook 71).

¹ The report was published in 1990.

² Social citizenship refers to social and moral responsibility, and political citizenship concerns the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for effective participation.

On the other hand, New Labour adopted a new approach to the question of citizenship which clearly departed from Marshall's evolutionary conception of citizenship. While Marshall's social rights would reduce class inequality, New Labour enhances political rights as a way to achieve public recognition (Nam-Kook 84). Yet, this conception of citizenship as formulated by T.H Marshall and by extension endorsed by the Crick Report has been firmly criticised from various quarters, most notably from multiculturalists and especially those advocating the 'politics of difference'. Indeed, the main criticism concerns the fact that they embody the very notions of 'universalism' and 'unitarism' as uniformity leaves no room for differences or even recognition of claims of different cultural groups. Moreover, the social democratic conception of citizenship causes injustice because when treating different peoples as the same regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, class or culture, one fails to respect each group's own cultural values. Inevitably, Marshall thought that securing social rights through policies of the welfare state would guarantee a reduction in class inequality; however, his theory fails to take into account inequalities that may arise from ignorance of race, gender, and culture (Olssen 181).

Iris Young¹ has been a strong opponent of universal citizenship advocating, in *Polity and Group Difference* (1997), instead the concept of 'differentiated citizenship' as "the best way of realising the inclusion and participation of everyone in full citizenship." In fact, Young perceives the ideal of universal citizenship as including a sense of universality which refers to generality and equal treatment. She explains that in the first sense, the ideal of citizenship serves to "express or create a general will that transcends the particular differences of group affiliation, situation, and interest has in practice excluded groups judged not capable of adopting the general point of view." The second sense refers to "laws or rules that stay the same for all and apply to all in the same way" (qtd. in Olssen 181).

In contrast, Young suggests instead of exclusions, the participation of everyone through promoting specific mechanisms for group representation, replacing the rule of equal treatment in specific cases by fair treatment and articulating special rights to

¹ She is an American political theorist for whom the recognition of social groups is essential to redressing structural inequalities.

meet group differences. Following this analysis, Young proposes a model of 'differentiated citizenship' where differences are publicly recognised and accepted. She recommends installing mechanisms for minority group representation in order to increase political equality. Therefore, the liberal model of citizenship fails definitely to acknowledge differences of power between groups and ultimately the existence of 'oppressed' groups. All in all, the ideal of universal citizenship cannot cope with such differences in power (Olssen 181-82).

- From erasing cultural differences towards inscribing multi-ethnic citizenship

Many critics pointed out that the Crick Report fails to respect the 'politics of difference', and thus encourages an overly consensualist model of society. Indeed, the Report endorses certain uniform conceptions of moral values and social development as preconditions for citizenship. The Crick Report states:

A main aim for the whole community should be to find or restore a sense of common citizenship, including a national identity that is secure enough to find a place for the plurality of nations, cultures, ethnic identities and religions long found in the United Kingdom. Citizenship education creates common ground between different ethnic and religious identities.(qtd. in Olssen 183)

Some critics have argued that references to cultural diversity and minorities are very few and there is almost no reference at all to racism. Moreover, the report makes reference to certain ethnicities as 'other'; they are represented as not reliable in conforming to laws, standards, customs and conventions of a democratic society. In addition, the report takes a cultural paternalistic view of minorities as it appears from the following: "Minorities must learn to respect the laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority - not merely because it is useful to do so, but because the process helps foster common citizenship" (qtd. in Olssen 183).

On the other end of the paradigm, there is the Parekh Report which questioned the controversial concept of 'Britishness' as representing a form of consensus that did not take account of cultural differences. This is why the Parekh Report can be seen as representing an important and necessary counterweight to the Crick Report.

First of all, there are several principles underpinning the Report. The first principle recognises that all people regardless of their colour, gender, ethnicity, religion or culture have equal worth and should have equal claims to opportunity. The second principle regards citizens as both individuals and members of local communities. Parekh in his foreword to the report states that, “Britain is both a community of citizens and a community of communities, both a liberal and a multicultural society, and needs to reconcile their sometimes conflicting requirements”(CFMEB Preface).The third principle is the principle of difference, the report states:

Since citizens have different needs, equal treatment requires full account to be taken of their differences when equality ignores relevant differences and insists on uniformity of treatment, it leads to injustice and inequality; when differences ignore the demands of equality, they result in discrimination. Equality must be defined in a culturally sensitive way and applied in a discriminating but not discriminatory manner.(CFMEB Preface)

The fourth principle affirms that every society needs to be cohesive, and “must find ways of nurturing diversity while fostering a common sense of belonging and a shared identity among its constituent members.”The fifth principle asserts that every society needs a broadly shared body of values which include human rights, ethical norms which respect human dignity, the equal worth of all, equal opportunity and procedural values such as tolerance, mutual respect and dialogue.The sixth and final principle relates to racism, it is as described in the report, “deeply divisive, intolerant of differences, a source of much human suffering...It can have no place in a decent society” (CFMEB Preface).

Obviously, the Parekh Report advanced theoretically the Crick Report as it seeks above all to strike a balance between difference and diversity on the one hand, and universalism and consensus on the other hand. Therefore, unlike the Crick Report which clearly ignored cultural differences for the sake of unity, the Parekh Report highlighted the interdependence of difference and unity. Accordingly, the Parekh Report, unlike many models of multiculturalism recognises difference within a unifying model of political community joining thereby Young’s ideal of ‘differentiated citizenship’.

Finally, the Parekh Report did find a balance between difference and universality, even writers such as Charles Taylor argued for a synthesis of multicultural recognition with universal democratic norms showing clearly that multiculturalism is not incompatible with liberal universalism. According to Taylor the demand to be recognised for one's particularity is 'universal' which entails protection of the basic rights of all citizens and acknowledgment of the particular needs of individuals as members of specific groups (Olssen 189). Hence, I suggest that allowing for substantial cultural difference and adopting universal norms of inclusion based upon recognising rights to all is the safe way towards a commitment to democratic justice and an open dialogue.

1.3 Accommodating Minority Difference

Multiculturalism as a policy addresses post-immigration 'difference'. Indeed, 'difference' does not refer only to migration but also refers to how people are identified. Identification encompasses several fields: 'race', ethnicity, religion, culture and nationality, these are all forms of difference. Post-immigration minorities are marked as different; they are definitely differentiated from the majority society in two ways. The first pertains to negative 'difference' which is referring to inferiorisation, stigmatisation, stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination and racism; and secondly, by the perception of their identity by group members and outsiders. These perceptions represent not only a form of distinctness but also a form of inferiority that prevent equal membership in the wider society (Mahamdallie 66).

According to Moddod, the politics of recognition of difference or respect for identities are important to people and should be recognised as such not dismissed in the name of integration or citizenship. Therefore, the presence of minority groups has given rise to political struggles in the name of 'difference'; some differences have been clearly asserted and claims have been taking place, namely recognition or accommodation has taken the form of a political struggle that is judged legitimate. Multiculturalism refers to this political mobilization as well as to the policy and its

outcomes and the forms of accommodation in which ‘differences’ are necessarily recognised instead of being ignored or eliminated (Modood 34-36).

The claims of minority groups, who are mostly marginalized, are clearly addressed so that ‘difference’ which has a negative aspect becomes positive¹; thus, the politics of recognition consists of transforming the negative into positive that is to win respect. It is preferable to speak of ‘difference’ rather than ‘culture’ because what is at stake is the representations and treatment of minority cultures from the outside, that is from the standpoint of the wider society. It is true that cultural rights are important for multiculturalism but what is more important is that multiculturalism as a policy recognises post-immigration groups as having group-differentiating dimensions that are essential to the social structure of any nation (Modood 37).

Moreover, minority groups have always been perceived as ‘different’ because of their ‘race’, ethnicity and culture; this explains the fact that the assertion of difference is crucial for multiculturalism. One has first to understand accommodation as changes in arrangements that a society has to provide when becoming multicultural. Britain has introduced many changes to accommodate cultural minorities including changes in the content and administration of laws, efforts to allow representation of ethnic minorities in the police, adjustments of the content of state-provided school education, and so forth. Those accommodations are meant for people who are ethnically, culturally and religiously different from the wider society. But more specifically, accommodation as used by Parekh means measures that provide differently for different cultural and religious groups. Accommodation in this narrower sense is commonly associated with exemptions, such as the exemption enjoyed by turban-wearing Sikhs from the law that requires motorcyclists to wear crash helmets and by Jews and Muslims from the law that requires animals to be stunned before slaughter (Jones 127).

One has to bear in mind that multicultural policy should not be reduced to accommodation because taking account of cultural difference present in a society

¹ Though one is more likely to be confronted to both situations.

entails above all securing equality without resorting to arrangements that provide differently for different groups. Thus, providing greater equality among citizens does not mean revising society's arrangements without resorting necessarily to accommodation as used narrowly. Therefore, appealing to equality in multicultural circumstances does not always require accommodation (Jones 127).

Having clarified these points, it is now essential to understand equality as a major theoretical concept for justifying accommodation of ethnic minorities.

- *Theorizing Equality*

The fundamental question is how to achieve equality across difference. In fact, it seems difficult to imagine such a possibility. However, answering this question requires a comprehension of the concept of equality and the way it is applied politically. The concept of equality has to be applied to groups and not just to individuals. Political theorists have tackled this question from different angles. For instance, Charles Taylor argues that two different albeit related concepts are at work when referring to equality in the context of race and ethnicity, namely equal dignity and equal respect. Equal dignity, which appeals to people's humanity, means that everyone should be treated the same; it finds mainly its application in anti-discrimination policies. While equal dignity is colour-blind as it emphasizes the fact that all people are equal, equal respect focuses on difference between individuals as important in guaranteeing equality between them (Moddod 47).

According to Parekh, the concept of equality must be applied to groups and not just to individuals. Similarly, Taylor explains that since individuals have group identities, inequalities may arise, and that any denigration or misrecognition of these identities represents a form of oppression, that is a form of inequality which would eventually threaten the other form of equality, i.e. equal dignity. For Taylor, the idea of equal respect is the key idea of the 'politics of recognition', that is of multiculturalism meaning to grant group identities a public status (Eade *et al.* 141-42).

In addition, one has to understand that both kinds of equality are interrelated as the concept of equal respect stems from a concern with equal dignity. In fact, the

presupposition that there is equality between individuals allows the claim for equal respect. Taylor points out that, “there is a demand for an acknowledgment of specificity but it is powered by the universal that an advantage that some currently enjoy should not be a privilege but available to all” (qtd. in Modood 49). Thus, the two kinds of equality are based upon Universalist foundations and are essential to multiculturalism because the concept of equal respect does differentiate multiculturalism from classical liberalism.

On the other hand, Kymlicka rightly criticizes the Rawlsian idea of neutrality¹ because any society tends to prioritize some cultural values and behaviours over others. Consequently, no public space is culturally neutral; of course each society has already a cultural structure which is dominated by the majority group and where minorities are tolerated and only allowed to practise their religion and speak their own language only in private not in the public space (Modood 50). This sharp distinction can be a source of inequalities. This explains why marginalized or disadvantaged groups seek equality asking for recognition of their values and identities. This leads us to a first conclusion that equal respect and recognition are essential to multicultural equality and multicultural integration.

Along similar line, recognition of positive difference is undoubtedly crucial to regulate relations between citizens through legislative framework. For instance, hate speech necessitates some legislation but this would endanger freedom of speech. Therefore, while legal intervention is necessary when there is incitement to hatred or ‘fighting talk’, this can lead to public disorder and acts of discrimination, but this does not guarantee equal respect. These are definitely matters that cannot be regulated by law, and so needs protest and empathy, still majority groups are sometimes unaware about what hurts others. For instance, the British media responded to the Danish cartoons affair² recognising their right to republish the cartoons though it would be offensive to do so. All in all, respect is often seen as a pretext for not pursuing integration or equality. However, one has to suggest that positive difference is

¹ Rawls thought that the state was culturally neutral while no one was advantaged, no one was disadvantaged.

² A Danish newspaper published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in 2005.

essential to integration that is informed by equal respect as well as equal dignity (Moddod 52).

Mistakenly, equality is grounded in the theory of human nature which sees human beings as equal because of their shared features or similarity; therefore equality is consisting in treating them in more or less the same ways and giving them more or less the same body of rights. However, human beings are natural and cultural beings who are similar and different at the same time. Accordingly, equality cannot be grounded in human uniformity because treating human beings equally on the basis of their similarities ignores their differences. Equality must be granted at both shared human nature and culturally (Parekh 2006: 239).

As discussed in Chapter I, the Greek, Christian and liberal philosophers failed to provide a coherent theory of human nature arguing that only a particular way of life is deemed to be worthy of human beings. So, if we admit that human beings are similar and different they deserve equal treatment. Clearly, this view builds difference into the very concept of equality and dismisses the view that equality is grounded in human uniformity. It supposes that equality entails either uniform or identical treatment or differential treatment. Accordingly, equal rights do not entail identical rights because individuals belonging to different cultures may need different rights to enjoy equality (Parekh 2006: 240).

Thus, equality involves not just rejection of irrelevant differences as is commonly argued, but also full recognition of legitimate and relevant ones. For Parekh, equality is articulated at several interrelated levels. First, there is the need for equality of respect and rights; second, equality of opportunity, self-esteem, self-worth; and finally equality of power, well-being and the basic capacities required for human flourishing (Parekh 2006: 241).

Besides, the concept of equal opportunity like that of equal respect is important and needs to be interpreted in a culturally sensitive manner. Opportunity is a subject-dependent concept, as a facility or a resource is not an opportunity for an individual only if the individual has necessary cultural knowledge to take advantage of it. For

instance, a Sikh is in principle free to send his son to a school that bans turbans, but for all practical purposes it is closed to him. Though the inability involved is cultural not physical in nature, and hence subject to human control, the degree of control varies greatly. It is definitely “constitutive of the individual’s sense of identity and even self-respect and cannot be overcome without a deep sense of moral loss” (Parekh 2006: 241).

- *Contextualizing Equality*

In a culturally diverse society, equality means equal treatment for those who are equal but where cultural differences do exist, equal treatment would mean not identical but differential treatment. However, Barry’s liberal approach to equality rests on the assumption that, “human beings are virtually identical as they come from the hands of nature” (Barry 262).

One might ask how to achieve equality across cultures without discrimination. A good example of the acceptance of diversity is undoubtedly the dress. Indeed, it is a visible symbol of cultural identity and particularly important to individuals who would not accept any compromise about it. For instance, in Britain the *Construction Regulation 1989* requires all those working on construction sites to wear safety helmets; however, the *Employment Act 1989* exempts turban-wearing Sikhs who believe that the turban offers adequate though not exactly the same protection as the helmet. The law exempting Sikhs from wearing safety helmets clearly requires the fulfilment of two conditions that the turban should offer an equivalent or at least acceptable level of protection, and that a turbaned Sikh if injured, he would bear the responsibility as he would have suffered if he had been wearing a safety helmet. The law in question accommodates cultural minorities and respects differences without violating the principle of equality or disadvantaging financially other citizens or even privileging turbaned Sikhs (Parekh 2006: 244).

Moreover, treating individuals differently may in certain circumstances raise the question of unequal treatment or even discrimination. For instance, Sikhs may be

allowed to carry ‘Kirpan’¹ in public spaces as a symbol of their religion but other citizens would not be allowed to. Is there in this case discrimination or unequal treatment? The answer is that there is no discrimination because their religious requirements are just as respected as those of the Sikhs. And if there seems to be inequality of rights, “it arises out of the different demands of the same basic right to religion and does not confer a new right on the Sikhs” (Parekh 2006: 248-49).

Another point that needs to be made is that of funding religious schools by the state. Indeed, in Britain the state funds thousands of Anglican, Catholic and Jewish religious schools but rejected Muslim requests for similar schools on the grounds that equality requires equal treatment of those who are equal in relevant respects, that is having the capacity to provide a balanced religious and secular education. But since Muslim schools are unable to fulfil that requirement, they cannot be treated equally to other religious schools (Parekh 2006: 255).

Obviously, the fact of refusing funding Muslim schools by the state is unjustified. Indeed, intercultural equality requires a contextualized view of equality identifying what respects are relevant, and demand equal treatment of those shown to be equal in these respects. Though some would suggest a mechanical view of equality arguing that since Christians and Jews have this right, Muslims too must enjoy that right to state-funded schools. However, again cultural differences have to be taken into account in order to decide which contexts are relevant and whether Muslims are equal in respect to them. This entails clearly to start from a right to equality to the right to a specific treatment in a specific context. But here again the danger of such contextualization can lead to discrimination, so one has to insist on equality which requires identical treatment with relevant justifications (Parekh 2006: 257).

- Limits of Equality

One has also to concede that equality has its limits. Indeed, the Church of England has had for a long time a privileged status as its members have the right to sit in the

¹ A small dagger.

House of Lords¹ and a law proscribing blasphemy against Christianity does exist in England. But the particular status has been challenged following the *Rushdie Affair* in 1989 by non-Christian religions especially Islam on the grounds that Muslims are being treated unequally. However, many Conservatives argued that Britain is a Christian society and that the historical settlement between the State and the Church of England had made Christianity an integral part of the former corporate identity. The liberals on the contrary agreed that the principle of equality required disestablishment of the Anglican Church, and some advocated the abolition of the blasphemy law; whereas others called upon its extension to all religions. The response of the Muslim leaders was that the principle of equality required that all religions should be treated equally irrespective of their age and historical role. As for the blasphemy law, they advocated its extension (Parekh 2006: 258).

What is meant here is either equality of religions or equal right to religion. In fact, Britain has always been a Christian state and Christianity is a fundamental component of its identity, hence its privileged status. What is more important is that the religious beliefs of all citizens are equally respected so that if Christianity as the religion of the majority is given some precedence over others, what matters is that religions of minorities who are also integral part of British society are officially acknowledged. Besides, Christianity has shaped British identity and its political culture more than other religions, so they are not equal in this respect but still can rightly demand public recognition by the state (Parekh 2006: 260).

So, understanding religious equality must take account of the privileged status of Christianity and give some public recognition to other religions though not necessarily equal, and also some representation in the public institutions of the state. As for the anti-blasphemy law, which concerns people's religious beliefs and practices it seems right to extend it to all religions as it is crucially a question of equality and equal treatment.

Briefly speaking, it is right in a multicultural society that in order to secure equal treatment between different cultural groups a differential treatment is required if these

¹ Two archbishops and 24 bishops.

different treatments represent different ways of realising the same right. So, one needs to consider the nature and the purpose of the right or the rule involved, and show that the differential treatment is justified in terms of it. Moreover, in a multicultural society additional rights might be granted to groups or individuals in order “to equalize them with the rest or to achieve political integration, social harmony and encouragement of cultural diversity.” For instance, in Canada cultural minorities are granted extra resources and rights. Nevertheless, there is no agreement about the granting of such additional rights to minorities among liberals (Parekh 2006: 262).

It is safe to argue that equality is somehow difficult to achieve in any society as every society has a historically inherited cultural structure though it has a responsibility to accommodate its minorities in a coherent manner. Inequalities may persist in many areas of life and should be handled and settled by way of negotiation and compromise.

- Accommodation, Equal treatment and Equal Opportunity

Parekh has aptly considered and analysed the minority practices, which are different from societal norms, that should be accommodated, and has tried to explain on what grounds the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity can be a justification for accommodation. Parekh has explained what equal treatment requires and how equality of opportunity should be understood in circumstances of cultural diversity.

His principal argument is that in a multicultural society cultural differences may affect significantly opportunities available to people. He argued that cultures or religions of minority groups can become barriers to opportunities that are available to others. For instance, “a Sikh is in principle free to send his son to a school that bans turbans, but for all practical purposes it is closed to him.” The subject here feels himself unfree to do what his faith requires. But Parekh explained that the freedom at issue means “to be morally or religiously unfree, to be morally or religiously not at liberty to do those things that one has an obligation not to do.” Nevertheless, for many writers such as Barry this is an unacceptable usage of freedom because it contains an

element of moralization, so refusing this kind of unfreedom as it is internal to the subject (Parekh 2006: 241-42).

So, Parekh has clearly indicated how a person's culture or religion might close off opportunities¹. Parekh characterized opportunity as a 'subject-dependent concept' in that "an ostensible opportunity is really no opportunity for someone who lacks the capacity, the cultural disposition or the necessary cultural knowledge to take advantage of it." Some have grounded that assumption on cultural determinism as people's choices are determined by the cultural context in which they have developed. However, Parekh's characterization of opportunity as a 'subject-dependent concept' rejects determinism. Of course, people are embedded in a culture and are able as well to take a critical view of their culture or "to rise above its constitutive beliefs and practices and reach out to other cultures." He argued that, "the degree to which people are shaped by their inherited culture will vary with circumstances and will depend particularly on how far their culture is isolated from others." For Parekh, members of a multicultural society "are able to see the contingency of their culture and relate to it freely rather than as a fate or a predicament" (Parekh 2006: 241,157,158,167).

This led to a strong reaction from Brian Barry who argued that, on the contrary people's opportunities consist in the choice sets objectively available to them. People are free to exploit an opportunity which does not mean that the opportunity is not genuinely available to them. People's cultures or religions may impose constraints upon the opportunities, but these are subjective constraints which could not justify complaints of inequality of opportunity. On the contrary, Barry views opportunity as an entirely objective matter explaining that equal opportunity cannot justify accommodation of cultural or religious groups (Barry 48, 62).

Though Barry expects that the choices made by different individuals may lead to unequal outcomes, the state is not expected to intervene in order to redress these inequalities by transferring additional rights to some or by reducing the rights to others. Barry is adamant that opportunities are equal to all, so there is no injustice if

¹ Note that constraints are not intrinsic to culture or religion.

choices lead to unequal outcomes. However, he explains that the liberal state has to intervene to rectify inequalities that arise from other factors and in which the individual has no responsibility. He cites some examples of these factors such as poverty, disability or stubborn legacy of racial discrimination policies (Barry 32, 92-95).

However, one may concede that Parekh's characterization of opportunity as a subject-dependent concept is more accurate, justifying accommodation for people whose culture or religion affects their opportunities though cultural constraints should be differentiated from other constraints. Moreover, Parekh explains the reasons for accommodating minorities that is when a practice is for an individual "constitutive of the individual's sense of identity and self-respect" and when "it cannot be overcome without a deep sense of moral loss" (Parekh 2006: 241).

One final point that characterizes multiculturalism is the rule and exemption approach suggested by Parekh to accommodating minority differences. Parekh gives two examples of exemptions. Turban-wearing Sikhs who are exempted from the requirement to wear a crash helmet if they ride a motorcycle and from hard hat rules if they work on a building site. But are these exemptions instruments of equality?

It seems that the laws at issue are not 'cultural' in character, nor are they running counter to the culture of any group, they rather give rise to clashes with the particular practices of some communities. Therefore, the accommodations or the exemptions in this case are likely to be ways of resolving the conflicts between cultures and public policies. This approach has been profoundly criticized by Barry who observes that the fact a law disadvantages some individuals because of their cultural backgrounds is not, in itself, a good reason for granting an exemption. Rather, what must be shown is that the reason for granting the exemptions is sufficiently compelling to override the objective the law was intended to serve. Nevertheless, much later Barry conceded that exemptions can be justified on a variety of grounds like generosity, political prudence or a utilitarian calculation of the balance of advantages to be gained (Jones 132; Barry 38-39; Murphy 90).

Another key question remains, which is how to deal with clashes that may arise from rules established by a multicultural society and the cultures of different communities. One has to concede that Sikhs do have reasons not to wear crash helmets or hard hats that other members of society have to. So, a society has to take account of these reasons to allow exemptions. All in all, accommodating minorities rests on the principle of equality as well as other reasonable considerations. This ‘balance of considerations’ approach is more likely to resolve the conflicting claims between minority cultural practices and public values. Parekh appeals to the principle of equality when making the case for accommodation as well as many different considerations (Jones 133).

It is probable that the most significant measure now providing for accommodation in Britain is the Equality Act 2010. The Act includes all the various anti-discrimination measures enacted in Britain, it provides against both direct and indirect discrimination. While direct discrimination¹ does not relate to accommodation as it does not provide differently for the different demands of different racial or religious groups, indirect discrimination provides for accommodation as anti-discrimination laws seek to safeguard people from disadvantages that might arise in relation to employment and the provision of goods and services from particular features of their ethnicity or religious faith (Jones 135).

I may conclude like Parekh that opportunities available to people can be ‘subject-dependent’ as cultural differences may lead individuals to take advantage differently of opportunities available to them. Equality can make the case for accommodation but it is not sufficient alone, we have to find reasons to justify exemptions. As suggested by Parekh, in a multicultural society much has to depend upon context and circumstances.

2. Towards Adopting Multiculturalism

Britain has adopted multicultural measures which reflect the cultural policy of the British Empire recreating after its fall what Favell called ‘multiculturalism-in-one

¹ It includes racial and religious discrimination.

nation'. Therefore, Britain did not rely on assimilation but encouraged largely diversity. She has definitely adopted multicultural policies directed towards the managing of a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society (Fomina 2010: 68).

Thus, multicultural policies have been adopted as a response to the effects of post-world war economic growth and the flow of immigrants constituting a major workforce for Britain. However, this situation became soon problematic as this wave of immigrants threatened the very concept of Britishness, added to discrimination encountered by newcomers. The response of the British government was the implementation of policies meant for tackling discrimination and reducing inequalities between majorities and minorities.

Roy Hattersley, a Labour Party politician in 1965 aptly formulated the politics of Britain aiming at limiting immigration and introducing integration measures, "without integration limitation is inexcusable, without limitation integration is impossible." Indeed, the two policy areas were developed in symbiosis as the mid-1960s saw the first legislation limiting immigration as well as the first legislation counteracting discrimination. For instance, the 1968 Race Relations Act was introduced as a consequence of Powell's anti-immigration and racist speeches (Fomina 2010: 78).

By the 1970s there was a conviction especially among the Conservatives that only firm controls could be conducive to good community relations. Moreover, support for multiculturalism was visible with the publication of the report on multicultural education in the 1980s. In fact, Chris Patten, the then school minister emphasised that anti-racist training programmes and multicultural education had to be embraced even by 'all-white' schools, as otherwise they might become a breeding ground for racism. However, by the end of the 1980s Britain was confronted with the reality of multiculturalism, which needed policies to promote integration and equality, and of course eliminating discrimination and racist practices (Fomina 2010: 78).

The objective of this section is to conceptually examine multiculturalism as a policy by using theoretical contributions especially those of Parekh and Kymlicka. I

will start by analysing the political structure of a multicultural society focusing on different modes of integration, and ultimately defining the ideal structure of a multicultural society. Then, I will attempt to provide helpful definitions of multiculturalist policies which would facilitate our understanding of British multicultural policies. Finally, I will examine the first attempts at introducing multicultural measures in Britain highlighting the Conservatives' reluctance at accommodating ethnic minorities in the name of the concept of one nation.

2.1 Structuring a Multicultural Society

A multicultural society requires unity and cohesion to hold itself together and foster its diversity. Indeed, a multicultural society should meet the demands of diversity granting cultural communities respect for their culture and facilitating their integration into wider society. Of course, responding to cultural diversity involves the choice of a particular mode of political integration (Parekh 2006: 196).

First, assimilation has been advocated by Conservatives, nationalists and some communitarians who believe that the stability of society depends on the adoption of a common national culture¹. The state guarantees the assimilation of cultural minorities into the prevailing national culture and gives away their separate cultures. In the assimilationist view, minorities are free to assimilate into the dominant culture; however, if they do not, they are subjected to discriminatory treatment (Parekh 2006: 197).

Thus, assimilation is not desirable in a multicultural society as minorities lose their right to maintain and transmit their ways of life. Besides, no society is totally homogeneous and unified as it consists of different classes, religions and even values and practices. Assimilation also does not tolerate the slightest difference, so refusing to accommodate the legitimate demands of its cultural minorities would lead the latter to legitimize their demands in religious or ethnic terms, therefore politicizing these differences (Parekh 2006: 199).

¹ It includes common values, ideals of excellence, moral beliefs and social practices.

- *Models of Integration*

While assimilation ignores the demands of diversity, proceduralist, civic assimilationist and millet models are modes of political integration that to some extent do meet the demands of unity and diversity. Firstly, according to the proceduralist the minimal state combines maximum political unity with maximum diversity. This view has been formulated by Hobbes and recently restated with some modifications by Michael Oakeshott and Chandran Kukathas (Parekh 2006: 199).

Secondly, the civic assimilationist view¹, which is half way between the proceduralist and the assimilationist, argues that the unity of the political community lies in its shared political culture, which includes its public or political values, ideals, practices and institutions. However, citizens are free to lead their self-chosen lives in the private realm. Therefore, the public sphere represents uniformity whereas the private sphere² represents diversity (Parekh 2006: 200).

The proponents of the millet model³ argue that the state has no moral status, and its sole *raison d'être* is to uphold and nurture its constituent cultural communities which are free to pursue their ways of life and enjoy their autonomy because individuals owe their primary loyalty to their respective communities and secondarily to the state (Parekh 2006: 200).

Nevertheless, the three theories remain unsatisfactory; the unity of the state advocated by the proceduralist does not explain how such agreement can be secured in a multicultural society. Besides, for the proceduralist the state provides a considerable space for cultural diversity but the state cannot be morally neutral, and hence the space for diversity is not as great. In addition, in most multicultural societies a particular culture is generally dominant while minority cultures cannot flourish, this works to the disadvantage of minority cultures (Parekh 2006: 202).

¹ Its origins went back to Locke; it was later restated by Rawls and Habermas.

² It includes the family and the civil society.

³ It was founded in the Ottoman Empire; a regime of minority communities governance offering tolerance and protection to religious minorities.

Similarly, the civic assimilationist view separates public and private spheres too sharply failing to reveal the interplay between those institutions. Besides, the civic assimilationist view gives more prominence to the public realm¹ at the expense of a multicultural private realm. Even if cultural communities are free to lead their self-chosen lives within the private sphere, they should accept the political culture of the wider society as having more power and prestige than the other cultures. Besides, even if the millet model has its merits, by granting autonomy to communities, it disallows interaction between them without which no political community can act effectively and maintain its unity and cohesion (Parekh 2006: 204-05).

In short, the four views pertaining to the political structure of multicultural societies are defective as the assimilationist view ignores the claims of diversity, and the millet view those of unity. Whereas the proceduralist and civic assimilationist views respect both but do not appreciate their dialectical interplay and strike a right balance between them. Obviously, these modes of political integration view diversity as a fact to be accommodated rather than a value to be cherished.

Thus, building a coherent political structure for a multicultural society requires to take into account both unity and diversity, and strike a right balance between them. Furthermore, each multicultural society has to develop its own appropriate political structure as each has its own kinds of cultural diversity. On the other hand, in a multicultural society, the state should play a major role in fostering a sense of justice, it has the duty to secure equality to all its citizens as the latter should enjoy equal opportunities and minority groups should be granted additional help to overcome disadvantages derived from cultural differences to equalize them with the rest in the name of justice, social integration and harmony (Parekh 2006: 206).

Besides, local authorities have to play a crucial role in a multicultural society. Indeed, local authorities are more able to accommodate differences than the central government. Multicultural education is also an important component of

¹ It is monoculturalist.

multiculturalism as it de-ethnicizes cultures, encourages dialogue between cultures, and ultimately fosters social cohesion (Parekh 2006: 212,230).

2.2 Defining Multiculturalist Policies

Western nations have dealt differently with immigration which resulted in different versions of multiculturalism. Indeed, Australia and Canada accepted largely a non-white immigration embracing therefore wholly multiculturalism as their official policy. Australia recognised being a multicultural society in 1971 encouraging immigrants to integrate and retaining their home culture, and Canada adopted a Multicultural Act in 1988. Whereas in Britain multiculturalist policies were justified on the ground that immigrants were seen as ethnic minorities who needed to be treated with special care because of Britain's colonial guilt and paternalism. Many multiculturalist policies were implemented even during the Conservatives reign for whom a liberal democratic state should in such situation of diversity provide special treatment to immigrant groups. This has led some scholars such as Malik¹ to criticise multiculturalism as being racist (Fomina 2010: 84).

One way of clarifying our understanding of multicultural policies in Britain is by defining multiculturalist policies. Indeed, Kymlicka made a list of multiculturalist policies in order to determine the extent to which countries are multiculturalist, and therefore committed to multiculturalist policies. So, Kymlicka cites eight multiculturalist policies which can be summarized as such: adopting multiculturalism at the central and regional levels; adopting multiculturalism in the school curriculum; the inclusion of ethnic minority representation in the public media; introducing exemptions from dress codes; allowing dual citizenship; funding ethnic group organisations; and the creation of anti-discrimination legislation (Rattansi 16).

According to Kymlicka countries adopting six out of the eight policies can be considered 'strong' adopters of multiculturalism and those adopting only three policies are 'weak' adopters of multiculturalist policies. Accordingly, Australia and Canada

¹ Kenan Malik is an Indian-born British writer interested in contemporary theories of multiculturalism, pluralism and race.

have been identified as strong adopters of multiculturalist policies thanks to their positive conception of a multiculturalist nation that has been clearly adopted as an identity for the whole nation; whereas most European states as the Netherlands, Sweden and Britain have been identified as modest adopters of multiculturalist policies since they have been mainly interested in integrating ethnic minorities only as a subordinate part of the nation (Rattansi 18).

Having thus defined multiculturalist policies, one has to consider how multiculturalism works. Within this framework, Moddod sees clearly that multiculturalism and integration are complementary ideas as integration should take a multicultural rather than assimilative form. Moddod seeks to clarify the different usages of such terms in order to locate them in the political paradigm. Therefore, even though we have defined very briefly these interrelated concepts in the first Chapter, it is worth redefining them for the sake of clarification. Assimilation “is where the process of assimilation between social groups is seen as one-way”, as immigrants do not retain their identity in order to merge with the host society. Whereas integration is “where the processes of social interaction are seen as two-way”, meaning that there is interaction between natives and newcomers. Multiculturalism sees integration as working differently for different groups. So, multiculturalism is different from integration as it recognises that groups are different so they cannot necessarily be accommodated according to a single plan, and therefore they will change the society into which they are integrated in different ways (Moddod 44).

Moddod explains that equal respect and social recognition are crucial to multiculturalism, and the only possibility to achieve integration. One might concede that integration just as multiculturalism is difficult to define mainly because for a long time integration was synonymous with assimilation (Baglieri Campo18). On the other hand, the question of integrating ethnic minorities in Britain is still posed. Indeed, Jenkins’ definition of the concept of integration of ethnic minorities has definitely shaped the concept of social and community cohesion that clearly influenced multicultural policies in Britain and which was embodied in the Cattle and Ouseley reports following the riots of 2001.

Furthermore, Marshall's concept of Citizenship and Social Class concerned only the integration of classes; it was not concerned with questions of integrating sub-national units like the Welsh and Scottish or even immigrants. Therefore, the first to be interested in these questions of integrating immigrant communities in Britain, and consequently introducing the concept of integration in the public sphere was the former British Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins who interestingly provided his famous definition of integration, he states:

Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a 'melting pot', which will turn everyone out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman...I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of uniformity but as cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance...If we are to maintain any sort of world reputation for civilised living and social cohesion, we must get far nearer to its achievement than is the case today.(qtd. in Rattansi 9)

Obviously, Jenkins's statement marked the beginning of the process of integrating minorities in Britain as it set out a general framework for the inclusion of the new immigrants into the British polity.

2.3 Introducing Multicultural Policies

Britain has always relied on governmental reports to respond to the new challenges or even to implement policies. Indeed, the Rampton Report into the West Indian under-achievement became the 1982 Swann Report which recommended the implementation of multicultural schooling for all (Rattansi 25).

Therefore, Multiculturalism as a policy was acknowledged officially with the publication of the Swann Report, *Education for All* in 1985. Indeed, the report recognised the importance of schools as places to teach pupils how to live in a multi-racial and culturally diverse society. Clearly, the Swann Report was the first major government report that considered ethnic minority pupils' situation as it was published after the riots of the early 1980s in Brixton. The report did reflect the British society

proposing a multicultural curriculum though its title general connotation reveals the importance of education regardless of ethnicity (Baglieri Campo 22-23).

There was also the Scarman Report into the urban disturbances in the 1980s¹ which blamed general disadvantage and inequalities for the anger amongst black youth. These were only some attempts at introducing multicultural policies, but unfortunately the Thatcher government elected in 1979 stopped further multicultural progress as the recommendations of the Swann Report were discarded. Probably, the most significant drawback was the abolition by the government in 1986 of the left-leaning Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone which was meant for promoting equality especially in education (Rattansi 26).

Some recognised that there was during the New Right era rather a *laissez-faire* multiculturalism as segregated residence was tolerated. Therefore, Britain had to wait until the election of the New Labour in government to see any real implementation of multicultural policies. Indeed, New Labour's *Third Way* emphasizes community and solidarity to define the individual's interests. Blair argued that, "we can only realize ourselves as individuals in a thriving society comprising strong families and civic institutions buttressed by intelligent government." However, for Blair the state does not have control over society, distancing himself from the discourse of both the Consensus and the New Right eras. For Blair individuals must be located in a society to realize their identity and interests. Blair called this position '*The Third Way*'. Therefore, New Labour's *Third Way* aims at building a cohesive 'one nation' in which individuals realise themselves (Nam-Kook 80-81).

It is worth mentioning that New Labour has always celebrated the diversity of Britain emphasizing the fact that the construction of a national identity can be compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism. New Labour's ultimate aim was promoting national dialogue beyond differences. According to Giddens², "controversial issues including effects of traditions on individual and community levels should be handled in a public arena through dialogue rather than embedded

¹ They are known as the Brixton disturbances in London.

² See *Beyond Left and Right* (1994).

forms of power” (qtd. in Nam-Kook 81). Moreover, New Labour emphasized political rights encouraging active participation in a local governing process as with the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales in 1999 and a London mayoral election in 2000. New Labour also recognised the role of the Muslim Council of Britain and encouraged dialogues with various religious and cultural community leaders through the Commission for Racial Equality.

However, when the Conservatives were in power all multicultural initiatives were rebuffed, and more significantly by the end of the 1990s the John Major government rejected the European Union plan to set up a European Monitoring Centre on Xenophobia and Racism; thus, progress was made only with the arrival of the Labour government in the same year. Significantly, the Labour government allowed an inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence which revealed practices of racism within the London Metropolitan Police. Moreover, during the Conservatives years little has been done at local levels in terms of multiculturalism, this led ultimately to the 2001 riots in the North of England. It is worth noting that these early attempts at introducing multiculturalism were criticised as being essentially undermined by a degree of ‘essentialism’. According to anti-racists cultural essentialism hinders the implementation of multicultural policies (Rattansi 28).

New Labour rejected assimilationist policy which tends to deprive individuals of free choice, and is therefore contrary to the liberal principle of individual autonomy as well as rejected a state-supported multicultural policy that secures the survival of national and ethnic groups but which could deprive individual members of free choice by unfairly restricting the range of cultural options open to them. So, New Labour was more inclined to support a policy which respects liberal principles of individual autonomy (Nam-Kook 83).

For New Labour, choosing the adequate policy was made difficult as minority groups were looking for full public recognition as individuals regardless of gender, race or ethnicity, and respect for cultural tradition as members of a minority group. They wanted to participate in the larger society and to maintain their membership in

the minority group. So, they refused a pure assimilation into a wider society and extremes multiculturalism in the form of isolated ethnic communities. Iris Young expressed this duality as the wish to join economic opportunity and political inclusion but resist incorporation into a dominant national culture. On the other hand, natives expected from newcomers a certain degree of integration as respecting rules and ways of life of the adopted country (Nam-Kook 83). However, the outbreak of riots in the North of England in 2001, widely blamed on multiculturalism, led to the beginning of a new era in British history questioning multiculturalism as well as responding to the challenges posed by the riots.

3. Locating Multicultural Policies in New Labour's Britain

The summer and autumn of 2001 saw ferocious civil disturbances in the northern English mill towns of Burnley, Oldham, and Bradford. In fact, street battles took place between British Asian youth¹ mostly Muslim and white youth many of whom were from the Far-Right. The response of the British government was as usual to commission official investigations into the disturbances, the British government also decided to set up a Home Office Committee to liaise with the inquiries and compare the findings (Rattansi 68).

It is true that Britain developed multicultural policies as a consequence of post-colonialism and labour migration. It is believed that these policies relied on the concept of difference, and therefore focusing more on the 'multi' of multiculturalism and less on relationships between individual citizens, solidarity and mainstream society. These difference policies, it is thought, led to ethnic segregation and inequality limiting interaction between different ethnic groups.

Many politicians and commentators have questioned multiculturalism because, as they argued, it allowed ethnic minorities to lead 'parallel lives'; therefore, multiculturalism came to be replaced by a new era of 'community cohesion'. For some commentators, the form of multiculturalism that developed in Britain was a top-down

¹ Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

creation and a kind of liberal paternalism which has not been accepted by minorities, and urban disorders were a clear evidence of that situation (Fomina 2006: 414).

This final section aims at analysing New Labour's approach to cultural diversity through a somehow deep investigation of local and governmental reports into the 2001 riots and the subsequent inquiries, strategies and discourses that help definitely situate New Labour's multicultural policies, and ultimately provide an answer to the main question of whether New Labour's approach to multiculturalism have succeeded in managing British diversity.

3.1 New Labour's Integration Agenda

Interestingly, the Bradford commission was set up even before the disorders under Sir Herman Ouseley¹ who explained in his foreword to the Bradford Report that his Race Review team was given the brief to enquire into "why community fragmentation along social, cultural, ethnic and religious lines" was occurring in Bradford. Clearly, even before the beginning of the investigations, the Report set up the problem using terms like 'community fragmentation', 'community fracturing' and 'self-segregation'. Obviously, one can guess the influence of the Ouseley Report on the other inquiries into Oldham and Burnley and also the independent review under Ted Cante (Rattansi 69).

At this stage, it seems important to examine in some detail the reports into the disorders as they would probably explain the evolution of government policies as a response to the riots, and also public thinking about the effects of multiculturalism. In fact, the reports revealed unambiguously the causes of the riots. De-industrialization was identified as the main cause noting that unemployment and poverty amongst Asians were higher because the local authorities had few systematic policies for employing ethnic minorities. Besides, all of the districts concerned with the disorders were among the twenty per cent most deprived in the country². Moreover, there were racist practices against Asian minorities from local whites and from the governing

¹ Note that it has already experienced disturbances in 1995.

² Some areas of Oldham and Burnley were amongst the poorest 1%.

urban councils. For instance, the Commission for Racial Equality condemned in the 1990s the Oldham Council's Housing for racism. The reports also pointed to self-segregation on the part of both communities allowing the Asians and the Whites no interaction between them (Rattansi 70).

On the other hand, the reports pointed to the fact that the local media exacerbated tensions between communities as selective reporting revealed unfair share of local government resources advantaging Asian areas over white areas. Thus, the reports identified many causes, still they advised for more research and investigation. Their findings were mainly the fracturing of local communities as Asians and Whites were now leading what the Cattle Report called 'parallel lives' with little inter-communal dialogue and much inter-communal hostility (Rattansi 71).

- Segregation or Integration?

Trevor Phillips, the then head of the Commission for Racial Equality¹ (CRE) held in 2004 a very controversial speech about multicultural policy in Britain which gave rise to a heated public debate. The CRE main principle is building an integrated society in which diversity is valued. It aims at encouraging integration and eliminating racial discrimination through legal powers (Von Meien 8).

Clearly, the state of segregation in Britain was announced by Trevor Phillips who stated that because of multicultural policies, "we are sleepwalking into segregation" where people become strangers to each others. He also described some districts as becoming black holes "into which nobody goes without fear and trepidation and from which nobody even escapes undamaged." He condemned the fragmentation of the society by race and ethnicity. His all thinking is summarized in this statement: "We need to be more radical and ambitious, not less, we need to pull the rug from under the extremists and remind people that we are all equally British regardless of race and religion. Our claim for equality in an integrated society is founded on the certainty of our citizenship- on what we have in common, not our differences" (qtd. in Von Meien 8-9).

¹ It was founded in 1976 by the Race Relations Act.

However, according to the CRE, multicultural policies implemented since the 1960s undermined equality and solidarity as some ethnic groups suffer from enduring inequality in the labour market, education and housing. It was believed that ‘difference policies’ and the celebration of diversity divided British society. The conclusion reached by the Commission was that multiculturalism as a policy is now in danger of deepening the division within British society along ethnic lines (Eade *et al.* 150).

So, following *Building an Integrated Society –Delivering Good Race Relations* Conference held on 12 July 2005, the CRE proposed alternative policies which aim at building an integrated society where diversity is celebrated but where difference does not lead to division. So, what was proposed was not a rejection of multiculturalism but rather building a concept of citizenship based on selected common values (Eade *et al.* 150). Moreover, some critics of multiculturalism have always pointed to the fact that the disturbances of 2001 were evidence that multiculturalism in Britain had failed; however, the reports into the 2001 disorders suggested quite the opposite. For instance, in the Burnley Report the absence of ‘multicultural activities’ was lamented especially in education, local authority practices and employment practices. The Bradford Report criticised the National Curriculum, which was created by the Conservative governments for failing to teach about different cultures. Besides, the Oldham Report recommended greater effort to celebrate the town’s diversity and different groups’ contribution to enrich the socio-economic life of Oldham. It also argued for greater education in cultural awareness (Rattansi 73).

All in all, the reports demanded more multiculturalism through valuing cultural diversity and recognising the contribution of immigrants, they also recommended more interaction between communities in order to rectify patterns of residential and educational segregation. The reports also identified the causes of segregation revealing that racism combined with discrimination in housing allocation and aided by the local media reporting created segregation much more than Asian resistance to integration or a chosen self-segregation (Rattansi 74).

It is important to note that the reports into the 2001 disturbances did not use the term 'ghetto' to describe the ethnic 'clustering' in the cities as they could not measure the degree of segregation existing in the mill town. According to the reports more research was needed to determine the real degree of segregation. But what is striking is that the chairman of the CRE, Trevor Phillips did use in his well-known speech this term and precisely in the wake of the July 2005 bombings in London that Britain was in danger of "sleepwalking its ways into segregation" and "some districts are on their way to becoming fully fledged ghettos, black holes into which no-one goes without fear and trepidation." He even linked this situation with terrorism, as he stated:

The aftermath of 7/7 forces us to assess where we are...we are becoming strangers to each others...we know what follows then crime, no-go areas and chronic cultural conflict...multiculturalism had to accept large share of the blame for in recent years we have focused far too much on the 'multi' and not enough on common culture. We've emphasized what divides us ...we have allowed tolerance of diversity to harden into effective isolation of communities, in which some people think special separate values ought to apply. (qtd. in Rattansi 75-76)

Similarly, it has been argued that multicultural policies despite anti-discrimination measures have led to segregation and ghettoisation of British society, the so-called 'parallel worlds'. Moreover, there has been abuse of individual rights in the name of cultural rights of ethnic communities. It was said that multiculturalism as a policy is problematic (Fomina 2006: 410).

It is important to note that the segregation of ethnic minorities was partly a product of the demand of labour in the early days of migration, but more importantly was the product of the New Right's two-nation approach that clearly created housing disadvantages for ethnic minorities. Clearly, during the Thatcher era ethnic minorities were segregated which gave rise to frequent inner city riots¹. There were two different views on the riots. The Labour Party emphasized the economic deprivation of ethnic minorities under the circumstance of slum residence whereas Thatcher emphasized ethnic minorities' challenge to Law and Order of British society. The Scarman Report

¹ Bristol in 1980, Brixton in 1981, and Handsworth, Brixton, Toxteth and Tottenham in 1985.

into the riots did stress alienation and political marginality as causes of the riots, and did recommend the intervention of the government to deal with problems of policing, unemployment, poor housing and racial disadvantage. However, the Thatcher government refused to accord any legitimacy to the rioters leading to a more divided society and a marginalization of ethnic minorities (Nam-Kook 12, 74).

There were evidence from researches undertaken by Finney and Simpson¹ that assertions in the 2001 reports and other governmental reports about growing ethnic 'segregation' are unjustified. Indeed, Finney and Simpson concluded that "an assimilationist agenda placing responsibility for integration exclusively on the shoulders of minorities is clearly not a viable option." They unambiguously demonstrated that residential segregation is decreasing in almost every district of Britain. Moreover, using government statistics they found that ethnic mixing is on the increase and ethnic separation is declining (Rattansi 78).

However, the problem of segregation was accentuated by the bomb attacks in London on July 5th 2005. Moddod argued that the question of self-segregation of Muslim migrants became an issue after the 7/7 attacks and represented, according to the press, a challenge to 'Britishness'; and that multiculturalism has created fragmentation rather than integration. Moreover, the Blair government had already raised the issue of the integration of minorities. Accordingly, legislative measures were taken such as the introduction by the Home Secretary David Blunkett of a naturalization ceremony and a test for all new British citizens in 2004² (Baglieri Campo 24).

Yet, many have pointed out that the formation of separate communities has been fostered by racial discrimination and aided by official policies rather than multiculturalism. According to the Cattle Report, cultural differences are the underlying causes of social tensions between different communities:

Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarization of our town and cities. The extent to

¹ See *Sleepwalking to Segregation? Challenging Myths about Race and Migration* (2009).

² This measure was announced in 2002.

which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges. (qtd. in Pitcher 90)

Clearly, the ‘parallel lives’ argument is advanced as the main factor that led to the fragmentation of urban communities though other factors did contribute to the outbreak of the 2001 riots. My contention is that community cohesion is the product of state discourse; in other words that the thesis of segregation and ‘parallel lives’ is the result of racialized discourses of community that fails to understand cultural difference. So, the so-called segregation of the northern towns must be understood in the context of racism that had resulted in socio-geographical concentration of minorities, and definitely not in terms of self-segregation or oppositional expression of cultural identity. Indeed, segregation or separatism was rather the outcome of the phenomenon of ‘white flight’¹ (Pitcher 90).

Thus, segregation was undoubtedly a myth that continues through the community cohesion discourse to be presented as an impediment to the cohesive community and to challenge what the Denham Report identifies as ‘our core values’. Yet, when criticising difference policies Trevor Phillips did not mean questioning the value of celebrating diversity or even denying the fact that Britain is a multi-ethnic and multicultural nation, but that these policies isolate communities and marginalize cultural pluralism. So, what was proposed were integration policies which would create a multicultural society in which interaction is promoted and equal treatment is guaranteed. What is at stake is building an inclusive identity, a notion of ‘Britishness’ that includes ethnic and cultural diversity (Parekh 2006: 199).

Phillips clearly proposed integration instead of multiculturalism which would be based on shared basic values including democracy, freedom of speech, equality and common language. He concluded by a metaphor to describe the society he aspired for,

¹ Note that the Black middle class are able to move away.

“a kind of integration that binds us together without stifling us. We need to be a nation of many colours that combine to create a single rainbow” (qtd. in Von Meien¹⁰). This has been clearly stated by Parekh when proposing a model of political integration, he argued that, “For a multicultural society to be cohesive and vibrant it needs to include a consensually grounded structure of authority, a collectively acceptable set of constitutional rights, a just and impartial state, a multiculturally constituted common culture and multicultural education, and a plural and inclusive view of national identity” (Parekh 2006: 236).

Therefore, the CRE proposed a model of integration that has three essential features: equality, participation in decisions-making and interaction. Equality is an important element for integration; ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in comparison with the majority in Britain. So, to achieve equality, it is essential to encourage the participation of ethnic minorities in civil society. The CRE revealed that there were fewer ethnic minority people on public bodies, as for instance the House of Commons do not reflect Britain today. Moreover, participation in decision-making is crucial to increase life chances and opportunities. Finally, interaction between different communities is important for building a cohesive society (Eade *et al.* 156).

Again, Ted Cattle¹ who was commissioned by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett to set up the Community Cohesion Review in order to examine and discuss the causes of the 2001 riots made around seventy recommendations. Interestingly, the recommendations focused mainly on building a greater sense of citizenship and promoting community cohesion as it is suggested in the following:

We believe that there is an urgent need to promote community cohesion, based upon a greater knowledge of contact between, and respect for, the various cultures that now make Great Britain such a rich and diverse nation. It is also essential to establish a greater sense of citizenship, based on (a few) common principles which are shared and observed by all sections of the community. This concept of citizenship would also place a higher value on cultural differences. (qtd. in McGhee 83)

¹ He was the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council between 1990 and 2001. He wrote two important books: *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (2008), and *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity* (2012).

Indeed, both the Cantle Report and Blunkett's speeches focused on the concept of citizenship. For instance, David Blunkett, the then Home Secretary argued that the "weakness of British citizenship" was a key factor to be considered by the nation. For him the problem lies in the fact that, "The UK has had a relatively weak sense of what political citizenship should entail. Our values of individual freedom, the protection of liberty and respect for difference, have not been accompanied by a strong, shared understanding of the civic realm. This has to change"(qtd. in McGhee 83).

It is worth noting that Cantle's recommendations are to be found in the government's interrelated strategies such as *Community Cohesion*, *Managed Migration*, *Strength in Diversity*, *Improving Opportunities*, and the work of the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion (CICC). What underlie all these strategies is a focus on forging a society based upon shared values rather than focusing on diversity.

According to Blunkett integration means a stronger understanding of what 'our' collective citizenship means and that the building of 'our shared' commitments was not about 'cultural conformity', rather it was to involve maintaining 'our' diversity while simultaneously reorienting 'our' allegiances in the movement towards 'a common place'. Clearly, Blunkett's discourse on 'integration with diversity' along with his discourse on British citizenship as the means of achieving unity in diversity have been restated in different strategies conducted by the Home Office such as *the Strength in Diversity*, and *Strengthening Opportunities* and other speeches of the Commission for Racial Equality and the CICC between 2006 and 2007 (McGhee 84).

It appears from these strategies that New Labour has adopted a new integration strategy that combines between the concept of integration and the concept of active citizenship, and as a means to distance itself from the discourses of assimilation and multiculturalism. If the 2001 riots have been a pretext to debate on multiculturalism, the post- 7/7 became an open hostility to the concept of multiculturalism especially in the speeches of the Communities Minister, Ruth Kelly and the head of the CICC, Darra Singh in 2006 and 2007 (McGhee 85).

Hence, the importance to focus on the discourses of active citizenship as they have been used to differentiate integration from assimilation and multiculturalism. Indeed, when the *Strength in Diversity* consultation strategy was launched in May 2004, the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett made it clear that “Integration in Britain does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost. Our approach is pragmatic, based on common sense, allowing people to express their identity within a common framework of rights and responsibilities” (qtd. in McGhee 86).

This strategy marked the development of a new model of integration though integration has been introduced as a foundational concept within multiculturalism by the then Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins’s speech to the national Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants in 1966. Clearly, the concept of integration renewed and restated represents the Commission for Racial Equality’s attempt to re-evaluate the policy of multiculturalism. Consider the following statement by the CRE: “When the aim, said to be ‘integration’, was really assimilation, the absorption of minority migrant communities into the majority community with no noticeable effect on the culture and the way of life of the majority, while expecting that the culture and the way of life minorities brought with them would disappear” (qtd. in McGhee 87).

Like Blunkett, Trevor Phillips the head of the CRE recognises diversity while rejecting assimilation; he argued that integration is “a two-way street in which the settled communities accept that the new people will bring change with them, newcomers will realize that they too have to change if we are to move closer to an integrated society” (qtd. in McGhee 87).

While Phillips’s model of integration focuses on equality, participation and interaction; Blunkett’s model of integration found in the *Strength in Diversity* consultation strategy focuses on the promotion of a “wider concept of active citizenship.” Blunkett formulated his integrative concept of ‘active citizenship’ as opposed to assimilation and multiculturalism. According to Blunkett: “An active concept of citizenship can articulate shared ground between diverse communities. It

offers a shared identity based on membership of a political community, rather than forced assimilation into a monoculture, or an unbridled multiculturalism which privileges difference over community cohesion” (qtd. in McGhee 88). This integration strategy was described by Joppke as a centrist policy of civic integration with respect to immigrants, and by Parekh as one means of reconciling the demands of unity and diversity in multicultural societies.

The project of ‘integration with diversity’ which was first introduced in the *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* White Paper (2002) is a model of civic assimilation based upon the idea of forging allegiance to core principles shared by all, through the effective engagement of responsible ‘active citizens’ located in ‘active communities’. The *Strength in Diversity* consultation strategy signals the government’s desire to enhance the principles of shared citizenship and dialogue, in other words:

To build a successful integrated society we need to promote an inclusive concept of citizenship, which goes further than the strictly legal definition of nationality and articulate the rights and responsibilities we share. Building this wider notion of active citizenship through participation, volunteering and civic action, underpinned by a sense of shared values, is one of the main ways in which we can strengthen the relationships and connections between communities. (qtd. in McGhee 89)

Therefore, the implementation of integration policies means above all addressing inequalities. The first measure taken in this sense was the amendment of the Race Relations Act in 2000 which enshrined a duty upon public authorities to work towards eliminating racial discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good race relations between different groups. However, the amended legislation brought clearly little change as for instance in the police service, the number of ethnic minority officers rose from 2 to 3.5 per cent only in the period between 1999 and 2005. In education too, exclusions and underachievement of ethnic minorities remained because of the lack of coherence (Eade *et al.* 166).

In conclusion, the CRE integration agenda was directed towards building an inclusive society in which integration is a key response to the problems of inequality, and interaction is definitely valued so that diversity is welcomed and assimilation is

rejected; whereas Blunkett's model of integration meant the promotion of a wider concept of active citizenship as opposed to assimilation and multiculturalism.

3.2 From Integration to Community Cohesion: Responding to the 2001 Riots

It seems obvious that all the reports into the 2001 disturbances cited only causal factors without tackling the problems behind the causes. Therefore, the government's response to the events and the reports was rather hazardous. It engendered new policies of integration, and then a shift to community cohesion, and ultimately a seemingly retreat from multiculturalism. New Labour gave a significant importance to deliberation especially when dealing with the 2001 riots. For New Labour the causes of the riots were the consequence of the lack of deliberation among different cultural groups in the form of segregated residence rather than poverty and economic deprivation in the form of slum residence. Therefore, New Labour recommended cross-cultural contact, inter-faith dialogue, the twinning of schools and fostering respect among different ethnic minorities (Rattansi 93).

Ideas of 'community cohesion' and 'social cohesion' have been used in managing the incorporation of ethnic minorities. Indeed, the British government appointed communities ministers and set up a Commission for Integration and Community Cohesion and a new government departments. These ideas and the policies that flow from them have been advanced on the grounds that minorities have failed to integrate though there were no evidence from the reports into the disturbances that there were a link between multicultural policies and the civil disturbances. On the contrary, all the reports, as argued earlier, have clearly highlighted that the real problem is incomplete multiculturalism (Rattansi 95).

'Community' and 'race' are inseparable terms. Indeed, community describes race as a common essence or shared experience since the state has always used community as an apparatus of its racial politics. Britain used the concept of community as a means to understand and deal with racialized groups. Therefore, through the concept of community, the state and its agencies have constructed policies directed towards racialized communities (Pitcher75-76).

One has to examine how ideas of community have been used to conceptualizing issues of social cohesion, and ultimately find out their evolution in the political philosophy of New Labour. I will try to examine their application as the concept of community cohesion has definitely shaped the state response to the ‘race riots’ that took place in the North of England. This new approach to diversity has certainly been taken as a new multicultural paradigm for the local politics of race.

In Britain the concept of ‘integration’ was replaced by ‘community cohesion’ as it was mentioned in the Cattle and Denham Reports initiated by the Home Office. Indeed, the Denham Report was explicitly entitled *Building Cohesive Communities* which marked really a departure from multiculturalism. The idea of community cohesion and the policies to which it has given rise came as a response to the events of 2001. Before moving further, one has to examine first the philosophical foundations of this idea which are to be found in the concepts of ‘communitarianism’ and ‘social capital’ (Rattansi 96).

- *Theorizing Community*

To begin with, communitarianism which emerged in the 1990s is a kind of ‘third way’ between the New Right and the Left. In fact, the New Right has been blamed for having eroded ethics of social responsibility and norms of reciprocity as expressed in Thatcher’s “there is no such thing as society”, whereas the Left was blamed for too much bureaucratized centralization that undermined local communities and welfare systems that failed to sustain the family. Nevertheless, this concept is difficult to define precisely, what really constitutes a community and when does a social group constitute a community? The definition is even made difficult when trying to define the concept of community cohesion (Rattansi 97).

On the other hand, the influential concept of ‘social capital’¹ was revived in 2000 with the publication of *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by the famous political scientist Robert Putnam². Indeed, Putnam defines

¹ This concept was applied by the World Bank.

² He is a prominent American political scientist best known for his study about social capital.

social capital as, “the connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” He emphasizes that high social capital allows participants in the dense networks to trust each other and act together to pursue and achieve shared objectives. There is a distinction between ‘bonding’ social capital and ‘bridging’ social capital. The first brings together people who are like one another whether in relation to class, ethnicity, gender or age; whereas ‘bridging’ social capital brings together people who are unlike each other and it is a crucial component if wider social cohesion is to be achieved, hence, the importance of shared values that would lead to bridging capital rather than too much cultural difference. Thus, Putnam’s recommendation to reverse the decline of community in the United States is the development of community associations and civic and political participation which would bind the nation in danger of ‘pulling apart’ (Rattansi 99).

But the crucial question is whether this concept should be applied in the British context. One can just notice that building social capital became really an alternative to multiculturalism in Britain¹. Yet, Putnam’s social capital suffers from conceptual as well as empirical limitations. And more specifically it cannot be applied as such in Britain. As a concept, it seems neutral but there exists also ‘cultural capital’ which allows upper classes to build exclusive networks and a series of advantages monopolizing opportunities and access to other resources. Moreover, Putnam’s findings about the decline of social capital in the USA cannot be transferred to the British context; as according to Peter Hall’s analysis of British surveys there is little intergenerational difference in rates of participation in association and therefore a little evidence of a decline in social capital² (Rattansi 100-02).

However, by the end of the twentieth century, Tony Blair suggested to replace the ‘old ideologies’ by the concept of ‘community’³. It was Ferdinand Tönnies⁴ when describing cultural transformations in German society who defined *Gemeinschaft*, that is community as the special social force that holds people together as members of a

¹ Note that Putnam gave a seminar on the subject at 10 Downing Street.

² For more detail see Peter A. Hall “Social Capital in Britain”. *British Journal of Political Science*, no.28, 1999.

³ Note that in the 19th century this concept was conceived as archaic.

⁴ *Community and Civil Society* (1877).

whole, but he added that this concept is lost with the birth of the *Gesellschaft*, that is society. Clearly, Tönnies described the move from tradition towards modernity. Though he was criticising the *Gesellschaft* using a pre-bourgeois concept that is *Gemeinschaft*, he did not suggest a return to the *Gemeinschaft* but suggested that if modern society is to recover any sense of the organic community it has lost, this process must take place within the *Gesellschaft*, and develop out of entirely new forms of corporate behaviour (Pitcher78).

It is worth noting that the idea of community has always been a conservative one. The question at stake is therefore to explain New Labour's embrace of such concept. The answer to this question is clearly to be found in the re-branding of the Old Labour in 1995 and particularly the rewriting of Clause Four of the Party's Constitution. Indeed, New Labour retreated from the principles of common ownership¹ and embraced the concept of community as the 1995 Clause Four mentions community twice while the 1918 text did not mention it at all (Pitcher 79).

The use of community by New Labour has the double advantage to distance the Party from its own history as well as from the *laissez-faire* policies of Thatcherite neo-liberalism. New Labour was returning to its own liberal thinking² reorganising the relationship between the rights and responsibilities of social actors as obligations and duties to society are prioritized over rights and freedoms. In fact, the new Clause Four states that, "the rights we enjoy reflect the duties that we owe." This 'Third Way' between corporatism and individualism permitted to New Labour to be an alternative to Conservative rule. If Thatcher believed that there was no such thing as society, for New Labour individuals and families came together in a broader category of collective interest: community had taken the place of social class as a fundamental unit of social belonging. The New Labour discourse on community represented a social critique in which the idea of community is contrasted with the recent Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite past (Pitcher 80).

¹ As set out by Arthur Henderson and Sydney Webb in 1918.

² That is the new liberalism as articulated in the beginning of the 20th century by L.t.Hobhouse and T.H.Green.

However, community cannot be regarded as a means for distancing New Labour's from its own past or from Thatcherite rule but rather as a means for the reconfiguration of the *Gesellschaft*¹ and also as a form of governmentality. Following New Labour thinking it is possible to exercise government through community. In this sense, Nikolas Rose argued in *Powers of Freedom* (1999) that:

The community of the third sector, the third space, the third way of governing is not primarily a geographical space, a social space, a sociological space or a space of services, although it may attach itself to any or all such spatializations. It is a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of emotional relationships through which 'individual identities' are constructed through their bonds to micro-cultures of values and meanings. (qtd. in Pitcher 81)

Thus, the concept of community was conceived as a reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and its citizens. In his work, Rose pointed out that this 'ethopolitics' represents an attempt to inculcate social order and regulate individual conduct by establishing a set of moral norms and values which are applied to the actions of groups and individuals, and by which they come to be judged legitimate or illegitimate (Pitcher 81).

This conception of community is embedded in ideas of social capital clearly endorsed by New Labour from the work of the American sociologist, Robert Putnam. In fact, Putnam predicted the demise of community in the late twentieth century because of the reduced voluntary participation of the United States citizens in formal organisations and informal networks of association. For Putnam, the state has to decentralize the resources and authority of government and encourage through social policies the development of 'richer social networks' that will not only increase participation, but which should concomitantly translate into the economic enrichment of society as a whole (Pitcher 81).

This has been clearly endorsed by Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett in a lecture delivered in 2003, *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda*, he argued:

¹ Society.

Community empowerment depends on a fine grained understanding of what holds modern communities together. This is where social capital theory helps. It gives concrete empirical and theoretical content to ideas about community networks, the bonds of trust and belonging, and shared values amongst families, friends and communities. It shows just how important these ties and values are to individual well being such as educational attainment, health or happiness and to communities suffer less crime, anti-social behaviour and family breakdown, when people know and trust each other, and interact in clubs, associations and voluntary groups. (qtd. in Pitcher 82).

Blunkett described a politics of community as a tool for the reconfiguration of society by tackling deprivation and social conflict. Such conception of community can also be seen in the work of the American sociologist Amitai Etzioni¹. Indeed, Etzioni's book, *The Spirit of Community* (1993) in which he analysed the moral decline in North American social life is similar to *The Third Way*, whose aim is criticising Thatcherism, as it proposes combining corporatism with individualism (Pitcher 82).

Etzioni explained in his manifesto that “we adopted the name Communitarianism to emphasize that the time had come to attend to our responsibilities, to the conditions and elements that we share, to the community” (qtd. in Pathak 109). He proposed to restore the moral voice of communities, and the devolution of moral authority from the state to civil community. Moreover, Etzioni argued that the destruction of moral traditions, social values and institutions resulting from the social movements of the 1950s and 60s led to a moral ‘vacuum’ at the heart of American society. He proposed a ‘change of heart’ that should take place not at the level of the state and its institutions, but on a smaller scale, beginning with the family, and disseminating from this basic unit through different communities which are in turn linked in a kind of social web which binds them together in reciprocity. Clearly, Etzioni proposed the reinvention of society from below because society is no more than a ‘community of communities’, and it is an ethical commitment to one’s immediate community that in turn permits the remoralization of social life (Pitcher 82).

¹ He is best known for his work on socioeconomics and communitarianism.

However, for Etzioni communities should retain a certain autonomy in relation to one another. He proposed, therefore, a theory of multicultural association, a plurality of interwoven communities which seeks to “balance both diversity and unity”, thus supplying a “third alternative that allows us to keep a set of shared values while providing full opportunities for the constituent ethnic and racial communities to honor their particular heritages as important” (qtd. in Pitcher 83). This version of communitarianism attempts to make a compromise between the competing demands of social cohesion and the rights of communities to self-determination.

A question can be raised here: how can a ‘community of communities’ begin to deal with conflicts or clear disparities of power and privilege between its constituent parts? Etzioni formulated the idea of the national supra-community that is the American society. He explained that ‘core American ideals’ are the essential precondition of the ‘pluralism within-unity’ of the communitarian model. Though Etzioni’s theory of cultural pluralism aims at reconstructing the social in the name of diversity, it is balanced by the necessity of national cohesion. Such conception of communitarianism has undoubtedly influenced New Labour’s thinking as despite its ethos of cultural pluralism, the basic source of social cohesion in New Labour’s conception of community is similarly “seen to lie ultimately in conformity to a moral code which binds together all members of a society” (Pitcher 83).

Having thoroughly examined the theoretical background of the concept of community, it is now important to define community cohesion, identify its shortcomings, and finally examine New Labour’s practice of communitarianism and community cohesion as a response to the 2001 riots.

- Defining Community Cohesion

Community cohesion is defined as a state practice designed to render community open to the exercise of government. Interestingly, the discourse of community cohesion concerns not only ethnic minorities but also the white working class which has been ethnicized.

Definitions of community cohesion have been provided by many governmental agencies in order to guide local authorities. According to a recent guidance to local authorities, community cohesion encompasses three features, a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities, those from similar backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods (Rattansi 113).

- Making Community Cohesion work

Efforts have been made to enforce community cohesion as a new official policy. Indeed, following the publication of the 2002 *Building Cohesive Communities* report, a Community Cohesion Unit was established and Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programmes have been set up. At a local level, local authorities were asked to prepare community cohesion plans in order to foster contact between cultural communities.

Nevertheless, community cohesion as an official agenda has not gathered much support among researchers because of its reliance on communitarianism and social capital theory. The community cohesion agenda proved inadequate as governmental policies did not tackle the question of class inequalities between ethnic minorities and the white working-class living close to the ethnic minorities. Moreover, there were no proposals to rectify inequalities in opportunities. On the other hand, segregation did exist between the wealthy and the working classes of all ethnicities which undermined significantly social cohesion. Clearly, governmental policies did not tackle socio-economic inequalities; there were instead a ‘culturalization’ of policies of community cohesion meaning that the cultures of ethnic minorities were blamed for lack of community cohesion (Rattansi 115).

However, drawing on serious research on the issue of community cohesion, it is interesting to highlight the fact that both ‘relational’ and ‘structural’ initiatives are important to the creation of cohesion and solidarity between communities. The

research carried by Mary Hickman¹ unambiguously reveals that addressing structural disadvantage such as granting local resources to all communities renders attitudes towards immigrants less hostile and more accommodating; besides social relations are improved through the creation of recreational spaces by local authorities and also the creation of forums in order to allow inter-communal and interethnic discussions. Probably, the most significant example is the city of Leicester in which an inter-communal dialogue has been established to improve social relations and performed by the Multicultural Advisory Group². Leicester provided definitely an interesting example of the management of the new super-diversity (Rattansi 116).

- New Labours' Practice of Community Cohesion

Between April and July 2001 the northern English towns of Oldham, Bradford and Burnley saw a series of social disturbances which have been characterized as 'race riots'. According to some commentators, these northern riots provided the New Labour government with social pretext for developing its new communitarian approach to race politics (Pitcher 87).

Interestingly, each episode of riots in British post-war history reveals the state discourses regarding the issue of race and immigration. Indeed, the Notting Hill riots of the late 1950s informed later colonial immigration legislation; the Brixton riots in the early 1980s revealed the Thatcher's government racialization of crime and policing; whereas New Labour's response to the 2001 riots was indicative of a change in political thinking and multicultural policies.

The reports into the riots were published by the end of 2001, namely reports by Sir Herman Ouseley for Bradford³, Lord Anthony Clarke for Burnley, and David Ritchie for Oldham. They were supplemented by a national review team set out by Home Secretary David Blunkett and chaired by Ted Cante. In addition, an interdepartmental Ministerial group chaired by John Denham was established, it

¹ She is a professor of sociology and Irish studies; she established the Irish Studies Centre at London Met in 1986.

² This body includes BBC Radio Leicester and the local newspaper *Leicester Mercury*.

³ Note that the Bradford Report was published before the first major outbreaks of violence. No official report on the Bradford riots was commissioned.

produced a report analysing the events and making recommendations which would be implemented at local and national levels (Pitcher 87).

I shall examine again the findings and recommendations of these reports along with other subsequent reports and speeches to show New Labour's embrace of community cohesion. Thus, it is important to note that all the reports into the riots attributed the lack of social order to a failure of community. Even Jack Straw¹ spoke in the mid-1990s of his belief that "the breakdown in Law and Order is intimately bound with the break-up of strong and cohesive local communities." Moreover, the specific terms of reference of the Cattle Report were to "consult on the issues that need to be addressed in developing confident, active communities and social cohesion." This seems to suggest that there were already a premature diagnosis as for the remit of John Denham's ministerial group was to report what could be done to minimize the risk of further disorder and "to help build stronger, more cohesive communities" (qtd. in Pitcher 88)

This clearly reveals that community has been already judged by New Labour as the causes of the riots. For instance, Denham Ministerial Group established only one day after the outbreak of disorders in Bradford, was known from the start as *The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*. Besides, Ouseley in his report referred to the community decline stating that, "The Bradford district has struggled to define itself as....a multicultural area and has lost its spirit of community togetherness." Ouseley recommended social cohesion in communitarian terms recalling definitely Etzioni's communitarian manifesto. On the other hand, David Blunkett drawing on Putnam's Social Capital theory argued that, "the more diverse an area is in racial terms, the less likely its residents are to feel that they trust each other" (qtd. in Pitcher 88).

As suggested by David Goodhart's social psychological argument, the Denham report considers that there is an inverse relationship between cultural diversity and social solidarity:

¹ He was the first New Labour's Home Secretary.

Our society is multicultural, and is shaped by the interaction between people of diverse cultures. There is no single dominant and unchanging culture into which all must assimilate. The public realm is founded on negotiation and debate between competing viewpoints, at the same time as it upholds inviolable rights and duties. Citizenship means finding a common place for diverse cultures and beliefs, consistent with our core values. (qtd. in Pitcher 88)

Indeed, David Goodhart¹ in an essay entitled “Too Diverse?” (2004) suggests that immigration, growing diversity and multiculturalism were undermining the common culture, trust and solidarity, meaning that the white working class is less inclined to support welfare benefits to immigrants with whom they share no culture or values. He assumes wrongly that there is a mechanical, deterministic relationship between social solidarity and ethnic diversity (Rattansi 106). Just as Etzioni who formulates the structure of an American supra-community, Denham balances his embrace of cultural pluralism by reference to ‘our core values’. This analysis is also to be found in the Community Cohesion Panel, which reports in 2004:

We need more integration, but we also want each community to feel proud of its heritage and traditions. In other words we need a type of multiculturalism in which everyone supports the values and laws of the nation, whilst keeping hold of their cultural identity ... to achieve this everyone must have a real sense of belonging and they must share common values. (qtd. in Pitcher 89)

Accordingly, New Labour’s use of the concept of community cohesion explains a multicultural theory of cultural difference while retaining the authority of a national value system. The Denham Report emphasises ‘common values’ as essential to cultural identities. Thus, community cohesion balances between cultural differences of minority groups and social order. In the words of Denham: “community cohesion works as a form of governmentality; while ostensibly devolving agency to local communities” (qtd. in Pitcher 90).

Another point to be tackled concerns how the social actors involved in the riots have been represented in the community cohesion discourse. This question is crucial as it informs about New Labour’s thinking on this subject as well.

¹ He is editor of the influential Centre-Left Journal *Prospect*.

- *Minority groups and the White working class in New Labour's Community Discourse*

It is, therefore, interesting to consider the section of the Cattle Report entitled *People and Values* which reveals the responsibility put upon minority groups in the name of community cohesion. There is a discrepancy in the report between the need to reach consensus on the issue of cultural pluralism for both white and non-white communities, and, on the other hand, an expectation that “minority groups will participate in the political system without the burden of back home politics.” Even though the Cattle Report suggests a parity of obligation, it places an emphasis on minority groups, singling them out as problematic. Therefore, this section of the report implies that certain types of cultural difference are incompatible with the idea of community (Pitcher 92).

Besides, Home Secretary David Blunkett before the publication of the Denham and Cattle Reports exhorted minorities to adopt British social values and ‘norms of acceptability’. Obviously, Asian difference is problematized on the basis of its deviation from a normative model of ‘national’ behaviour promoted by state discourse of community cohesion.

From what follows, it is clear that the governmental logic of community cohesion does not rely on the communitarian idea as set out by Etzioni, that is a model of incorporative social interaction, but instead it undermines communal association through behavioural requirements set out by the state. Community cohesion discourse problematizes cultural difference failing thus to recognise the real factors that underwrite social conflict which are mainly racism and discrimination (Pitcher 93).

Clearly, the British state targeted mainly minorities to respond to the 2001 riots as aptly expressed by Chris Allen¹, “this may be understood to be a form of ‘community sentencing’ intended to send out a strong message to the Asian population underlining the extent to which they were held responsible for the 2001 riots” (qtd. in Pitcher 94). The state ultimately becomes the arbiter of social conflict. In this respect, both Asian

¹ See *Fair Justice: The Bradford Disturbances, the Sentencing and Impact* (2003).

communities and the white working class are key social actors as they have been represented in community cohesion discourse as internally divided.

While Asian difference is conceived as problematic because it leads to separatism, white difference is characterized by racist beliefs and practices. So, the discourse of community cohesion recognises the responsibility for social conflict of two opposing actors and situates the cohesive community as the point of their resolution. Thus, community cohesion discourse recognises that the white working class are the perpetrators of racism though it fails to recognise the responsibility of organized Far-Right groups who were heavily involved in the 2001 riots. Moreover, the state discourse of community cohesion considers the white working class as embodying a number of characteristics that define them as a 'cultural group'; and therefore attributing to this group a racial identity of whiteness (Pitcher 95-98).

Clearly, the new discourse of community differs from the old discourses of race and immigration as the white working class is conceived as possessing a series of legitimate beliefs and needs that express their identity as a specific cultural –'ethnic' community. Therefore, the community cohesion discourse has underwritten the phenomenon of 'white ethnicity' as it extends a theory of cultural difference to include the entire social fabric of poor urban Britain. The Community Cohesion Panel have explained in their report that 'white communities' need to be more engaged with the community cohesion agenda and that their needs, both social and psychological, also need to be addressed (Pitcher 99).

It is safe to highlight the fact that the discourse of community cohesion failed to recognise the contextual differences of whites and non-whites within a framework of race. The 2001 riots were undoubtedly a pretext for the development of the communitarian project of community cohesion across the institutions of the British state. This new multicultural paradigm which privileges communitarianism has greatly contributed to construct the white working class in the image of existing minorities. For instance, the Cantle Report recommended that "the white community should be

encouraged to develop a leadership capacity in the same way as the black and ethnic minority communities” (qtd. in Pitcher 102).

In short, it can be said that New Labour’s communitarian discourse is not unflawed as it has propelled myths of Asian separatism and a white working class ethnicity; it has also built policies on these grounds. It is definitely problematic as it accommodated certain approved types of cultural difference at the expense of expelling others. Therefore, the British state turn to community under New Labour included existing minorities and whites into a single multicultural framework.

3.3 Reflexive Multiculturalism: A New Approach to British Diversity

Discourses on integration have started since 2001 aiming at improving community cohesion and increasing integration. An analysis of the diverse strategies and policies produced in response to the disturbances in 2001 helps understand the New Labour’s government new approach to questions of diversity and race relations.

The *Strength in Diversity* consultation strategy have marked a significant change in governmental thinking as the wider issues of racism, inequalities and discrimination are taken into account. This has entailed the recognition by the Home Office that “inequality makes recognition of common interests more difficult because people are actually becoming less alike in economic terms.” This in itself is a significant departure from the ‘cultural’ emphasis of community cohesion discourses over the material contexts of segregation and inter-community antagonism (McGhee 90-91).

The consultation strategy mentioned that inequalities and limited opportunities that face ethnic communities are not a question of white advantage and minority ethnic disadvantage though they have affected particular groups more profoundly. The pamphlet reveals that despite the government’s programmes in recent years dedicated to Black and ethnic minority communities, the latter still suffered from deprivation.

It can be said that this strategy has struck a balance between ‘the cultural’ and ‘the material’ appreciating the impact of economic inequalities. Indeed, it was argued that, “Structural inequalities and the legacy of discrimination have resulted in whole

groups that are effectively left behind, with young people failing to share in the opportunities that should be available to all, which in turn fuels their disengagement from mainstream society and creates pathways to extremism” (qtd. in McGhee 92). A significant development of the government’s strategy was salient in this statement. Indeed, the material aspects of discrimination and inequality in the context of segregation are taken into account; it marked a significant shift from the ‘cultural-deficit’ hypothesis articulated by the Community Cohesion Review team to explain the lack of community cohesion. There was also an acknowledgment of the relationship between inequalities and extremism (McGhee 93).

On the other hand, the new Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion (CICC) established in August 2006 marked a change of strategy from the post-2001 national strategies to a new model of integration which captured British diversity patterns across regions with a particular focus on the different problems and the solutions. This was clearly assessed by the Communities Minister, Ruth Kelly: “We are experiencing diversity no longer as one country but as a set of local communities. Each experiencing changes in a different way, with some being more affected than others” (qtd. in McGhee 100). The CICC’s aim was to help local authorities to deal with local tensions in the competition for scarce resources, as stated by the head of the CICC, Darra Singh: “My experience has shown that the way to tackle the tensions caused by diversity is at a local level. The job of local authorities is to balance diverse community interests to know when to say no, and to hammer out a way forward that manages competing demands and conflicting priorities” (qtd. in McGhee 100).

Multiculturalism has been attacked by the CICC but not rejected distancing therefore their new model of building community cohesion and increasing integration from the legacy of multiculturalism. The CICC adopted a new strategy aiming at avoiding using the term multiculturalism, which is:

Our view is that we need to update our language to meet the current climate. We therefore intend to avoid using the term ‘multiculturalism’ in our report because of its ‘catch all’ and confusing quality. Our focus is on what practical policies we need to make our complex

society work where race, faith and culture are important, but not the only elements of that complexity. (qtd. in McGhee 100)

However, Joppke¹ has explained the CICC's attempts to avoid using the term 'multiculturalism' as a 'practical' retreat from multiculturalism associated with the advent of a reflexive version of multiculturalism. This kind of reflexive multiculturalism refers to society's attempt to rectify the side-effects of existing practices, policies and laws and which tend to maintain social order and conflict resolution (McGhee 101).

In this sense, Singh, the head of the CICC prefers to use the term 'shared futures'² instead of 'multiculturalism' as he argued it captures better what integration and cohesion really mean to people. So, this new discourse was meant for the creation of a common purpose rather than a common identity which resembles to a great extent Brown's discourse on Britishness. According to Singh, the goal of the CICC is to promote a particular image of Britain, one which has "a past built on difference, a future which is shared" (qtd. in McGhee 102).

It is interesting to consider the recommendations made by the CICC in their final report. Indeed, the CICC focused on the question of reducing the tensions surrounding perceptions of preferential treatment in local communities. In fact, the CICC suggested that local tensions that emerged from perceptions of preferential treatment could be settled through the application of the principle of visible social justice which they described as "a commitment to equal and fair treatment, combined with a transparency and fairness to all communities." Another important recommendation made by the CICC was the single group funding recommendation which revealed the Commission's appreciation of social capital theory, as expressed by Putnam's bridging social capital³ (McGhee 102).

¹"The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy". *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 55, no.2, 2004.

² The term was used in Northern Ireland to improve community relations.

³ It has also been recommended in the Cantle Report.

On the other hand, the CICC suggested that continuing single group funding was irresponsible as it increased a sense of separation. Clearly, their opposition to single group funding was linked to their reflexive project of reducing inter-community tensions around perceptions of preferential treatment and the divisive competition for resources through promoting the idea of visible justice. Indeed, this reasoning is clear from this statement: “We are clear that whatever the type of area, all funding should be transparent and open to scrutiny and that funding decisions should be communicated clearly and to all communities. This is particularly important given the evidence we have seen of the damaging myths perpetuated around preferential treatment” (qtd. in McGhee 104).

Overall, the principle of visible justice is primarily reflexive in that it is dedicated to “making social justice visible to all groups in the community” as the principle is dedicated to tackling inequalities in all groups. Hence, one can suggest that the ‘white backlash’ referred to by Roger Hewitt¹ might become a central concern in future discourses on integration and multiculturalism. If multiculturalism means accommodating ethnic minorities, this conception is being challenged by a new discourse that tends to consider the disadvantaged white communities (McGhee 105).

To conclude, in Britain the debates on segregation, integration, citizenship and even the questioning of multiculturalism have been undoubtedly fostered by the 2001 riots and the bombing attacks in 2005. The government’s response to these events have been particularly well- defined but necessarily inconclusive to some extent as debates on multiculturalism, integration and national identity remain unsettled in Britain. And yet, it is equally obvious that Britain remains a very diverse society whose wish is to succeed in striking a right balance between unity and diversity in an age of ‘super-diversity’. Therefore, one has to concede that the discussed events have undoubtedly affected British society and political thinking, marking what Joppke described as New Labour’s move beyond multiculturalism. What has emerged in the subsequent

¹ *White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (2005).

discourses and especially Cameron's¹ statements on the failure of state multiculturalism was definitely a new turn in British politics associated with voices emphasizing the need to go beyond multiculturalism. Ultimately, the alleged failure of multiculturalism would be challenged by strong multiculturalists whose aim is to defend multiculturalism and cherish the values of diversity even though new approaches to cultural diversity are being advanced.

¹ The next chapter will tackle Cameron's speech at the annual Munich Security Conference on radicalism and Islamist extremism held on February 5th 2011.

CHAPTER IV: RE-IMAGINING MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN

It has been suggested, in Britain and across Europe, that multiculturalism is a divisive force; and has been ultimately presented as being merely outdated. Multiculturalism is being questioned and even attacked across a wide range of European countries. Indeed, over a relatively short period, many European governments have dropped the notion ‘multicultural’ from their policy vocabulary. Many politicians and public intellectuals have criticised a perceived shift towards ‘too much diversity’ while others proposed a post-multiculturalist approach to diversity, and the eventual replacement of multiculturalism by a new concept or narrative, that is interculturalism.

As argued in chapter one, multiculturalism is a fluid term which has acquired a vast range of associations. This chapter is centrally concerned with multiculturalism as a political theory and a ‘failed experiment’. Therefore, I will address the arguments condemning multiculturalism through examining public policies and debates concerning multiculturalism and will offer an explicit response to these arguments. While my analysis in this chapter will not consider all aspects of the multicultural backlash, it nevertheless highlights the extent to which the seemingly widespread turn against multiculturalism has been actually effective.

This chapter is also an examination of the debates on multiculturalism in the context of its alleged failure and even ‘death’. It aims at explaining why this concept is consistently presented as a threat to British values by media and political commentators of the Right and the Left in contemporary Britain. Is multiculturalism really the problem? Moreover, will its ‘replacement’ with interculturalism be more successful in promoting unity in diversity in twenty-first-century Britain?

On the other hand, the utility of multiculturalism has fostered heated debates over the last years, and more significantly today the most important challenge to multiculturalism is super-diversity. So, to what extent does multiculturalism remain an appropriate response to this new challenge; therefore, my contention is to demonstrate that multiculturalism is a positive means of managing diversity. This

chapter ultimately provides new insights into the debate over multiculturalism offering significant answers to debates that have mainly lasted for decades, and will probably continue to foster interrogations in the context of a more globalized world characterized by super-diversity.

1. The Crises of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism as a concept has never been endorsed by the majority of the Left. Hence, the announcement of its imminent death has concerned many, those who see it as the mere coexistence of ‘other cultures’, and those for whom it means the state promotion of ‘other cultures’¹. For others, it means resistance to assimilation of racial, religious and ethnic cultures into national ones. Whatever legitimate are these arguments the problem is that when multiculturalism is applied to communities, it becomes a proxy for ‘difference’. Yet multiculturalism is more than state policy, it is a lived experience of people which can be dynamic as well as divisive. This has announced the crisis of the nation-state and multiculturalism as well (Lentin and Titley1).

Indeed, since 9/11 politicians, academics and media commentators have announced the ‘crisis of multiculturalism’ in order to explain political developments, and justify political initiatives related to integration, security and immigration. Besides, multiculturalism is held responsible for everything from parallel societies to the incubation of terrorism. Therefore, it provides a metaphor for a spectrum of political aversion and racism that has become pronounced in Western Europe. Indeed, insisting that multiculturalism is a ‘failed experiment’ and inserting it into a causal historical narrative gives rise to anxieties about globalization and justify the socio-political transformations. Furthermore, to present multiculturalism as a naïve attempt to tackle the problem of difference leads to securitized migration regimes, assimilative integrationism and neo-nationalist politics (Lentin and Titley 3).

Moreover, multiculturalism has been blamed by political commentators for creating cultural cleavages, social fissures and political dilemmas. More significantly,

¹ Though it has never been an official policy.

a narrative of multicultural crisis has been deployed and linked to transformative events beginning on 11 September 2001. The narrative presents multiculturalism as a ‘failed experiment’ which emphasised difference over commonality, cultural particularity over social cohesion, and relativism at the expense of shared values. Ultimately, respect for cultural difference has given rise to the parallel societies and ghettos (Lentin and Titley 12-13).

In the narrative of the multicultural crisis, the ‘failed experiment’ of multiculturalism has engendered unacceptable consequences; its death requires a return to the older certainties that restore confidence in Western values. However, for racialized minorities, multiculturalism as a policy and as an ideal made many societies nicer and fairer places to live. Yet this broad acknowledgment has always been shadowed by the criticism that modest achievements are taken as licence to ignore continuing and shifting racism in multicultural societies (Lentin and Titley 14).

For many multiculturalism has just brought political ‘recognition’ and directed sporadic attention to the historical and political-economic conditions of social inequality; it has been seen as a mode of management and control, securing the legitimacy of the status quo. As Sneja Gunew¹ observes, “multiculturalism has been developed as a concept by nations and other aspirants to geopolitical cohesiveness who are trying to represent themselves as transcendently homogenous in spite of their heterogeneity” (qtd. in Lentin and Titley 16).

While in the past race held a central place in the West, today the centrality of culture is over-determining after 9/11. However, the crisis of multiculturalism is not a rejection of culturalism but rather a rejection of a cultural excess. Rejecting multiculturalism has become a proxy for the rejection of lived multiculturalism; the alibi of experimented failure justifies the ordering of ‘good and bad diversity’. In an era of transnationalism, the crisis of multiculturalism becomes a myth of comforting sovereignty, as Liz Fekete² suggests, after multiculturalism, “in a climate of fear,

¹ See *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalism* (2004).

² See “Enlightened Fundamentalism? Immigration, Feminism and the Right in Europe” *Race and Class*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2006.

hostility and suspicion, homogeneity is fast becoming Western's Europe security blanket" (qtd. in Lentin and Titley 18).

Thus, the idea that multiculturalism has died is an expedient one, it is not new but merely constantly renewed. Those who campaign for multiculturalism's end are liberal who oppose post-modern cultural relativism; nationalists threatened by the inassimilable; progressive intellectuals for whom liberal multiculturalism has weakened and divided leftist critique. What unites them all is their use of multiculturalism as a prism (Lentin and Titley 18).

Therefore, this section addresses the multicultural backlash through an examination of public policies and debates concerning multiculturalism. The central concern is about specific multicultural policies and other issues related to immigration and ethnic minorities surrounding the turn against multiculturalism. My analysis in this section will focus on the narrative of multiculturalism's failure as presented by media and politicians, insisting on the motivations of the backlash against multiculturalism.

In this perspective, some core theoretical ideas are explored in relation to the fierce rejection of multiculturalism. Before going on to consider the reasons that motivated the backlash, it is first necessary to situate the backlash discourse in Western democracies in general, and in Britain in particular, emphasising the fact that the backlash discourse is rather a political rhetoric that is meant to conceal the real motivations; hence, the importance to tackle the Muslim question. Finally, I will suggest that the retreat of multiculturalism is a mere caricature.

1.1 The Backlash against Multiculturalism

Many politicians and public intellectuals have criticised multiculturalism leading many European governments to move away from multicultural policies. Indeed, there seemed to be a perceived backlash against multiculturalism in public discourses throughout Europe. In the first anniversary of the London bombings, the *Daily Mail's* headline was '*Multiculturalism is dead*'. This was clearly the result of several years of public criticism which started with a condemnation of liberal politics that produced a dangerous social condition in which Islamist terrorism could flourish; and it ultimately

culminated with a verbal backlash against multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf 1).

The backlash against multiculturalism came as a consequence of the disturbances in northern England in 2001, and was subsequently an indirect consequence of the 'War on Terror' and the London bombings of the 7 July 2005. Thus, it is worth noting that the backlash was certainly not limited to Britain. Indeed, since the beginning of the twenty-first century European states have witnessed the emergence of a backlash against multiculturalism. What is striking, of course, was certainly the unfolding of such public debates against multiculturalism across different social and political situations (Vertovec and Wessendorf 1).

It is important to note that countries having implemented, officially or not, multicultural policies like Australia, Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands have not adopted the same approach. Stuart Hall has rightly pointed out to the fact that policies related to an overall multicultural agenda have not followed the same development even in a single country. Stuart Hall stated that, "over the years the term 'multiculturalism' has come to reference a diffuse, indeed maddeningly spongy and imprecise, discursive field: a train of false trails and misleading universals. Its references are a wild variety of political strategies"(qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 2). Furthermore, many observers have rightly declared that multiculturalism was experiencing a backlash in relation to immigrants who were seen as illiberal, disloyal and a burden to the welfare state. This has undoubtedly led to political discourses dominated by perceptions of the 'death of multiculturalism'. However, the picture is less pessimistic as an overview of existing multicultural policies challenges the very claims of failure and retreat.

For about forty years the accommodation of ethnic diversity all around the world has been an uneven process because of the rise and fall of multiculturalism which explains that most scholars and policy-makers argue that we are indeed in a 'post-multicultural' era though they disagree about what comes 'after multiculturalism'. In fact, multiculturalism has been considered as a threat to national

identity by leaders of European centre-right parties. They even announced the ‘death’ of multiculturalism. The language and metaphors they used convey a sense of national victimhood and of a majority culture under threat from Muslim minorities. This clear new popular ‘common sense’ racism against Muslims and foreigners reveals the revival of argument first used by Enoch Powell in his ‘*Rivers of Blood*’ speech, that warned of the dangers posed by mass immigration from the New Commonwealth. Now, race and immigration are being replaced by culture and religion in time of economic crisis and spending cuts (Mahamdallie 38).

Attacks led by European centre-right politicians against what Cameron described as ‘the state doctrine of multiculturalism’ started with the publication in Germany in August 2010 of *Deutschland Schafft Sich ab*, that is *Germany Abolishes Itself*, a book by Thilo Sarrazin¹, a social democrat. Sarrazin’s message was that Germany was facing the risk of descending into imbecility as immigrants, i.e. Turks are genetically of lower intelligence and have higher fertility rates. While distancing themselves from such argument posed by Sarrazin, which is in itself a revival of Social Darwinism, many German politicians criticised Sarrazin publicly but agreeing with him on questions of multiculturalism and integration of Muslims in particular (Mahamdallie 39).

Therefore, it became clear by October 2010 that centre-right politicians across Europe used Sarrazin’s argument advocating assimilationist views. For instance, Angela Merkel, who had previously described Sarrazin’s book as “not helpful”, declared in a speech in Potsdam on 16 October 2010 that the multicultural society had “utterly failed” and that ‘the Multikulti’ concept where people would “live side by side happily did not work.” Obviously, European Conservative and Liberal Party leaders have implied that multiculturalism has become a form of political correctness (Mahamdallie 40-41).

Yet, here again, I want to argue that underlying the debate over multiculturalism was a fight between racism and anti-racism in which governments across Western

¹ He was former member of the Executive Board of the Deutsch Bundesbank.

Europe were seeking to implement austerity measures. In fact, three leading politicians in Europe, Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron made speeches claiming that multiculturalism has failed and blaming immigrants for failing to integrate. Avowedly, their aim was to promote a myth of national unity and discover an ‘enemy within’ that the nation can unite against.

It is worth noting that once the ‘race card’ was played and now it is the ‘Islam card’ or the ‘anti-Muslim card’ which is being played in electoral politics. One can say that only few political leaders have an overtly anti-Muslim discourse such as the French President Sarkozy as he announced in March 2011 a national debate on Islam’s place in secular France. Other politicians do not overtly speak in anti-Muslim terms but once their speeches are decoded, one can find out an underlying anti-Muslim message as can be revealed in Cameron’s speech.

Again, the public debates over multiculturalism have involved the partial and even false portrayals of multiculturalism across Europe. In fact, public statements made in Britain are particularly revealing the backlash against multiculturalism. Indeed, multiculturalism is considered by critics as single and fixed ideologies which make it easy to be condemned ignoring, therefore, the varied sets of policies and practices which are meant to accommodate immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Indeed, a columnist, Melanie Phillips suggests that “Multiculturalism became the dividing force of British life, ruthlessly policed by an army of bureaucrats enforcing a doctrine of state-mandated virtue to promote racial, ethnic and cultural balkanization.” Moreover, the *Sunday Times*’ writer Jasper Gerard describes how “many immigrants, encouraged by multicultural orthodoxy, retreat into their differentness.” In the *Daily Mail* James Slack describes “the dogma of multiculturalism and the Left-wing doctrine which dictates that different communities should not be forced to integrate. Instead, they are allowed to maintain their own cultures and identities.” Even in 2007 Conservative party leader, David Cameron criticised “the creed of multiculturalism for contributing to a deliberately weakening of our collective identity.” Later Cameron also condemned what he calls the “disastrous

and discredited doctrine of state multiculturalism” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 6-7).

On the other hand, multiculturalism has been mainly attacked, as seen in chapter three, as promoting ethnic separatism and rejecting common national values. Indeed, the 2001 Cante Report and its image of ‘parallel lives’ provided much of the discourse about multiculturalism fostering separateness. For instance, John O’Sullivan wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that: “multiculturalism encourages minorities to retain their culture and identity.” Then, the backlash discourse culminated with the statement made in 2006 by the then Secretary of State for Community and Local Government, Ruth Kelly who declared: “we have moved from a period of uniform consensus on the value of multiculturalism, to one where we can encourage that debate by questioning whether it is encouraging separateness.” Following this trend, David Cameron warned that “multiculturalism- the idea that different cultures should be respected to the point of encouraging them to live separately- had dangerously undermined Britain’s sense of identity and brought about ‘cultural apartheid’” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 8).

Moreover, multiculturalism is said to reject common values. Indeed, some have suggested that, “a blend of multiculturalism and Europeanism has drained all pride and meaning out of Britishness”; the solution must be to drop multiculturalism and promote national identity. This was also the view of David Blunkett, the Home Secretary who rejected an “unbridled multiculturalism which privileges difference over community cohesion” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 8).

In Britain such views have been present especially with the *Rushdie affair* which revealed Muslim intolerance and also the 7/7 terrorist attacks. After the attacks, the *Daily Mail* columnist Melanie Phillips blamed multiculturalism as she wrote: “Muslims have been presented not as the community which must take responsibility for the horror, but as its principal victims.” Melanie Phillips went further:

This moral inversion is the result of the cultural brainwashing that has been going on in Britain for years in the pursuit of the disastrous doctrine of multiculturalism. This has refused to teach

Muslims along with other minorities the core of British culture and values. Instead, it has prompted a lethally divisive culture of separateness, in which minority cultures are held to be equal if not superior to the values and traditions of indigenous majority. Even worse, multiculturalism causes the moral paralysis of ‘victim culture’, whereby to say an ethnic minority is at fault is to invite immediate accusations of racism. We have already paid a terrible price for multiculturalism and this cancer of moral inversion and irresponsibility. (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 10)

Indeed, in her book *Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within* (2006), Phillips went further in condemning multiculturalism for its alleged cultural relativism, arguing that: “At the heart of multiculturalism lies a radical egalitarianism by which everyone’s culture and lifestyle has equal validity and moral stature. The consequence is that people are increasingly unable to make moral distinctions, based on behaviour” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 10).

On the anniversary of 7/7 Britain’s *Daily Express* was clearly attacking Muslims along side with the doctrine of multiculturalism, it wrote:

Many will not understand our culture, our attitude to women, our liberal values. Many will not even want to try. At best they will be out of touch, at worst they will be inclined to radicalize the young and spread the word that leads to death and terror. The pernicious doctrine of multiculturalism has allowed this situation to develop. The Government must not allow it to continue. (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 10-11)

Again, critics of multiculturalism have explained and tried to convince that multiculturalism provides a haven for terrorist. Indeed, Melanie Phillips stated that: “Multiculturalism plus radical Islam is an explosive cocktail.” Moreover, the then Tory shadow Home Secretary, Dominic Grieve declared to the *Guardian*: “Multiculturalism in the UK has left a terrible legacy, creating a vacuum that has been filled by extremists from across the political spectrum” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 11-12).

Having highlighted the backlash discourse, it is now necessary to explore the key themes that surrounded this discourse. Significantly, Baukje Prins and Boris Slijper¹ have identified through a discourse analysis five recurrent themes underpinning the backlash discourse: the clash between cultures especially between Islam and Western culture; ethnic diversity and national identity emphasising separateness as a threat to social cohesion; the socio-economic situation of immigrants stressing high unemployment and dependence on welfare; policies of immigration and asylum resulting in failure of integration; and finally controversies about the ‘correct’ terminology and strategies to counter opponents. Prins and Slijper concluded that: “In the end, concerning each of the five issues that we discern in the debates on multicultural society...positions cannot be simply reduced to the classical opposition between right and left, or to more recent distinctions such as those between black and white, immigrant and indigenous, or Muslim and Western” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 12-13). They found that blaming multiculturalism entails blaming immigrants or ethnic minorities as their desire to maintain their cultural traditions and distinct identities is the objective of multiculturalism which lead to all these negative consequences.

The backlash discourse against multiculturalism has had undoubtedly consequences in the public sphere. Indeed, politicians from the Right and the Left tended to distance themselves from multiculturalism. As expressed by the head speech-writer for the then British Home Secretary, David Blunkett, “the minister will never use ‘the M-word’ again.” Thus, this conceptual distancing became a significant political trend as can be seen through the policy platform, *Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society: The Government’s Strategy to Increase Race Equality and Community Cohesion*, the words ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’ figure nowhere in the document. Again, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion which was set up in 2007, stated clearly its strategy: “we need to update our language to meet the current climate. We therefore intend to avoid using the term ‘multiculturalism’ in our

¹ See “Multicultural Society under Attack: An Introduction”. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2002.

report because of its ‘catch all’ and confusing quality” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 14).

However, many academics reacted against this backlash particularly after the publication of David Goodhart’s ‘*Too Diverse*’ article¹. In fact, the magazine *Prospect* published critical responses from Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh and Saskia Sassen. Anthony Giddens too joined the debate qualifying it as ignorant and misconceived, he argued that: “Multiculturalism simply does not mean what most of its critics think.” *The Economist*’s columnist, Bagehot disagreed about the tone of criticism, noting how multiculturalist’s detractors tend to concentrate on the easy targets such as honour killings, forced marriages and the need for national language learning. In contrast, he praised multiculturalism’s results (qtd.inVertovec and Wessendorf 14).

For some commentators the backlash discourse did have real consequences on policies and institutional practices as suggested by Christian Joppke² who declared that there has been a “wholesale retreat from official multiculturalism policies in Europe.”Joppke summarizes the cause of this retreat in three points: the lack of public support for official multiculturalism; the failure of these policies resulting in socio-economic marginalization and self-segregation of migrants; and a new assertiveness of the liberal state in imposing the liberal minimum on its dissenters (Vertovec and Wessendorf 15).

The question at stake here is: has there been such a wholesale retreat as suggested by Joppke. If we consider the three causes, it would be clear that Joppke has not brought any evidence showing a significant public opinion turn against multicultural policies. Indeed, a BBC MORI Poll in 2005 showed that 58 per cent of the British public who were polled agreed that “people who come to live in Britain should adopt British values/traditions” and only 35 per cent felt that “people who come to live in Britain should be free to live by their own values/traditions”, at the

¹ It was first published in *Prospect* magazine, then it was reprinted in the *Guardian*.

² “The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy”. *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2004.

same time 62 per cent of these Britons agreed that “Multiculturalism makes Britain a better place.” Further, only 32 per cent believed that “Multiculturalism threatens the British way of life” while just 21 per cent agreed that “the policy of multiculturalism in Britain had been a mistake and should be abandoned” (qtd. in Vertovec and Wessendorf 15). Clearly, these findings reveal that attitudes towards multicultural society and minority culture initiatives have not been affected.

In addition, many critics of multiculturalism explained socio-economic marginalization and self-segregation of minorities by the failure of multicultural policies. However, there seems to be no evidence that accommodation of cultural minorities have led to or even worsened these disadvantageous socio-economic traits but rather that these traits have developed by discriminatory labour market dynamics and geographies of deprivation. On the other hand, the claim that multiculturalism leads to self-segregation; of course there are some ethnic concentrations, yet no evidence suggests that patterns of self-segregation increased but rather that there exists ethnic mixing as evidenced by Ludi Simpson¹.

Yet, in most European countries integration policies have been adopted including citizenship courses, mandatory tests and language requirements for immigrants in order to integrate them into the host society. However, Joppke’s ‘seismic shift’ was not really perceived because apart from an obvious avoidance of the word ‘multiculturalism’ within most policy documents across Europe, there has not been such a massive change. Even if ‘multicultural’ no longer appears in political rhetoric, and ‘integration’ appears plainly in public documents, ‘Diversity’ is clearly mentioned in the key British strategy document, *Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society* as it appears 34 times within a 54-page document (Vertovec and Wessendorf 18).

It is worth noting that ‘Diversity policy’ is not a new concept as it emerged in the late 1990s, and it is used interchangeably with multiculturalism. Indeed, ‘diversity’ is used to mean just multiculturalism. Diversity policies include measures to reduce

¹ See Chapter Three.

discrimination, to promote equality and to recognise cultural identities. Derek McGhee has rightly pointed out that multicultural policies and programs still continue to be implemented, he writes: “we have entered into a phase of reflexive multiculturalism in which the term ‘multiculturalism’ has been driven underground, while some of the strategies associated with multiculturalism continue to influence policy and practices at the ‘local’ level” (McGhee 145).

While my analysis has focused so far on the backlash discourse, I would like to focus now as a final point on the most vehement critique of multiculturalism that aims at discrediting the whole concept, which is the charge of essentialism.

Multiculturalism has been criticised as a political theory. Indeed, since the beginning of the 21st century policies and theories of multiculturalism have been fiercely attacked as multiculturalism was viewed as in retreat across the Western democracies. Critics of multiculturalism can be divided into two categories: the anti-multiculturalists and the post-multiculturalists. Among the most known anti-multiculturalists, one can identify Brian Barry and Samuel Huntington¹. Anti-multiculturalists consider that multiculturalist ideas are illiberal as multiculturalism rejects Enlightenment values of individual freedom, democratic citizenship and universal human rights. Hence, according to them, multiculturalists tend to overcome traditional Western models of national citizenship in the name of cultural difference (Kymlicka 2015: 210).

On the other hand, post-multiculturalists believe that multiculturalism is based on liberal democratic ideals of equality, freedom and citizenship and addresses the many ways in which full equality and citizenship are denied to minorities. Though post-multiculturalists argue that multiculturalist reforms have either failed to solve the problems for which they were intended or inadvertently created new ones. As a post-multiculturalist, Anne Phillips argues that despite its noble intention, multiculturalism has become a ‘cultural straitjacket’ rather than a ‘cultural liberator’, and it requires

¹ He wrote *Who Are We? The Challenge to America's National Identity* (2004).

‘radical overhaul’ if it is to serve its original emancipatory goals (Kymlicka 2015: 210).

Of course, it is clear that anti-multiculturalists are mistaken particularly about the origins and motivations of the rise of multiculturalism in the past four decades. Indeed, multiculturalism does not reject liberal democratic values; on the contrary, the rise of multiculturalism has been part and parcel of a broader rights revolution that is intimately linked to processes of liberalisation and democratisation¹.

However, it would be more difficult to dismiss the post-multiculturalist critique because public policies may have unexpected or counter-productive effects. Furthermore, forty years after, minorities are still facing exclusion and stigmatisation. Thus, before any dismissal of this critique one needs to consider the possibility that multiculturalism has become part of the problem and requires overhauling. Besides, post-multiculturalists, as we will see more often, say that the flaws of multiculturalism in practice are reflected in, and perhaps even attributable to flaws in the way political theorists have conceptualised multiculturalism. In other words, they do not say that multiculturalism is good in theory but bad in practice. Others even say that multiculturalism has been better in practice than in theory (Kymlicka 2015: 211).

Clearly, post-multiculturalists attacked political theories of multiculturalism considering them as defective and responsible for the failure of multiculturalism in practice. My contention here is to show that the theories and practices of multiculturalism are not the cause of the problem, but rather constitute its remedy. My focus will be on the issue of ‘essentialism’ as according to critics, liberal multiculturalism involves essentialising the identities and practices of minority groups. In this sense, Ann Phillips argues in *Multiculturalism Without Culture* (2007) that multiculturalism:

exaggerates the internal unity of cultures, solidifies differences that are currently more fluid, and makes people from other cultures seem more exotic and distinct than they really are. Multiculturalism then appears not as a cultural liberator but as a cultural straitjacket, forcing

¹ See chapter one.

those described as members of a minority cultural group into a regime of authenticity, denying them the chance to cross cultural borders, borrow cultural influences, and to define and redefine themselves. (qtd. in Kymlicka 2015: 211)

This charge of essentialism is to be found among many post-multiculturalists such as Anthony Appiah, Seyla Benhabib and Nancy Fraser. Paradoxically, defenders of multiculturalism complain that national identities have all too often been essentialised in ways that exclude minorities. For instance, in Parekh's work on nationalism and national identity, critique of essentialism has been essential in defending multiculturalism. Thus, one cannot conceive that multiculturalist theorists once attacking essentialist conceptions of national identity and culture, shift to adopt essentialist conceptions of minority identity and culture (Kymlicka 2015: 212). But in what sense is it true? One can ask these questions: what is encouraging essentialism, is it philosophical theories in the way they conceptualise culture and identity, or is it official policies of multiculturalism in the way they define access to rights, or finally is it a public discourse of multiculturalism that legitimises stereotyping?

Clearly, unlike other authors, Ann Phillips does not suggest abandoning the term multiculturalism and does not describe herself as post-multiculturalist. Still, she is looking for a post-multiculturalist multiculturalism as suggests her statement mentioned above. Indeed, she does not blame theorists for multiculturalism's essentialising effects but she does focus on the practice of multiculturalism and with the more simplified understandings of culture and identity that inform laws, policies, and public discourses; she notes that "one of the biggest problems with multiculturalism is the selective way culture is employed to explain behaviour in non-Western societies or individuals from racialised minority groups, and the implied contrast with rational, autonomous individuals whose actions are presumed to reflect moral judgements." She explains that this problem of selectivity arises at a different level, in the way multiculturalist ideas get translated into political practices (qtd. in Kymlicka 2015: 230).

Here the question, at stake, is in what way does the practice of liberal multiculturalism have these essentialising effects? One can understand first from her

book that she is concerned with British formal laws and policies as adopted by public officials; yet it appears from her analysis that British public officials have a fairly sophisticated understanding of the issues as they have received training as part of multiculturalism policies which reject essentialising ideas of cultures. She concludes that the formal laws and bureaucratic regulations are more or less appropriate, and are not themselves in need of a radical overhaul (Kymlicka 2015: 231).

So, the problem of essentialism remains unresolved. For Phillips the problem lies in what she calls a ‘public discourse’ or ‘public ethos’ of multiculturalism, she says that even if no formal law endorses or fosters an essentialist view, “a strongly multicultural public ethos is likely to have some of the suggested effects.” she fears that a multiculturalism public discourse reproduces pre-existing stereotypes and prejudices, such as the assumption that non-Europeans act blindly from cultural compulsion whereas whites act from reason and moral judgment. In other words, she locates the problem in “the way we talk” about multiculturalism in public life; this needs according to Phillips a radical overhaul. She insists that the essentializing element is to be found in the way multiculturalism is talked about in the media, and in the associational life of civil society (Kymlicka 2015: 231-32). Interestingly, Modood rejects the tendency to read too much into these statements stating that:

The charge of essentialism is itself essentialist. It rightly identifies some elements of essentialism in the political discourses of identity and culture but attributes a false importance to them. It gives them the status of being the beliefs that constitute the understanding of culture, identity and so on in multiculturalism, when in fact multiculturalist discourses may be, indeed invariably are, based on a variety of beliefs and assertions about culture. (90)

Obviously, Modood recognised the fact that essentialist ideas are present in public discourses, but that it is a mistake to assign such charge to multicultural politics because it is “the theoretical critique of ethnicity and multiculturalism that affixes these ideas to multiculturalism” (Modood 90).

I may suggest that perpetuating essentialist assumption does not entail to reject formal policies of multiculturalism because there is no evidence that public policies are generating the essentialising tendencies in the public discourse. On the contrary, it

seems that the problem of ethnic stereotyping is lower in countries with multicultural policies. What is rather suggested by Phillips is strengthening multicultural policies and diffusing understandings about multiculturalism to public officials such as new programmes of community outreach and education. Accordingly, instead of recommending a ‘radical overhaul’ of multiculturalism as her book suggests, Phillips proposes eventually a re-commitment to multiculturalist public policies (Kymlicka 2015: 233). All in all, the essentialist critique of multiculturalism is rather misguided as despite a seeming consensus amongst post-multiculturalists; they did fail to identify their target.

1.2 The British National Debate on Multiculturalism

British society has, unquestionably, been a multi-ethnic society open to diversity despite some sceptics from the Far-Right Parties who campaigned overtly against multiculturalism. However, at the beginning of the millennium there had been some reservations about multiculturalism across the political spectrum. Indeed, multiculturalism was thoroughly criticised for transgressing principles of liberal democracy, for essentialism, for treating cultures as static, for privileging patriarchy and disempowering women. British politicians reasserted the importance of ‘core values’ and warned against the danger of ghettoisation, communal separatism and exclusion; and ultimately urged immigrants to learn English and declare their loyalty to the nation-state that is to reinforce the notion of Britishness (Grillo 53).

The beginning of the demise of the term multiculturalism can be traced in Britain when Trevor Phillips, the then head of the Commission for Racial Equality, in an interview with *The Times* newspaper on 2 April 2004 noted that the term was “not useful” as it has come to mean cultural separateness. Some critics consider multiculturalism as anti-European and anti-Western; for others multiculturalism is a dogma that requires compliance as it is imposed by increasingly intolerant advocate. It destroys the ideas of nationhood and it leads to the establishment of parallel cultures. Critics even see it as a form of reverse colonisation.

Indeed, since the implementation of multicultural policies in Britain, criticism has always characterized the public debates over multiculturalism. The Swann Report and the *Rushdie affair* are only few examples that prompted heated debates in the 1980s. Yet, the real turn against multiculturalism began with the beginning of the millennium as public statements, public debates in government assemblies and newspapers targeted mainly immigrants, Muslims and multiculturalism. Indeed, since 2000 successions of events have sparked fierce debates about the threat of Islamist terrorism and ultimately the death of multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf 4).

Thus, the backlash has been underpinned by key events: in September 2001, 9/11 the terrorist attacks in the United States of America; in November 2004, the murder of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh by a Muslim extremist; in July 2005, the London terrorist bombings; and in September 2005, in Denmark the publication by the *Jyllands Posten* of Prophet Muhammad cartoons which led to fierce condemnations by Muslims all around the world. All these events have definitely sparked much debate about Muslims and Islam. And critics who have been for a long time attacking multicultural policies were now using these events to ensure the death of multiculturalism. The 2001 year was crucial in shaping the debate on Islam¹ as it coincided with the race riots in the English northern cities and the terrorist attacks which were followed by the July 2005 London bombings (Grillo 53).

As we have seen in chapter three, the British government adopted new initiatives concerned with community cohesion to counter multiculturalism's divisive character while continuing to celebrate diversity. Indeed, in 2006 a new Department of Communities and Local Government was set up in order to build community cohesion; a Commission on Integration and Cohesion was also formed to examine the issues that raise tensions between different groups in different areas, and that lead to segregation and conflict. In a speech introducing the Commission, headed by a British Sikh, Darra Singh, the then Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, declared:

I believe that we should celebrate and clearly articulate the benefits that migration and diversity have brought but while celebrating that diversity we should also recognise that the

¹ It is the second largest religion in Britain with some two million adherents.

landscape is changing ...And we should not shy away from asking ...some of the more difficult questions that arise. I believe it is time now to engage in a new and honest debate about integration and cohesion in the UK...We have moved from a period of uniform consensus on the value of multiculturalism, to one where we can engage that debate by questioning whether it is encouraging separateness. (qtd. in Grillo 54)

Tony Blair too in a lecture on *Our Nation's Future: Multiculturalism and Integration* (2006), declared:

Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths have a perfect right to their own identity and religion, to practice their faith and to conform to their culture. This is what multicultural, multi-faith Britain is about ...But when it comes to our essential values belied in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage then that is where we come together, it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. At that point no distinctive culture or religion supersedes our duty to be part of an integrated UK...Being British carries rights. It also carries duties. And those duties take clear precedence over any cultural or religious practice. (qtd. in Grillo 54)

Clearly, after 2001 there was a real consensus among politicians and intellectuals that multiculturalism has institutionalised 'difference' and led to increasingly fragmented societies. More significantly, the 7/7 attacks put Britain in a state of uncertainty questioning once again if multiculturalism and integration have failed in the UK. So, the debate on Muslim integration is still open, bringing concerns about extremism and fundamentalism. As a consequence, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron launched a fierce attack on multicultural society on the same day as the English Defence League held a manifestation in Luton, preaching fascism and racism (Baghlieri Campo 24).

Following the terrorist attacks in London in 2005, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron made a controversial statement at the annual Munich Security Conference, held in Germany on February 5th 2011. Unsurprisingly, Cameron's speech on radicalisation and Islamist extremism gave rise to a heated debate and was highly criticised as it linked between radicalisation and multiculturalism, though Cameron was careful to make the distinction between Islam and Islamist extremism where "Islam is a religion, observed peacefully by over a billion people" and "Islamist

extremism is a political ideology, supported by a minority” (qtd. in Baghlieri Campo 25).

Interestingly, Cameron does not overtly speak in anti-Muslim terms as his speech is written in an English liberal manner that may conceal the real message. Even if he spoke approvingly of Islam as a peaceful religion and criticise the ‘hard Right’ for its ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis, when talking of Islamist extremism and national identity, he explicitly stated that we have been “too cautious, frankly even fearful, to stand up to them.” Clearly, by ‘them’ he referred to Muslims, recalling Powell’s theme of ‘aggressive minorities’, but unlike Powell his message is not made in an inflammatory language (Mahamdallie 44-45).

In his speech, Cameron explained that society has failed to help second and third generation of immigrants to integrate as they felt rootless, this feeling could lead to violence and search for belonging elsewhere, that is, Islamist extremism. This diagnosis has led Cameron to the conclusion that state multiculturalism has allowed ethnic minorities to live separate lives apart from each other, failing to create a collective identity. He stated therefore that muscular liberalism should replace multi-racialism and multiculturalism (Baghlieri Campo 25).

Moreover, Cameron blamed the attractiveness of the ideology of ‘Islamist extremism’ to so many young Muslims in the West on the mistaken policy of what he called ‘state multiculturalism’. He said: “We have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We’ve even tolerated these segregated communities, behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values” (qtd. in Gamble 2015: 281).

Interestingly, Cameron raised an important issue in his speech, i.e. multiculturalism and national identity. He, unambiguously, advocated the idea of muscular liberalism. It bears pointing out that muscular liberalism has been defined by Max Wind-Cowie, as a political approach mainly from the right wing of someone who believes in liberal values and believes that those values must be defended and

promoted. Tom Sutcliffe in *The Independent* recalled that the phrase ‘muscular liberalism’ evokes a movement called ‘muscular Christianity’ which has emerged during the Victorian age to show that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality and manly character. It was seen as an appropriate vehicle for advancing British imperialism and for increasing the health and well-being of the nation. He suggested that Cameron’s reference to muscular liberalism implies that British society is tolerant towards other religions, but the latter are not accorded the same privilege as Christianity (Baghlieri Campo 28).

Academics as Tariq Modood and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown criticised Cameron’s speech rejecting his notion that Britain has failed as a multicultural country, and also for blaming multiculturalism for the problems of integration and for focusing his discourse towards only one group, the Muslim community. Moreover, Modood rejected the idea that ethnic minorities promote separatism. He argued that recent research showed that all minorities, including Muslims want to live in mixed neighbourhood and “ghettos are created by those who move out” (qtd. in Baghlieri Campo 28). For Modood, Cameron’s speech could not explain the practical content of ‘muscular liberalism’. Indeed, Cameron was articulating the new common sense; while he rejected the doctrine of ‘state multiculturalism’, he did not explain how his policies of ‘muscular liberalism’ were to be imposed on faith communities (Gamble 2015: 282).

On the contrary, Modood believes that multiculturalism in Britain has not failed yet, but society needs to work on individual rights and integration which must be about “bringing new communities and not just individuals into a relation of equal respect.” Furthermore, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown writing in *The Independent* considered Cameron’s speech as selective and speaking mainly about Muslim communities whereas other ethnic minorities also contribute to separatism (Baghlieri Campo 27).

Along similar line, a group of signatories wrote a letter published in the *Guardian* whose aim was to condemn Cameron’s speech and defend multiculturalism as well; it stated clearly the reasons behind this speech:

We believe David Cameron statement that multiculturalism has failed was a dangerous declaration of intent...His speech was reminiscent of M. Thatcher's infamous 1978 statement that Britain was "being swamped by alien cultures". He has branded Britain's Muslims as the new "enemy within" in the same way as Thatcher attacked the miners and Trade unions. David Cameron is attempting to drive a wedge between different communities by linking Britain's multicultural society with terrorism and national identity. Mr Cameron's aim is simple as it is crude to deflect the anger against his government's cuts from the bankers and on to the Muslim community. (qtd. in Mahamdallie 16)

So, the question at stake is about the significance of such speech. One can suggest that Cameron's speech marked a step change in state racism. Indeed, the speech intended to drive a wedge through British society at the same time as the economic recession and savage cuts in public services and jobs were being done. Cameron definitely did not make his speech out of ignorance. On the contrary, he knows that immigration into Britain is largely balanced by net migration out of the country. He also knows that immigration has a positive impact on economy as Government research has shown that a 1 per cent increase in the ratio of immigrants leads to an increase of up 0.4 per cent in average earnings. He is also aware that polling evidence shows that British Muslims are more patriotic and law-abiding than white British people. He had just recourse to a tactic of right wing politicians as his government's policies are destroying jobs and creating insecurity. He clearly shifted the anger of the population to innocent scapegoats (Mahamdallie 17, 32).

On the other hand, other intellectuals supported Cameron as was the case of Norman Tebbit¹ who defended Cameron's statements about multiculturalism, stating in *The Telegraph* in 2011: "At last a political leader has dared to say what I have been saying for twenty years and getting kicked around for. Multiculturalism is not good for our society. In fact, I doubt if it is good for any society, for the simple reason that a society is defined not by its ethnic origins, but by its culture." He argued that opposing multiculturalism means that the laws and customs of a society must apply for all its members (qtd. in Baghlieri Campo 28).

¹ He is a British politician who served in the Cabinet from 1981 to 1987 and a great supporter of Margaret Thatcher.

Unsurprisingly, the English Defence League commenting on Cameron's speech, declared: "Cameron has now taken that first step towards seriously addressing the threat that certain forms of Islam pose to this country. So thank you Dave. The speech is a landmark event. It marks an important departure from the last 30 years of government thinking" (qtd. in Mahamdallie 17). So, predictably, the implications of Cameron's speech came to the fore with the 'Preventing Terrorism' strategy that recast Britain's Muslims as 'suspects', divided them into 'Good Muslims' and 'Bad Muslims', and eventually considered those having extreme views as 'treasonous' and supporting terrorism.

Now, let us look at the Muslim question. My contention here is to explore how the British state responded to the London suicide bombings of July 2005. Indeed, she adopted a multicultural framework to further a particular agenda though concealing the bombers' motives and ignoring the government's responsibility for its foreign policy commitments. Indeed, Tony Blair refused to relate between events in the domestic sphere and the prosecution of the 'War on Terror', in particular the war on Iraq. At the same time, the state's position towards British Muslims was internally divided, sometimes they were celebrated, another time condemned depending on their utility to a nationalist agenda, they were seen as exemplars of multicultural Britishness, and their transnational commitment have been problematized (Pitcher 10).

The 'War on Terror' has doubtless been the most significant response to the attacks on America in September 2001. It has also shaped the global politics of race in the 21st century. Indeed, Britain's racial politics has been framed in new ways by America's current imperial practice rendering the state hardly capable to sustain an ethics of multicultural pluralism in the face of the exigencies of the war (Pitcher 136). Thus, our aim is to examine Britain's racial politics in response to the London bombings of July 7, 2005 which involved subjecting British Muslims to state scrutiny.

While experts and public opinion recognised that the London bombings were the result of Britain's involvement in the prosecution of the 'War on Terror', arguably the state discourse explained terrorist violence in terms of an arbitrary attack on an

innocent, cohesive multicultural society. Therefore, our aim is to examine the British state's multicultural response to the London bombings through an analysis of different speeches, statements, legislation and policy that followed. I will show the limits of state multiculturalism as it relies on a racialized distinction between the inside and outside of the national community particularly, when the state maintains nationalist exclusions by the expulsion or incarceration of individuals marked out by their actions, religious beliefs, affiliations or associations as foreign. In fact, the state's handling of the transnational conflict in which British Muslims were involved has revealed a fundamental contradiction in the politics of multicultural nationalism.

It is worth mentioning that the adoption of the name '7/7' for the London bombings has been almost universal, as by 8 July 2005, most the London newspapers used this epithet. However, I might argue in this way that associating the London bombings with the American attacks of 2001 is misleading as it ignores the social and historical specificity of either event as well as the difference of motives and objectives that led to these events. It is also a mistake to associate both events as the 'War on Terror' was the response to the American attacks, whereas the London bombings occurred after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Finally, the association of '7/7' and '9/11' will certainly lead to accepting an interpretative discourse which legitimises imperial adventurism (Pitcher 137).

Unanimously, the bombings on 7 July 2005 were said to be an attack on a capital city epitomized by its cultural, religious and racial diversity. These bombings were an attack on a 'multicultural' society, property that according to Ken Livingstone, the then Mayor of London made the city of London 'the greatest in the world'. Again, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair emphasised the multicultural nature of a nation under terrorist attack in his statement to the House of Commons: "We are united in our determination that our country will not be defeated by such terror but will defeat it and emerge from this horror with our values, our way of life, our tolerance and respect for others, undiminished." In addition, Blair made a parallel between a defiant citizenry under attack and the capital's subjection to air raids during the Second World War, saying:

Yesterday we celebrated the heroism of World War Two including the civilian heroes of London's blitz. Today what a different city London is – a city of many cultures, faiths and races, hardly recognisable from the London of 1945. So different and yet, in the face of this attack, there is something wonderfully familiar in the confident spirit which moves through the city, enabling it to take the blow but still not flinch from re-asserting its will to triumph over adversity. Britain may be different today but the coming together is the same. (qtd. in Pitcher139)

One can guess in Blair's multicultural emphasis a historical parallel with Churchill's statement¹, some three months after Britain's entry into the Second World War, evoking national unity at a time of imperial warfare. While the London terrorist attacks have been considered mostly as the outcome of Britain's involvement in the War on Iraq, particularly by public opinion², Blair insisted that the attacks were simply the product of an 'evil ideology' that bore no relation to the actions of the British state³. He pointed out that the target of this attack were the British people, overlooking, therefore, the responsibility of the British state (Pitcher 140-41).

Now, it is important to consider Blair's multicultural response to the London bombings as it revealed the politics of race and racism that have been adopted in the context of the 'War on Terror'. Blair's unequivocal attempt to deny the correlation between Britain's involvement in the war and the bombings attacks is bound up in a racialized understanding of the obligations that come with membership of the British nation. In this multicultural crisis, the British state's response to the London bombings has revealed the extent to which certain expressions of race, culture, and religion can still contravene the acceptable limits of national belonging (Pitcher 144).

What is particularly striking is the use in this ideological conflict of the 'War on Terror' of the concept of the Muslim 'ummah' that describes the commonality of Muslims across the boundaries of the nation-state. This idea of universalism of Islam is clearly perceived in the terrorist bomber's message when he spoke of avenging

¹ Churchill declared 'business as usual' as being the maxim of the British people.

² Opinion polls conducted in July 2005 showed that nearly two-thirds of the British public and almost four-fifths of British Muslims believed that Britain's participation in the invasion of Iraq was a factor leading to the London bombings.

³ Note that even one of the 7 July bombers in a video message declared that his actions were motivated by British foreign policy.

Muslims. So, while the very concept of ‘ummah’ has a transnational structure, the state multicultural discourse remains confined to the physical borders of the nation-state. More explicitly, when the concept of ‘ummah’ stresses the common solidarity shared by Muslims across the world, Blair’s multiculturalism becomes domesticated as a trope of nationalism, as he sees Muslims at home and abroad as different categories of person. This transnational conception of human solidarity here reveals the limits of ‘plural’ conceptions of multicultural difference when they are motivated by a national agenda (Pitcher 145).

It is important to notice that the bombers’ religious identity cannot be identified with Muslims in Britain or elsewhere. Indeed, the tendency to associate Islam as a religion with political violence is definitely misleading. The conflict between British Muslims and the state has emerged as the British state showed hostility towards them through constructing an antagonism against them. To understand the relationship between Muslims and the British state one has to consider Blair’s multicultural nationalism which is dependent on an anti-ethical relationship between the state and those with whom the nation is said to be at war. This clearly recalls the dialectics of racial difference formulated by Hegel that is the master-slave relation. So, maintaining national identity depends merely on the construction of an opposing concept. Islam has, therefore, served as the ‘constitutive outside’ of the ‘War on Terror’ (Pitcher 146).

Although the western leaders stressed the fact that the ‘War on Terror’ is not a war against a religion, and despite the multicultural discourse of Blair, the policies and practices implemented have been harmful as they targeted Muslims. Ultimately, the ‘War on Terror’ has chosen Islam as an antagonist, rendering Britain’s two million Muslims a potential threat. The nation at war against a constitutive outside becomes an ‘inside’ as well.

Similarly to the McCarthyism in 1950s America, the post-2001 period in Britain has led to the policing and repression of an enemy within. In fact, the Counter-Terrorism Minister Hazel Blears declared in March 2005 that, “some of our counter-

terrorism powers will be disproportionately experienced by the Muslim community¹.” For instance, the 2003-04 and 2005-06 statistics show that Asians were stopped and searched with twice the frequency of white people. This reveals clearly that the ‘War on Terror’ has accentuated continuing racial hierarchies within the structure of the multicultural British state (Pitcher 148).

Moreover, the British state has adopted simultaneously benevolent or hostile attitude towards British Muslims. Indeed, sometimes British Muslims were accused; some other times acquitted as it appeared from the legislative proposals worked out after the London bombings. For instance, a 2004 draft paper from the Home and Foreign Commonwealth Offices on relations with the Muslim community stressed the necessity of gaining the active cooperation of Muslims, immigrant and British in the prosecution of the ‘War on Terror’. The Foreign Commonwealth Office considered that focusing on Islam in response to the London attacks would be a counter-productive measure. It is worth mentioning that the British state did have the support of moderate Muslim organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain (Pitcher 149).

What I have been suggesting so far is that the position of the British state towards Muslims has been divisive which explained the imposition of a nationalist framework in which Islam has been understood either as a native form that is ‘moderate’, or a foreign form that is ‘fundamentalist’. Therefore, the policy proposals worked out in response to the London bombings reflect this nationalist framework. Indeed, in August 2005 Tony Blair announced new legislative measures. The first measure concerned the deportation or exclusion of foreign nationals on the grounds of their fostering hatred, advocating, justifying or validating terrorist violence, or being connected with a range of websites, bookshops, networks or organisations on a proscribed list drawn up by the Home Office (Pitcher 151).

It appears clear that terrorism is understood as a foreign entity which derives from beyond the borders of the British state though the 7 July bombers were indeed

¹ The majority of Muslims are South Asians of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin.

British citizens. Another proposed measure concerned the refusal of asylum to anyone who has participated in terrorism, or has anything to do with it anywhere. Another significant proposal concerned the revocation of citizenship in the case of those with dual citizenship, and suggests that citizenship could be stripped from ‘naturalized’ citizens engaged in extremism (Pitcher 152).

All these proposals were said to promote the interests of national security. Blair also tried to introduce a proposal that seeks to increase the possible ‘pre-trial’ period of the detention for terrorist from two weeks to ninety days; however, it was defeated in the House of Commons, and twenty-eight days was voted instead with the subsequent reintroduction of internment laws which were implemented in Ulster and did certainly contribute to feelings of alienation and resentment. It is ironic to see that the values that were used to justify the ‘War on Terror’ such as freedom, cultural pluralism and democracy were the very values that are broken and contravened (Pitcher153).

In a further proposition, Blair promised to review existing thresholds for the granting of citizenship, and called for the better integration of Britain’s Muslim community; this reveals that his first objective related to prevent further terrorist attack is indeed associated with a longstanding concern over integration. Blair proved again that Britishness and terrorism are irreconcilable positions. Bringing the question of citizenship to the fore is recalling the Norman Tebbit’s ‘Cricket’s test’¹. Though only few of these proposals became laws, they did construct a terrorist enemy who is either foreign, Muslim or both (Pitcher 155).

Furthermore, one might argue that some legislation could be seen as the institutionalisation of Islamophobia as it has the potential to construct all Muslims as potential extremists unless proven differently. Tellingly, the Tory Chairman Baroness Warsi was right when she stated that Islamophobia has become the acceptable face of racism. What Britain needed was rather to foster respect, dialogue and shared understanding with Muslim community (McGhee 49).

¹ It refers to the lack of loyalty to the England Cricket team among South Asian and Caribbean immigrants suggesting that they should support England at the sport of cricket rather than their native countries.

The 'War on Terror' has arguably legitimised a range of racist and Islamophobic practices in institutions and across civil society. Indeed, racist attacks against individual's physical appearance, attacks on Mosques and social prejudices that question the loyalty of Muslims to British culture and traditions increased significantly. Islamophobic and racist attacks were also to be found in the tabloids; for instance, the *Daily Mail* wrote that the bombings were the ungrateful gift of the bombers to a nation that had housed and schooled them. It was said that that Britain's native hospitability has been abused and repaid with terrorist violence. Thus, both the responses of the state and the tabloids to the bombings were in fact informed by pre-existing racist discourse. What is striking is the way this creeping racism inflects public debate. In fact, most people know of Muslims what is shaped by the media; hence, the journalist Peter Osborne's comment is more than correct when he stated that, there is a "shameful Islamophobia at the heart of British media" (qtd. in Pitcher 157).

Besides, there were significant rise of Islamophobia as the terrorist attacks committed by sections of the Muslim community have been used to negatively portray Islam and over one billion of Muslim people around the world. Thus, the rise of Islamophocia led inevitably to the increase in support for Far-Right and Fascist parties and organisations. For instance, UKIP and the BNP polled the fourth and fifth largest votes respectively in the 2010 general election. In the 2009 European elections UKIP polled the third highest vote and pushed Labour into fourth place (Mahamdallie 77-82).

What was required from the Muslims was to demonstrate their primary loyalty to the nation and more specifically they were supposed to reject the Universalist transnational solidarity represented in Islam and replace it with a bordered commitment to the nation. Islam has been often described as the embodiment of 'fundamentalism' and subsequently a threat to contemporary social order. Indeed, this racist conceptualization of Islam is dependent on the representation of a racialized Islamic fundamentalism. The Islamic faith is to some extent the equivalent of Karl Marx's 'Jewishness' using the idea of Jewishness in the pejorative sense referring to

the antisocial celebration of money. Indeed, Marx argued that “the social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism” (qtd. in Pitcher 159). Similarly, we might predict the social emancipation of the Muslim when states and societies are emancipated from a fundamentalist antagonism towards Islam.

Probably, British Muslims will continue to be stigmatised in discourses of the nation until they espouse a meaningful collective identity that does not consider their transnational commitments; it is then possible for Muslims in Britain to forego the universal element of their faith and adopt a British form of Islam. Therefore, Islam would be contained within the symbolic borders of the nation. In short, the London bombings have definitely operated a significant transformation in multicultural Britain. Indeed, multiculturalism became a social reality, as such the state has to pursue thoughtful practices in the future and ultimately imagine multiculturalism in which Islam is seen not as an obstacle but a model.

1.3 Beyond the Death of Multiculturalism

It is essential to recognise that multiculturalism is a defining feature of Britain today not just an optional component of society. Indeed, multicultural politics have for a long time been a substantial characteristic of the British state whatever currency the term multiculturalism might have at any particular point in time. However, multiculturalism has been particularly criticised as a state practice in Britain as well as in Western Europe.

Even the efficiency and usefulness of multiculturalism was called into question. One can suggest that since the onset of the ‘War on Terror’, the British state’s critique of the concept of multiculturalism was indeed part of multicultural politics. The state’s objective was to benefit from a popular anxiety about separateness, not to indicate a substantial change in policy and practice. Even if multiculturalism was presented by New Labour as outdated, this is rather a clever rhetorical manoeuvre as there were no fundamental changes in the racial politics of the British state. The state is still pursuing a politics of multiculturalism and its rhetorical rejection of multiculturalism is simply the continuation of multicultural politics by another name (Pitcher 164).

In most European countries multiculturalism is regarded as disastrous or wrong turn in response to immigration. However, it is difficult to sustain such an account if we consider that the implementation of multicultural policies has coincided with three determining factors which are the formation of the European Union, the emergence of post-industrialism, and the restructuring of the welfare state, known as the 'triple transition'. Indeed, all the transformations that occurred in Western societies such as cultural fragmentation, unemployment and housing shortages have been rather the result of more influential transformation intertwined with globalization and the advent of transnational structures such as the European Union (Rattansi 144).

Some have argued that multiculturalism has been unable to tackle the socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination against minorities; however, high unemployment amongst ethnic minorities has been the result of de-industrialization witnessed by Britain's northern cities. This situation has been clearly painted by the 2001 reports which I have discussed at some length in Chapter three. Furthermore, racial discrimination has also contributed to the employment and housing situation of the minorities. Nevertheless, these factors do not correlate with the adoption of multicultural policies as in the case of Britain, the adoption of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity measures have significantly contributed to improve the situation of ethnic minorities in matters of employment (Rattansi146).

Therefore, despite announcing the death of multiculturalism the state has not foregone the advantages it continues to derive from multicultural politics. Indeed, beyond its 'death' multiculturalism has become a defining feature of Britain's current race crisis. It remains able to account for contradictory practices. Overall, multiculturalism has allowed the state to resolve a range of other social problems; it has been definitely useful at each time to organise and manage contradictions and crises.

At this stage, it is important to summarize the evolution of multiculturalism presented as a master narrative: first, from the 1970s to mid-1990s there was an increased recognition and accommodation of diversity through the adoption of

multiculturalism policies across Western nation-states; secondly, the mid-1990s were characterized by a backlash and retreat from multiculturalism that led to a return of ideas of nation-building, common values and identity, sometimes a return of assimilation. Finally, this retreat from multiculturalism can be explained by the rise of nativist and populist right-wing political movements which considered that the accommodation of diversity is threatening the way of life of the majority group. Conversely, the retreat from multiculturalism is explained by the centre-left which considers that multiculturalism has indeed failed to meet the social, economic and political needs of the minorities leading, therefore, unintentionally to their social exclusion (Kymlicka 2010: 32).

It is worth noting that the social-democratic discourse unlike the radical right discourse emphasises ideas of inclusive national identity, anti-racism and anti-discrimination though distancing itself from the rhetoric and policies of multiculturalism. Therefore, the new approach proposed to go beyond the perceived limits of misguided multiculturalism whilst rejecting earlier ideas of unitary and homogenous nationhood is deemed 'post-multiculturalism'¹.

I will try to explain that this simplistic narrative is somehow misleading as it does not render faithfully the experiments in multiculturalism over the past forty years; it exaggerates the extent to which they have been abandoned; and it does not identify the genuine difficulties and limitations they have encountered. According to post-multiculturalists, multiculturalism is a feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity comprising a celebration of customs, traditions, music and cuisine, what Alibhai-Brown refers to as the '3S' model of multiculturalism in Britain. Clearly, this view is only a caricature of multiculturalism; nonetheless it has been endorsed by many critiques who believe that celebrating difference could not solve economic and political issues. Most commonly criticism of multiculturalism include the fact that multiculturalism does not tackle issues of economic and political inequality such as unemployment, poor educational outcomes, residential segregation, poor English language skills and political marginalization (Kymlicka 2010: 34).

¹ It differs from the Radical Right's anti-multiculturalism.

Thus, the post-multiculturalists have identified these flaws to explain the retreat from multiculturalism and the search for new post-multicultural models of citizenship. Post-multiculturalists have proposed a model of citizenship that prioritises political participation and economic opportunities instead of cultural recognition. This model emphasises human rights and individual freedom over cultural tradition in order to build an inclusive common national identity. It also privileges cultural change and cultural mixing over the reification of static cultural differences (kymlicka 2010: 34).

However, post-multiculturalists have presented a caricature of multiculturalism failing to grasp its reality as it has developed over the past forty years in the Western democracies. As discussed in chapter one, the history of multiculturalism is more complex¹. Multiculturalism is above all a model of democratic citizenship grounded in human rights ideals and meant for suppressing enduring effects of older racial and ethnic hierarchies and inequalities. This account of multiculturalism is undoubtedly in complete contradiction with the '3S' model which presents multiculturalism as a caricature rather than a model of citizenization (kymlicka 2010: 38).

First, the claim that multiculturalism is primarily about symbolic cultural politics is not accurate because multiculturalism does include economic, political and cultural elements such as policies concerned with access to political power and to economic opportunities. Secondly, the post-multiculturalists' claim that multiculturalism ignores the importance of universal human rights is misleading because multiculturalism is part of a larger human rights movement that challenge the traditional ethnic and racial hierarchies. Therefore, it cannot accommodate illiberal practices within minority groups and reject cultural practices that violate human rights. Third, the post-multiculturalists' claim that multiculturalism denies the reality of cultural change is a misreading of the reality of multiculturalism. Indeed, multiculturalism is a transformative project that involves both minorities and majorities. Multiculturalism is transformative of the identities and practices of minority groups as well as transformative of majority identities. In short, it is clear that the post-multiculturalist critique is misguided and flawed as it fails to recognise the

¹ Multiculturalism is part of a larger 'human rights revolution'.

experiments of multiculturalism as part of a larger human rights movement (Kymlicka 2010:38-39).

If post-multiculturalist critiques of multiculturalism have been largely misleading, how can one justify any retreat from multiculturalism? One has first to admit that accounts of multiculturalism's death have been mostly exaggerated. We have also to concede that the question of multiculturalism has been controversial; but we have first to dismiss one explanation about the retreat from multiculturalism that is a return to the traditional liberal belief that ethnicity belongs in the private sphere, and that citizenship should be unitary and undifferentiated. This would mean a complete rejection of the idea of multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2010: 40-41).

Moreover, the retreat from multiculturalism does not concern the whole Western democracies but only some have been affected. For instance, public support for multiculturalism in Canada remains high. In Australia, the federal government has recently backed away from multiculturalism; the state's governments have moved into adopting their own new multiculturalism policies. What is noticeable are some advances and retreats from multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2010: 41).

However, according to Banting and Kymlicka in most countries multiculturalism is not retreating but growing as evidenced by the Multiculturalism Policy Index which monitors multicultural public policies across twenty-one Western democracies across three intervals (1980,2000 and 2010). Indeed, it was demonstrated that the announcement of multiculturalism's death in the years following 9/11 was misguided as data revealed a substantial growth of post-immigration multicultural policies between 1980 and 2000, and even a progression between 2000 and 2010¹. Furthermore, one can clearly notice that two countries like Britain and the Netherlands scored in 2000, 5.5 out of 8; and by 2010 the score for the Netherlands has been reduced to 2, and Britain remained the same. These results of course offer a mixed picture, and have suggested this conclusion: "while the term multiculturalism has disappeared from the political rhetoric, this is something that is not paralleled by the

¹ Note that only three countries have a lower score in 2010 in comparison with 2000.

eradication, nor much to the detriment, of actual measures, institutions, and frameworks of minority cultural recognition” (Vertovec and Wessendorf 21).

Consequently, attacks on multiculturalism did not lead to the alleged retreat of multiculturalism. On the contrary, there were a movement towards multiculturalism and towards a ‘civic re-balancing’ of multiculturalism. Saying that multiculturalism has failed or that it is dead as did Cameron might suggest replacing it with assimilation, individualistic integration or cosmopolitanism. Surprisingly, such discourses reinforce the sociological reality of group as they denounce the existence of distinct groups, especially Muslims which are arguably encouraged by multiculturalist policies. Ironically, those critics of multiculturalism acknowledge the sociology of group multiculturalism while rejecting its political dimensions. Furthermore, the accusation that “some groups are not integrating may actually reinforce group identities, therefore contributing to the social conditions that give multiculturalism a sociological pertinence” (Modood 144, 159).

On the other hand, anti-multiculturalists tend to use multiculturalist ideas not only in sociology but also when deploying an anti-multiculturalist discourse. For instance, group consultations have been increasing particularly with Muslims in Britain since 9/11. France too as an anti-multiculturalist country has increased corporatism with the creation by Sarkozy of the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman in 2003 to represent all Muslims to the French government in matters of worship and rituals. Admittedly, these bodies meant to control Muslims, are not the best of multiculturalism but they still adopt a multiculturalist mode of integration and their presence offers the possibility of movement towards a more egalitarian, rather than controlled top-down multiculturalism (Modood 160).

As suggested by Vertovec and Wessendorf, aspects of a backlash and denial of multiculturalism are more likely forms of multiculturalism as in France and Germany where there seems to be a movement towards, not away from multiculturalism. There seems to be not a shift from pluralistic integration to individualist integration but

rather measures acknowledging the social reality and political significance of groups (Modood 160).

Here again, multiculturalism according to its most prominent theorists such as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, and Bhikhu Parekh aimed at integration because as noted earlier multiculturalism is not opposed to integration but is “a mode of integration that deals not just with individuals but also with groups.” Integration is therefore “the generic over-arching term of which multiculturalism is a species and so the two terms are on different levels rather than being alternatives” (Modood 147).

Besides, anti-multiculturalists condemned the increasingly unpopular group-based multiculturalism that mobilizes group identities to demand differential treatment, whereas the advocates of multiculturalism respond that it is working in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood referring to ‘cosmopolitanism’. Of course, a group-based multiculturalism is much less popular than cosmopolitanism, but a group-based multiculturalism still has a future if we consider the British Prime Minister Cameron’s vision of a ‘Big Society’ in which civil society associations based on locality and faith take over some responsibilities currently undertaken by state agencies. Indeed, one of the Big Society agenda is the state funding to create new community-based non-state schools called ‘free schools’. Over a quarter of these are led by religious groups; for instance, 102 schools were approved for funding in July 2012. One can wonder to what extent the new Big Society is a break with what is rejected as ‘state multiculturalism’. Again, the British government’s PREVENT programme, directed at preventing Muslim extremism has indeed increased participation in local governance. Paradoxically, while attacking multiculturalism the state is still deploying multiculturalist policies (Modood 162).

Surprisingly, leading British politicians, while exhibiting hostility to multiculturalism since the 2001 riots, have also passed multiculturalist measures such as the Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006) and The Equality Act (2010). Legal exemptions for minority religious practices and anti-discrimination measures remained

as anti-discrimination laws and minority faith schools have actually increased since 2001.

In addition, it has been often claimed that multiculturalism is divisive and fosters separateness; however, multiculturalists have long rejected separation and division. Policies of multiculturalism have been used to promote unity. This understanding of multiculturalism as promoting division is rather a caricature, but it functions like a stereotype as it is widely believed. Further, leading politicians now publicly advocate 'Britishness' being more inclusive. In fact, the last Labour government led a debate about Britishness and introduced measures to foster British identity. By equating Britishness with Britain's political features and its diversity, the Labour government were promoting a 'civic multicultural national identity'. Cameron too in his 2011 Munich speech advocated "a national identity that is open to everyone." Clearly, if leading politicians seem keener to make Britishness more inclusive than their predecessors even in 2000, it is then difficult to argue that multiculturalism has retreated as a policy; it has seemingly advanced when understood as a vision for the nation (Uberoi and Modood 2013:139-43).

While the general trend in Britain has been to blame multiculturalism, support has come from improbable sources. Indeed, in *The Economist*¹ Bagehot rejected the tendency for 'multiculturalism' to become as derogatory a word as 'neo-con' or 'socialist'. Bagehot considered that the limited segregation in housing and education policies is sometimes preferable to enforced mixing which could be counterproductive. The author argued that the adoption of multiculturalist policies in Britain has been a boom rather than a liability (Rattansi 149).

Similarly, Anthony Giddens² who supported multiculturalism in 2006, considered that the whole debate about multiculturalism has been ignorant and misconceived calling for "more multiculturalism, no less." He considered the failure of the Far Right in Britain compared with other countries as Denmark, Belgium, France and the Netherlands a proof that Britain has succeeded in managing cultural diversity.

¹ A Centre-Right publication.

² He is the founder of the 'Third Way' project.

In addition, if some liberal governments officially retreated from multiculturalism they remained committed to diversity as most of the policies are still in place, as pointed out by Vertovec this distancing is rhetorical (Rattansi 150).

Anthony Giddens considered the suddenness of the backlash against multiculturalism commenting in *The Guardian*: “everyone seemed suddenly to be dismissive of the notion not only the traditional critics of the far right but nowadays most of the liberal left too.” For him these new critics of multiculturalism, for example, Trevor Phillips, “risk contributing to the processes they decry, since they are so dismissive of the achievements that mark this country out from others, particularly in Europe. I can’t think of any other European state that has been more successful than the UK in managing cultural diversity” (qtd. in Rattansi 149-150). Tariq Modood too thinks that multiculturalism is still an attractive and worthwhile political project; and that we need “more of it rather than less.” Modood adds that it does not mean that those calling for integration do not have a point because multiculturalism and integration are complementary ideas. But, it means that integration should take a multicultural rather than assimilative form (Modood 13, 44).

With regard to the available evidence of the whole era of multiculturalism and even the flaws that have been revealed, one cannot endorse such an account or conclusion. It follows that if multiculturalism has not failed, for some there is a need to take a somewhat different path.

2.Interculturalism: An Alternative to Multiculturalism

Some observers have predicted an ideological shift justified by the failure of multiculturalism. Others believe that an alternative to multiculturalism must be found, to live in diversity as they are persuaded that multiculturalism is no longer a persuasive policy approach. Indeed, it has been proposed not to move away from multiculturalism but rather to go beyond multiculturalism, that is, interculturalism.

It is thought now that multiculturalism views ethnic cultures as having strictly definable boundaries, having unchanging essential components, and lacking quite fundamental internal dissent, that multiculturalism has been too prone to essentialism.

Thus, Rattansi suggests the adoption of interculturalism to undercut this essentialist tendency. Interculturalism recognises connectedness of cultures and the shared values that have developed throughout the world, unlike multiculturalism which inadvertently tend to treat non-Western cultures as separate from the Western cultures and ideals (Rattansi 153).

So, it is now time to make a transformation of the vocabulary of multiculturalism into that of ‘interculturalism’ with an emphasis on the interconnectedness of cultures and highlight the contribution of non-Western cultures to the development of conceptions of tolerance, liberty and rationality. Managing the ‘superdiversity’ of European nation states requires the adoption of interculturalism which entails not only respect for ‘other cultures’ but also how commonalities provide a basis for developing more common understandings (Rattansi 159).

While Parekh has emphasised the importance of intercultural dialogue, Rattansi considers this emphasis as the end of multiculturalism and a transition to interculturalism. However, this interpretation is not grounded. The question at stake is therefore, what interculturalism is and what its relation to multiculturalism is.

During the last decades, the concept of interculturalism has been used in the philosophical and public debates particularly as a response to the so-called failure of multiculturalism. In Quebec, the concept is used against the Canadian multiculturalism model in which there is no place for majority precedence and the idea of a foundational national culture is absent. In Europe the Council of Europe played a major role in the advocacy of interculturalism as an alternative to multiculturalism. Interculturalism has been presented as a new approach to diversity which focuses on integration and social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and interaction.

Bouchard and Taylor argue, in *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation*¹ (2008), that the term interculturalism has been first used in Quebec in 1985, prior to which there was only two references, a Council of Europe document and a Belgian

¹ The Report of the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Difference, the Commission was set up in 2007.

document, both dated 1981. In Canada, interculturalism developed as a reaction to the multiculturalism of federal Canada, whereas in Europe it emerged as a city policy strategy in the Intercultural Cities programme of the Council of Europe in 2008¹. Multiculturalism has been used differently but has mainly focused on the accommodation and integration of migrant and post-migrant groups known as ‘ethnic minorities’. Multiculturalism has also been concerned with multinational questions as is the case in Canada which focused on constitutional and land issues (Meer *et al.*4).

In Europe, interculturalism has become an important issue since it attracts academics who are dissatisfied with the multicultural paradigm. It is argued that interculturalism has features that would address the shortcomings of the multicultural citizenship approach. There are some scholars as Meer and Modood who argue that the two paradigms are complementary; yet, it is interesting to go beyond their similarities and identify the dividing lines. Investigating how the paradigms work together and can influence each other is of course interesting though my contention here is to consider the distinctive features of interculturalism.

Moreover, multiculturalism as a model of integration is perceived to be in crisis. Some do not have an alternative to multiculturalism, but others as the Council of Europe are convinced that interculturalism is the alternative to multiculturalism, yet it has not been really distinguished from multiculturalism. Indeed, “interculturalism is actually nearly as old as multiculturalism, for the former was a Quebecan reaction to the latter, but what is understood by interculturalism in Europe is quite different”(Meer *et al.* 165).

I will show that interculturalism manages to channel the majority of the substantial criticisms of multiculturalism through highlighting key features of interculturalism. Moreover, the fact that interculturalism follows a mainstreaming public philosophy renders it more attractive than multiculturalism for policy-makers and represents a pragmatic turn in dealing with diversity dynamics (Zapata-Barrero 55).

¹ This pilot programme jointly with the European Commission examines practical tools for the management of interculturalism in eleven European towns and cities.

Thus, I will address in this section the key distinctions of multiculturalism and interculturalism arguing that this framework of discussion represents an important shift in the conceptualisation of citizenship in super-diversity societies. I will then turn to the central concern to examine to what extent interculturalism represents an alternative to multiculturalism focusing on the positive qualities of interculturalism, but ultimately bringing back the debate into the utility of multiculturalism.

2.1 Framing the Dividing Lines

Interculturalism as a concept is widely spread in European countries such as Germany, Greece and Italy which adopted intercultural education programmes, but also in Spain where a Spanish urban governance was created in 2011 as a network of Intercultural Cities Programme that privileges integration at a city-level. Unsurprisingly, 2008 was designated the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue by the European Commission whose objective was “encouraging all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of our rich cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions” (qtd. in Meer *et al.* 6).

Before going on to consider the differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism, it is important to have an overview about Canadian multiculturalism and Quebecan interculturalism because one way of clarifying our understanding of the differences between the two concepts is by examining the two models as they emerged in Canada and Quebec.

- Canadian Multiculturalism and Quebecan Interculturalism

Policies dealing with diversity and integration are called in Federal Canada ‘multiculturalism’, whereas in Quebec they are referred to as ‘interculturalism’ even if they are quite similar; but Quebecers prefer to use a different name. Indeed, nationalists in Quebec often claim that Canadian multiculturalism is designed to slow down and even defeat integration, that it encourages ghettoisation. Therefore, Quebecers rejected multiculturalism in Quebec as they believe that multiculturalism was introduced in Canada in order to avoid having to deal properly with French-

English duality. Indeed, Quebeckers wanted earlier to use the phrase ‘bi-culturalism’¹; however, the former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared that Canada is bilingual, but not bicultural; rather it is multicultural (Taylor 329-33).

The differences lie more in the stories than in policies. There is first a semantic distinction between the two terms; multiculturalism refers to policies which aim at recognition of both difference and integration and acknowledging diversity whereas interculturalism gives more weight to integration. However, the difference will appear in terms of the two stories. Anglophone Canada has its origin from the British Isles so that the political identity of Anglophone Canada was traced in relation to the Empire/Commonwealth. Then, in the post-war period a few proportion of Canadians share that British origin so that the old ‘Anglo-normativity’ no longer exists. The Canadian multiculturalism developed in the 1960s and 1970s through the dethroning of this Anglo-normative understanding. It is said in the legislation that Canada had no official culture understood as ancestral culture; thus multiculturalism became a marker of the new Canadian political identity (Taylor 336).

In contrast, multiculturalism is not feasible in Quebec as more than 70 per cent of the population is from francophone origin. Moreover, their language and culture have been under powerful threat of assimilation because of the presence of anglophone majority in Canada and the domination of the English language.

Of course, the ‘inter’ of interculturalism means that achieving integration is essential in Quebec to ensure that it takes in French rather than English. It is worth noting that until the ‘Quiet Revolution’² of the 1960s, the integration of immigrants has meant to integrate into the English minority. Unlike Canadian multiculturalism, the ancestral identity of Quebec cannot be dethroned. It is said that Quebeckers could not change their culture of interaction centred on the notion of ‘Québécois de souche’³.

¹ It was used by André Laurendeau who co-chaired the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

² It refers to the efforts made by the Liberal government of Jean Lesage, elected in 1960, to make intense socio-political and socio-cultural change in Quebec, more specifically the secularization of government and the creation of a state-run welfare state.

³ Old-stock Quebeckers.

Some think that there is still a possibility to create a more equal and inclusive society but one that cannot resemble the Canadian one (Taylor 337).

The contrast between the two stories is obvious, the ‘multi-‘story decentres the traditional ethno-historical identities as such identities co-exist in the society, but none is officialised. The ‘inter-‘ story starts from the reigning historical identity, but sees it evolving in a process in which all citizens of whatever identity, have a voice, and no one’s input has a privileged status (Taylor 338).

Therefore, the rhetorical difference between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebecan interculturalism despite similarities in policies can explain the tension that arises between the ‘multi-‘ and the ‘inter-‘. For many commentators the Quebecers’ refusal to dethrone their traditional identity is in fact a refusal to recognise diversity. On the other hand, for Quebecers the insistence that they should treat their historical identity as just one among many is a refusal of the fundamental duality of Canada. In short, speaking of a mere rhetoric is indeed a failure to see the essential role these stories play (Taylor 339).

Accordingly, Quebec as a nation has developed a distinctive intercultural approach to diversity that is quite distinct from federal Canadian multiculturalism. While multiculturalism remains the official policy of the Canadian federal government, all Quebec governments and the Quebec populations since 1981 had rejected multiculturalism. Therefore, the adoption of interculturalism in Quebec has been clearly explained by the authors of the Report of the Consultation Commission on the Accommodation of Practices Related to Cultural Difference, known as the Bouchard-Taylor Report 2008: “the crucial point here is that there really is a majority culture within the nation of Quebec whose fragility is a permanent fact of life. This results in a specific vision of nationhood, identity and national belonging” (qtd. in Meer *et al.*7)

Debates over multiculturalism and interculturalism have been taking place across Europe and North America, but have remained unconnected and, sometimes restricted to broad categories which locate interculturalism and multiculturalism in

respectively a 'duality' and 'diversity' paradigm. Now, the intercultural-multicultural debate is widely established, yet the dividing lines between both concepts have to be clearly framed. The question at stake is to what extent are interculturalism and multiculturalism similar or different from each other. My contention is to consider ways in which conceptions of interculturalism are being contrasted with multiculturalism.

- Contrasting positively Interculturalism with Multiculturalism

Firstly, it is argued that dialogue and communication are essential features of interculturalism as they facilitate exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds. The question is whether it is a distinguishing feature of interculturalism in particular that dialogue and reciprocity are foundational in multiculturalism. Again, the question is to what extent is communication specific to interculturalism. According to interculturalists the difference is in the social or convivial openness in which communication is facilitated (Meer *et al.* 9).

However, notions of dialogue and communication are central to multiculturalism. For instance, Charles Taylor in a seminal essay "The Politics of Recognition"(1992) characterises the emergence of a modern politics of identity premised upon an idea of 'recognition'. Taylor explains that people can no longer be recognised on the basis of identities determined from their positions in social hierarchies alone. The emphasis is rather on the manner in which people form their identities, hence the importance of 'dialogical' relationship. In other words, Taylor suggests that people form their identities upon dialogue with others. He also adds that "we are always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us" (qtd. in Meer and Modood 36).

Clearly, Taylor is relying upon Hegel who believes that our idea of ourselves is dependent upon how others come to view us to the extent that our sense of self is developed in a continuing dialogue. Similarly, Parekh recognises the role of cultures in the development of the self for individual group members. His central argument about the importance of cultures in teaching us something is based on intercultural dialogue.

Accordingly, both Taylor and Parekh see communication and dialogue at a philosophical level as important components of multiculturalism. Even other theorists of multiculturalism as Kymlicka and Modood argue that dialogue at a political level permits to resolve conflicts over cultural practices. Therefore, dialogue is central to multiculturalism at both philosophical and political level contrary to the claims of interculturalists (Meer and Modood 38).

Secondly, the advocates of interculturalism suggest that the diversity of the location from where migrants and ethnic minorities come do not create communities or groups but rather mass of languages, ethnicities and religions all cutting across each other and creating a 'super-diversity'. It is argued that interculturalism facilitates the management of these sociological realities while multiculturalism emphasises strong ethnic or cultural identities at the expense of wider cultural exchanges. However, such characterisations of interculturalism ignore the alternative ways in which political interculturalism¹ is itself conceptualized (Meer and Modood 40).

Thirdly, multiculturalism, unlike interculturalism does not speak to the whole society but only to minorities within it. Indeed, Goodhart has pointed out that multiculturalism is asymmetrical emphasising difference and diversity and placing too much emphasis upon what divides us more than what unites us, ignoring the needs of the majority. Therefore, it fosters fragmentation and disunity. What was proposed instead is interculturalism that promotes community cohesion on a local level, and more broadly through an interculturalism that encourages the subscription to national citizenship identities as forms of meta-membership. Thus, states have introduced measures such as the swearing of oaths of allegiance at naturalization ceremonies and language requirements when seeking citizenship (Meer and Modood 42).

Finally, the fourth charge is that multiculturalism is embedded with illiberality and relativism as it allows cultural practices that infringe people's rights such as forced marriage. In contrast, interculturalism protects individual rights as it has the capacity to criticise culture as part of a process of intercultural dialogue. This is part of the

¹ It refers to ways in which interculturalism is appropriated in the critique of multiculturalism.

backlash against multiculturalism as described by Kymlicka, “it is very difficult to get support for multicultural policies if the groups that are the main beneficiaries of these policies are perceived as carriers of illiberal cultural practices that violate norms of human rights.” It is linked particularly to the accommodation of religious minorities who are perceived as conservative on issues of gender equality (qtd. in Meer and Modood 46).

Again, Kymlicka explains that: “if we put Western democracies on a continuum in terms of the proportion of immigrants who are Muslims, I think this would provide a good indicator of public opposition to multiculturalism.” Parekh too notes that this can be traced to a perception that Muslims are “collectivist, intolerant, authoritarian, illiberal and theocratic, and that they use their faith as a self-conscious public statement, not quietly held personal faith but a matter of identity which they must jealously guard and loudly and repeatedly proclaim ...not only to remind them of who they are but also to announce to others what they stand for” (qtd. in Meer and Modood 46).

Therefore, Muslim claims-making are considered as difficult to accommodate and visible Muslim practices such as veiling have in public discourse been reduced to and conflated with alleged Muslim practices such as forced marriage. Clearly, this characterisation puts Muslims in the case of ‘otherness’ and renders multiculturalism illiberal as it allows such practices. However, this reaction towards religious identities is unhealthy and problematic. In fact, most of practices are not religious but cultural such as female genital mutilation which is a cultural practice having little support from any religion. This attitude towards Muslims is biased and reflects a secularist bias that has alienated Muslims from multiculturalism. Thus, as argued by Modood, multiculturalism can encompass different groups and does not privilege any one but recognition should be accorded to the identities valued by the marginalised groups (Meer and Modood 46-47).

Accordingly, assessing the relationship between multiculturalism and interculturalism is crucial to answer Lentin’s question is interculturalism an ‘updated

version' of multiculturalism? Of course not because when advocates of interculturalism contrast it with multiculturalism their criteria are not persuasive. Indeed, while both share much in common as they are concerned with recognising cultural diversity; it is safe stating that the positive qualities of interculturalism such as encouraging communication, recognising dynamic identities, promoting unity and challenging illiberality are foundational in multiculturalism. More importantly, multiculturalism surpasses interculturalism as a political approach that recognises the fact that individual and groups need to be provided for in the distribution of powers as well as reflected in an ethical conception of citizenship. One can conclude that until interculturalism as a political discourse is able to offer an original perspective, one that can speak to a variety of concerns emanating from complex identities and matters of equality and diversity in a more persuasive manner than at present, it cannot, intellectually at least, eclipse multiculturalism (Meer and Modood 48).

2.2 Making the Case for Interculturalism

Interculturalism has been presented as a distinct alternative to prevailing approaches of multiculturalism in Europe. As Irena Guidikova, coordinator of the Intercultural Cities programme of the Council of Europe puts it: “multiculturalism is increasingly being challenged as eroding the foundations of community cohesion and the universality of human rights and equal dignity, and accused of being unable to forge a common identity.” For Zapata-Barrero interculturalism “enters into this negative diagnosis of multiculturalism, offering a lifetime” (qtd. in Meer *et al.*4).

Moreover, interculturalists argue that interculturalism, minimally, addresses the shortcomings of multiculturalism. Therefore, multiculturalism is no longer considered as a persuasive approach. Indeed, a strong advocate of ‘community cohesion’, Ted Cattle has described interculturalism as “an opportunity to replace multiculturalism as a conceptual and policy framework”; while others maintain that interculturalism represents a gain over multiculturalism while pursuing the same set of mostly uncontroversial political ends (qtd. in Meer *et al.*5).

In addition, the Council of Europe's 2008 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living Together as Equals in Dignity* states that multiculturalism is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be replaced by a form of interculturalism. The British Council has likewise emphasised the need for interculturalism in order to "develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes"(qtd. in Meer *et al.* 6).

The controversy over multiculturalism has emerged as a consequence of the backlash against multiculturalism and the necessity for managing a diverse society. Indeed, the multicultural debates centred on questions such as the rights of cultural recognition in the public sphere and how to enforce equality and cultural rights of non-national citizens with different languages, religions and cultural practices. However, multicultural citizenship is being challenged by the emergence of a new paradigm that is the intercultural citizenship (Zapata-Barrero 53).

Ted Cantle has presented interculturalism as a new progressive approach that manages diversity since multiculturalism failed completely to adapt to super-diversity and the multifaceted aspects of difference and 'otherness'. He explains that the 'success' of the multicultural model in Britain was challenged by the findings of the Cantle Report in 2001 that communities had 'parallel lives'. Moreover, multicultural policies followed by Britain do not fit the new era of globalisation and super-diversity, they have also failed to recognise that 'difference' is no longer simply defined by 'race' and that identity has become multifaceted and dynamic, developing support for a more intercultural model. They failed to recognise the interconnectedness of the world that needs a new and progressive approach which builds interaction between and within cultures (Cantle 135).

Furthermore, multiculturalism has failed to respond to majoritarian anxieties especially about the threat posed by the growth of migration to the homogeneity and distinctiveness of national and regional identities. Far-Right parties have exploited this fear of the erosion of a national identity. However, community cohesion programmes

have met some of the concerns about growing diversity through a new framework in which a sense of belonging and positive relationships between different groups were promoted (Cantle 136).

The positive approach of community cohesion at local level was indeed successful but multiculturalism has failed to adapt to the new social and political reality and provide a supportive discourse at a national level. It is suggested that the concept of interculturalism can undertake such a role, forming a new meta-narrative, and transform our understanding of 'difference' and our policy and practice for living together (Cantle 139-40).

Therefore, interculturalism offers a lifeline while multiculturalism has been diagnosed as neglecting inter-group relations and interpersonal contact among people with different origins and cultures. Interculturalism is mainly viewed as fostering interaction among people from different backgrounds. If we concede that we are witnessing an 'intercultural turn', is there a political theory founding this turn? Thus, it is important to explore the building of a preliminary theory of interculturalism.

- Theorizing Interculturalism

Intercultural citizenship cannot be reduced to one simplistic view of dialogue among people from different backgrounds. Indeed, one can identify three basic premises promoting intercultural citizenship: positive interaction which entails a reduction in prejudice towards 'others'; anti-discrimination which means that interculturalism focuses on the contextual, legal, institutional and structural factors that hinder support for intercultural relations or that reduce the possibility of interaction; and diversity advantage which implies redesigning policies in order to treat diversity as a potential resource and a public good, and not a nuisance to be contained (Zapata-Barrero 63).

Therefore, these three dimensions defining intercultural citizenship have to be justified theoretically. In this context, three hypotheses found interculturalism. Firstly, the social hypothesis argues that diversity provokes segregations and exclusion reducing simultaneously social capital and the sense of belonging to society. Thus, the

aim of intercultural citizenship is to restore social cohesion and feelings of belonging through policies of social equality (Zapata-Barrero 64).

Secondly, the political hypothesis argues that diversity threatens traditional values and the system of relations of rights and duties which ensures stability between citizens and the basic structure of society. Thus, the three dimensions defining multicultural citizenship maintain control of any justified change in traditional national values and also equilibrium between the loyalty of citizens and the rights of immigrants. Thirdly, the cultural hypothesis says that citizens' cultural capabilities are not fully developed in a diverse society as diversity tends to close off the cultural opportunities of diverse people. So, intercultural citizenship develops the potentiality of cultures in a diverse society (Zapata-Barrero 64).

From each of these hypotheses a theory has developed. The social theory of diversity is based upon Allport's¹ contact theory which suggests that contact reduces prejudice by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals; and also on Cattle's view of interculturalism as community cohesion and community building. Therefore, the social theory of diversity argues that positive interaction transforms conflict zones into zones of positive contact to ensure social inclusion. The aim of incorporating interculturalism into society is to foster cohesion and avoid social disturbances (Zapata-Barrero 65).

The political theory of diversity is best exemplified through the work of Bouchard who focused on the survival of national identity, avoiding dualism in society between traditional social values and diversity. It aims at reducing the potential impact of changes on tradition and on the loyalty of citizens and the rights/duties of immigrants. Finally, the cultural theory of diversity is based on promoting the cultural opportunities of people through a democratisation of culture and cultural citizenship. Therefore, interculturalism helps the cultural development of citizens through interaction. Overall, the three theories of diversity are essential to building an intercultural framework. The social theory's drivers are social inclusion and trust

¹ He developed his theory in 1954.

whereas social conflict constitutes its diversity limit. The political theory's driver is the stability of tradition and rights/duties and its basic limit is the loss of national identity. Finally, the cultural theory has the development of capabilities as its driver and the lack of cultural capabilities as its basic diversity limit (Zapata-Barrero 66).

- Supporting Interculturalism: policy implications of interculturalism

Interculturalism constitutes in itself a pragmatic answer to diversity dynamic contexts. Interculturalism is a proximate policy, always performance-oriented, with the aim of inverting diversity's negative impact and of promoting a view of diversity as an opportunity and advantage for personal social development. Indeed, this problem-solving approach has been developed by Cattle who recommended new orientations for the British government after the disturbances in northern towns in 2001. Social conflicts have been linked with the failure of British multicultural policy.

Cattle's book, *Community Cohesion*¹(2008) proposes to reduce tension in local communities by promoting cross-cultural contact as well as promoting unity and supporting diversity. His work has had definitely a direct influence on policy focus in Britain. It is clear that interculturalism has seduced policy-makers who see this new approach to diversity as not concerned with targeting explicit groups unlike affirmative action which led to the rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant discourses. This attraction is then connected with its differentiated policy implications in contrast to multiculturalism. Interculturalism unlike multiculturalism does not request specific policies; it rather follows a mainstreaming public philosophy which proposes to address diversity without categorisation of difference but speaking to the entire population (Zapata-Barrero 70).

- Interculturalism: A Political Rhetoric

Recent academic and public debates have centred on defending an innovative and realistic interculturalism against a discredited multiculturalism. However, Meer and Modood have argued that there is little intellectual substance underlying this trend. It

¹ Cattle presented first his approach in the Cattle Report in 2001.

is often argued that both approaches rest on different underlying assumptions about the nature of individual and collective identities, the sources of social cohesion, the practices of democratic citizenship and the norms of justice. However, this amounts to a misinterpretation even a caricature of multiculturalist theories and approaches. When multiculturalism became a poisoned and caricatured concept, it can be strategic to relabel some multicultural measures as interculturalism politics (Loobuyk 25).

Moreover, defenders of interculturalism do not explain the differences between intercultural policies and multiculturalist policies. Thus, Meer and Modood argue that the good interculturalism versus bad multiculturalism literature is essentially rhetorical rather than analytical. Still Meer and Modood's conclusions have been contradicted by some advocates of interculturalism who see that it does represent an important intellectual alternative to some versions of multiculturalism. I do share Meer and Modood's conclusions, I want also to elaborate on the significance and purpose of this rhetoric, who are its proponents and who are the intended audiences.

The influential 2008 *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*¹ has argued that interculturalism should be the preferred model for Europe because multiculturalism has failed:

In what became the western part of a divided post-war Europe, the experience of immigration was associated with a new concept of social order known as multiculturalism. ..While this was ostensibly a radical departure from assimilationism, in fact multiculturalism frequently shared the same, schematic conception of society set in opposition of majority and minority, differing only in endorsing separation of the minority from the majority rather than assimilation to it... multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals.... The cultural diversity of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirical fact. However, a recurrent theme of the consultation was that multiculturalism was a policy with which respondents no longer felt at ease. (qtd. in Kymlicka 2016: 160)

The White Paper went further to argue that the intercultural approach avoids these failed extremes of assimilation and multiculturalism by both acknowledging diversity

¹ It was issued by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

and insisting on universal values: “Unlike assimilation, the intercultural approach recognises that public authority must be partial, rather than accepting a majority ethos only, if communalist tensions are to be avoided. Unlike multiculturalism, however, it vindicates a common core which leaves no room for moral relativism”(qtd. in Kymlicka 2016: 160-61). However, the White Paper does not explain which multiculturalist policies were premised on moral relativism, nor does it demonstrate that the problems of social segregation are to be found in European countries that adopted multiculturalism rather than in countries that rejected multiculturalism. Moreover, the White Paper was too much general that it could not precise which multiculturalist policies it would reject.

Surprisingly, the Council of Europe has always endorsed multiculturalism; therefore, it is clear that the authors of the White Paper knew that as it provided no evidence that interculturalism was superior to multiculturalism, they were simply presenting a caricature. The authors have constructed a new narrative in which interculturalism emerges in Europe from the failed extremes of assimilation and multiculturalism. Like all such narratives or myths, it was intended to enable certain political projects while disabling others, and the Council of Europe’s authors believed that this new narrative could enable inclusive politics while disabling xenophobic politics (Kymlicka 2016: 160-61).

In other words, the interculturalist rhetoric is meant to revive the political commitment to diversity as there was an increasing discontent with diversity. However, this new narrative explains that discontent come from naïve multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is offered up as a handy scapegoat for popular discontent in order to undercut support for populist and anti-immigrant parties. One can protest that blaming multiculturalism for popular discontent is not acceptable as suggested by evidence that show that discontent with immigrants is in fact higher in countries that did not adopt multiculturalism, and there is no evidence that adopting multiculturalist policies causes or exacerbates anti-minority attitudes.

This rhetorical contrast between a new interculturalism and an old multiculturalism serves to maintain policies adopted as multiculturalism and simply relabel it as interculturalism or as diversity policies or community cohesion policies. Indeed, the adoption of multicultural policies across Europe reveals that the rhetorical retreat from the word ‘multiculturalism’ is not a retreat from actual multicultural policies, which are often simply relabelled.

In addition, and as demonstrated earlier, Banting and Kymlicka have shown through the Multiculturalism Policy Index that the diffusion of multicultural policies across twenty-one countries have been strengthened from 1980 to 2000 to 2010. Obviously, what is happening is a rhetorical re-branding of multiculturalism rather than any substantive intellectual rethinking of it. It was thought that dropping the poisoned term of ‘multiculturalism’ and replacing it by interculturalism would help to preserve the commitment to diversity (Kymlicka 2016: 164).

It is now particularly important to consider the potential benefits and risks involved in the rhetorical reframing of diversity, and to suggest some reasons why this new rhetoric might not be as benign as some of its defenders have assumed. Indeed, the political rhetoric is not just that interculturalism is good but also that multiculturalism is bad. So, what is striking in this narrative is not simply to call this new approach to diversity, interculturalism, as the two terms can be used interchangeably¹, but also to choose the narrative of ‘failed multiculturalism’.

Moreover, when the White Paper states that multicultural policies rested on moral relativism, this has been a staple for populist parties. Clearly, the White Paper legitimises a populist worldview. So, interculturalists while indeed defending diversity, their anti-multiculturalist rhetoric may be used by populists who reject both multiculturalism and interculturalism. Indeed, anti-immigrant political parties have risen as a consequence of this rhetoric of failed multiculturalism. In short, the “‘interculturalism-as-remedy-for-failed-multiculturalism narrative’ cohabits in the

¹ There is nothing intrinsic to the words interculturalism and multiculturalism.

public space with the populist-parties-as-remedy-for-failed-elites narrative causing therefore unintended effects”(Kymlicka 2016: 167).

2.3 A Critical Dialogue between Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

Since interculturalism paradoxically wants to challenge and replace multiculturalism, it is interesting to redeem this claim. One has first to admit that interculturalism does have qualities. Indeed, it appreciates the importance of society’s historically inherited culture emphasising the necessity for any culturally diverse society to broaden the culture of the majority. Moreover, for interculturalism social cohesion can only be achieved by encouraging interaction and co-operation between the various communities at all levels stressing and developing commonalities rather than just the differences, this is also stressed by multiculturalism, though not always as strongly and unequivocally.

Yet, interculturalism has its limitations as it is biased towards the majority; it shows little sympathy for minorities that want to lead relatively self-contained lives. While multiculturalism is concerned with publicly funding minorities, interculturalism is in varying degrees antipathetic to them. If interculturalism recognises to the minorities equal opportunities in shaping national culture and identity, they are definitely limited as the inherited culture is privileged so that minority choices are limited¹. If multiculturalism has built an important philosophical literature regarding questions about the nature of culture and its relation to individual identity, interculturalism has not built any substantial theoretical framework. Finally, while multiculturalism has analysed the nature of the nation state and its role in shaping national culture, interculturalism largely ignores them and focuses on inter-group relations at local levels where the full impact of diversity is rarely felt (Parekh 2016: 277).

¹ Even the balanced Bouchard-Taylor report was criticised by Quebeckers for being too accommodative of minorities.

- *Intercultural and Multicultural Pluralism*

Admittedly, both multiculturalism and interculturalism appeal to pluralism on which contact and dialogue can proceed. For Zapata-Barrero contact and dialogue are understood as 'interaction' which means sharing a public sphere and working for some common purpose. Parekh has attempted to bring pluralism and dialogue together. Indeed, he explains that minority's cultures have something to teach us so that members of minority cultures should be encouraged to cultivate their moral and aesthetic insights for humanity as a whole. Indeed, he states:

Since human capacities and values conflict, every culture realizes a limited range of them and neglects, marginalizes and suppresses others. However rich it may be, no culture embodies all that is valuable in human life and develop the full range of human possibilities. Different cultures thus correct and complement each other, expand each other's horizon of thought and alert each other to new forms of human fulfilment. The value of other cultures is independent of whether or not they are options for us...inassimilable otherness challenges us intellectually and morally, stretches our imagination, and compels us to recognise the limits of our categories of thought. (Parekh 2006: 167)

On the other hand, Isaiah Berlin made the distinction between pluralism and relativism. Relativism does not allow value judgment, whereas pluralism not only allow it but also permits to imagine and empathise with cultural differences. Berlin¹ states:

Members of one culture can, by the force of imaginative insight, understand...the value, the ideals, the forms of life of another culture or society, even those remote in time or space. They may find these values unacceptable, but if they open their minds sufficiently, they can grasp how one might be a full human being, with whom one could communicate, and at the same time live in the light of values widely different from one's own, but which nevertheless one can see to be values, ends of life, by the realisation of which men could be fulfilled. (qtd. in Meer *et al.* 12)

Obviously, Parekh goes further than Berlin's 'imaginative insight' as he advances the idea of intercultural dialogue to widen the horizon of a way of life. Parekh thinks dialogue rather than an appeal to universal truths is the way to handle multicultural

¹ See *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (1991).

conflicts like those over free speech and protecting minorities from demeaning speech, or the virtues of exclusively legalised monogamy over the inclusion of polygamy. This can be contrasted with rationalist conceptions of dialogue in which Habermas views dialogue as a powerful regulate ideal appealing to reason and reciprocity rather than equality (Meer *et al.* 14).

For both multiculturalists and interculturalists dialogue is bi-focal as it focuses on both the minority's and wider society's way of life. While multiculturalists like Parekh make intercultural dialogue at philosophical and political levels central to their theories, interculturalists have offered an alternative: dialogue in terms of local encounters. This is one essential point in which multiculturalists and interculturalists complement each other even if the latter tend to believe wrongly that dialogue is an interculturalist innovation.

- The Dialectical Relation between Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

Interculturalism and multiculturalism can be reconciled as the latter focuses on equal rights, recognition and justice. Interculturalism focuses on interaction, social cohesion and shared participation on the basis of a sense of belonging together. Despite the fact that some tensions can arise between multicultural and intercultural policies, they should be implemented simultaneously as two complementary partners, each correcting the other (Loobuyk 226).

The relation between interculturalism and multiculturalism is dialectical; interculturalism can increase the societal support for multicultural policies. As observed by Uslaner¹, it is segregation that plays an important role in the creation of societal distrust, and not diversity as such. The fact that people live alongside each other in separate groups undermines solidarity and thus the basis of multicultural justice (Loobuyk 233).

Moreover, multiculturalism is a precondition for interculturalism because interaction can be effective only if the condition of equality is fulfilled. Multicultural

¹ "Segregation, Mistrust and Minorities". *Ethnicities*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2010.

measures are essential as they are not only in the interest of the minorities, but also in the interest of the cohesion of the whole society. So, multiculturalism is a precondition for the success of interculturalism. Multiculturalism guarantees that particular groups feel themselves fairly recognised and are not unfairly disadvantaged or excluded from societal participation which is the basis for interculturalism (Loobuyk 233).

In addition, multiculturalism and interculturalism are compatible and complementary on the theoretical level; this is also the case on the policy level as interculturalism is applicable to the level of the civil society while multiculturalism is more appropriate to the state level. If multiculturalism and interculturalism do not contradict each other and are mutually supportive, tensions may arise between multicultural and intercultural policies. However, tensions can be resolved if the two are implemented simultaneously. The government can balance the two perspectives when the application of interculturalism in the field of education can contradict multiculturalism. Further, multiculturalism can be adjusted through the adoption of sufficient intercultural policies which encourage interaction and shared participation. But if only interculturalism is adopted, this could create a risk that certain legitimate claims or rights of minorities would not be recognised (Loobuyk 37-40).

One has to concede that interculturalism and multiculturalism have to learn from each other because they remain definitely different in their orientations and scope. Interculturalism is concerned with social unity and stresses the centrality of the majority culture, whereas multiculturalism is concerned with justice to minorities and is more hospitable to diversity. Multiculturalism is oriented towards the nation state based on a thick and constantly redefined national culture, while interculturalism is oriented towards a state based on a relatively thin culture born out of intercultural interaction. Though as suggested by Parekh they cannot be combined into a single superior form of multiculturalism, they both have to add something to the other giving rise to an 'interculturally attuned multiculturalism' (Parekh 2016: 279).

Finally, interculturalism and multiculturalism can be seen as two complementary partners, each compensate for possible undesirable outcomes, they can

also be mutually reinforcing each other. They can be reconciled despite the tension between the multicultural recognition of diversity and the search for a societal belonging together. This is the real challenge for any state: how to recognise diversity without disintegration of the society. Conservatives and nationalists have privileged the sense of belonging together; however, the multicultural /intercultural debate can definitely result in acknowledging that both perspectives are equally important, what is ultimately needed is to strike a right balance between diversity and social unity.

3. Towards Re-imagining Multiculturalism and Multicultural Britain

In the light of what preceded, it is possible to re-imagine multiculturalism as an approach that is able to respond to new challenges in an age of globalisation and super-diversity. Indeed, as stated by Modood, multiculturalism is still doing better than the alternatives, and remains a persuasive response to cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is, undoubtedly, capable to create a society that is socially cohesive and culturally diverse, and strike a balance between the essential elements of minority identities and the shared values of the society as a whole. On the other hand, Britain is irreversibly a highly diverse society and will become certainly more diverse in the future. Multiculturalism is above all a description of the character of British society before being a policy response.

In this section, I would like to build on questions of multicultural citizenship and the multicultural state to challenge the view that multiculturalism is in its essence illiberal. I will, then, finish with the central issue of intercultural dialogue as eloquently presented by Parekh as a way of correcting liberalism's non-dialogical political perspective, and ultimately offering some responses to the detractors of multiculturalism.

3.1 Multicultural Citizenship: Building an Inclusive Society

A liberal democratic community should create the conditions of inclusion of immigrants so that all citizens become full members of the political community in which they live regardless of their origin. In fact, the inclusion of immigrants in the

political community depends mainly on the rules and policies of the state, but other factors are also decisive.

Parekh tackled the questions of inclusion and exclusion when he criticised the ‘civic assimilationist view’ which tends to draw a sharp line between the public sphere and the private sphere, allowing diversity in the private sphere and demanding cultural conformity in the public sphere. In this respect, Parekh argues that immigrants want generally to belong to the political community where they live and want to be considered as full members. Thus, the whole question is about the inclusion of immigrants by the democratic state and which democratic ethos is compatible with the social realities of a multicultural society (Carens 253).

In a liberal democratic state, while liberal democratic principles require the inclusion of immigrants, the latter are expected to accept liberal democratic values and practise liberal democratic virtues likewise the other citizens. On the other hand, the inclusion of immigrants requires the majority of citizens to develop adequate attitudes towards immigrants. However, an important liberal democratic principle that people should be able to live their lives as they choose, so long as they are not harming others sets clear limits to the expectations that citizens should face. J.S. Mill formulated this idea in his work, *On Liberty* (1859) in which he rightly argued that human freedom will be very limited especially for minorities in the case the majority disapproves any behaviour that does not conform to the majority’s view (Carens 257).

It is worth mentioning that in a liberal democratic state people do have what is referred to in France as a ‘right to indifference’ which is *per se* a moral right to interact with others in the public sphere without being submitted to the judgement of others. For instance, Muslim women should be free to appear in public in *hijab* without being stigmatised or harassed. Thus, liberal democratic principles justify all citizens whether immigrants or not, in expecting that other citizens will leave them alone and let them live as they choose (Carens 258).

Besides, incentives are another important factor that affects the inclusion of immigrants. Indeed, people respond to incentives because it is in their interest to do so,

as when someone learns the language of the majority in order to benefit from economic opportunities. Therefore, the social reality constitutes an incentive for citizens of immigrant origin to learn the majority language (Carens 261).

The crucial question is whether incentives are compatible with liberal democratic principles. In fact, for some people multicultural policies have created incentives for immigrants to live separate lives from the majority population. However, there are powerful spontaneous incentives for immigrants to self-segregate when they first arrive as they can use their native language. Therefore, such incentives do not stem from multicultural policies.

Broadly speaking, public interest requires overcoming social barriers between immigrants and others, and promoting a sense of common belonging. Instead of having recourse to rules, it is preferable to create incentives for people to come together. Indeed, many multicultural policies have been adopted, as argued by Kymlicka, to enable minorities to participate in mainstream institutions; however, it is the refusal to recognise and respect their distinctive concerns and commitments that is more likely to lead them to want to live separate lives. Kymlicka's argument is definitely persuasive because allowing, for instance, Sikhs to wear their traditional headgear instead of the usual headgear required by an official uniform will certainly motivate more immigrants to participate in mainstream institutions and to engage with others (Carens 264).

Another factor affecting the inclusion of immigrants is related to national identity. Indeed, even if most people have different identities: political, cultural, religious, ethnic and so forth, the most important one is nationality, that is the feeling that one belongs, along with others to a self-governing community with a shared history, culture and values. Of course, having a national identity does not exclude the existence of other identities mainly cultural, religious and ethnic that distinguishes minorities from the majority. But the crucial question is whether the national identity is constructed in a way that is open to and compatible with the distinctive identities of the immigrants. Are immigrants seen as members of the nation?

In a liberal democratic state national identity could not exclude or marginalise some of its citizens. In other words, a liberal democratic community must include all of its citizens regardless of their ancestry. Moreover, one cannot reduce national identity to the possession of citizenship status because this would rob it of all substantive content. What is required from a liberal democratic state is to have a national identity that genuinely includes immigrants (Carens 264).

Moreover, multicultural citizenship focuses on individual rights as citizens do have multiple identities. As argued by Moddod, “citizenship is not a monistic identity that is completely apart from or transcends other identities of importance to citizens. These group identities are even present and each group has a right to be part of the civic whole and to speak up for itself and for its vision of the whole” (Moddod 155).

Multiculturalism as a mode of integration or multicultural citizenship incorporates social unity or the sociological fact of diversity. In fact, this element means the incorporation of the excluded or the marginalized into the whole on the basis of equality and sense of belonging. This very element of multiculturalism has been less emphasised so that some have argued that multiculturalism is about encouraging minority difference without a counterbalancing emphasis on cross-cutting commonalities and a vision of a greater good. This explains that multiculturalism is often seen as divisive and productive of segregation. In this context, theorists of multiculturalism such as Taylor and Parekh, but also other enactments as the Parekh Report appealed to build on an idea of national citizenship (Moddod 163).

Hence, for the multiculturalists ‘the civic national turn’, that is the emphasis on cohesion and citizenship, is a necessary “rebalancing of the political multiculturalism of the 1990s which largely took the form of accommodation of groups while being ambivalent about national identity in some countries notably Britain” (Moddod 164). According to multiculturalists, a renewing of national identity has to be distinctly plural and hospitable to the minority identities. For the Commission on Multi-ethnic Britain, “rethinking the national story, with the minorities as important characters; not

obscuring difference but weaving it into a common, multi-stranded identity that all can see themselves in and giving all a sense of belonging to each other” (CFMEB 54-55).

As far as Muslim communities are concerned, the perception of Muslims as groups requires their integration and recognition as integral to the polity. Thus, the enlargement, hyphenation and internal pluralizing of national identities is essential to an integration when all citizens have not just rights but a sense of belonging to the whole. The Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain has emphasised the rethinking of British identity while the speeches of Labour and Conservative senior politicians denounced the report as unpatriotic, they paradoxically accepted the enlargement, hyphenation and pluralizing of Britishness. Ultimately, this civic-national turn means that the state is not only defined by liberal principles, but has also to attend to its national identity which is a necessary albeit not a sufficient condition of recognising and institutionalizing multicultural citizenship (Moddod 167).

If some advocates of multiculturalism such as M.Williams¹ consider that a common national identity inevitably carries with it an exclusionary component that is homogenising and incompatible with respect for difference, others like Parekh think that a political community should promote a strong sense of national identity, and be open to the distinctive identities of minorities within the community (Carens 271).

A national identity must be shaped by the ethos of inclusion that is required by liberal democratic principles. A liberal democratic state should construct its national identity that includes all its citizens not only through rules and rights, but also through a recounting of the history of the nation in a way that enables citizens of immigrant origin to identify with it. Moreover, constructing an inclusive national identity requires also a positive recognition of the particular identity of immigrants and an affirmation that this public identity is not incompatible with the political community. All in all, a liberal democratic state needs more than treating immigrants as equal citizens; it requires their inclusion as full members of the political community. Similarly,

¹ See *Citizenship as Identity, Citizenship as Shared Fate, and the Functions of Multicultural Education* (2002).

immigrants are expected to accept democratic institutions and adjust to social practices (Carens 265-68).

3.2 The Multicultural State

Multiculturalist theorists have been engaged in public debates in order to bring their insights into the dominant understandings of Western societies. Indeed, in trying to shape the world they have sparked fierce debate with those intellectuals who defend the idea of the universal, liberal secular state. However, multiculturalism rejects this monist and Universalist conception of the state and instead emphasises a pluralist conception in which difference and diversity are acknowledged. Parekh has rightly argued that taking multiculturalism seriously requires all functions of the state to be reconceived, because the constitution of most modern states assumes national and cultural homogeneity (Gamble 2015: 274).

Tellingly, multiculturalism has been criticised for rejecting the fundamental principles of the liberal secular state and of the national identities that are expressed through it, that is, undermining the dominant understandings of Britishness. The debate around multiculturalism that arose recently has been linked to a debate about the character of the public sphere and whether multiculturalism is compatible with it. The public sphere is a political space that emerged as a consequence of the development of the liberal state. Public intellectuals play a major role in shaping and organising this space mainly concerned with general debate and deliberation. The public sphere depends on there being shared norms and values and how the public interest should be determined (Gamble 2015: 275).

Having different understandings, multiculturalism has been associated with the claim that the state should not merely accommodate and tolerate multiple identities, but should also permit those identities to be reflected in different rules and laws. The liberal conception of the state accepts that the state should protect group identities while those groups should accept their membership of the state and its rules; this is the ideal of the secular liberal state which allows a multicultural society (Gamble 2015: 276).

According to Iris Young, a participatory democracy cannot be constructed on the assumption of an undifferentiated humanity but only on the recognition that group differences exist. Indeed, multiculturalists celebrate group difference as they seek the full inclusion and participation of all disadvantaged groups. Liberal theorists advocate the principle of equal treatment of all individuals, but for multiculturalists the principle of equal treatment is unfair. So, dialogue is necessary to balance the views of groups because groups need to be treated differently (Gamble 2015: 277).

Another important source of multiculturalism has been liberal pluralism and the respect for difference. Indeed, a commitment to pluralism tends to undercut the Universalist ideas that have underlined the secular liberal state. As John Gray has argued: “There is no impartial or universal viewpoint from which the claims of all particular cultures can be rationally assessed. Any standpoint we adopt is that of a particular form of life and the historical practices that constitute it” (qtd. in Gamble 2015: 288). Clearly, this pluralist perspective creates the space for multiculturalism because it requires that all cultures be accorded respect and understanding as minimum.

Having noted this important theoretical background, I will explore the question of the liberal secular state. It is worth noting that multiculturalism has been presented by its opponents as an attack upon the liberal secular state and a threat to the dominant national identities. One particular concern for the liberal secular state has been the presence of substantial Muslim immigrant communities. In fact, anxiety about their presence has intensified since 9/11 and the declaration of the ‘War on Terror’ by the United States (Gamble 2015: 278).

What marked particularly the debate over the secular state was undoubtedly the lecture¹ delivered in February 2008 by Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Rowan Williams reflected upon the doctrine of the secular state arguing that it ignores the realities of complex modern societies with their multiple affiliations and identities. He concluded that understanding the complexity of the rule of law in a

¹ “*Civil and Religious Law in England: A Religious Perspective*”. Foundation Lecture at the Royal Courts of Justice.

plural society leads to the search for ways to allow the “plurality of diverse and overlapping affiliations” to work for a common good (Gamble 2015: 280).

Nevertheless, his reflections were misinterpreted as a criticism of a form of modern liberalism that defines citizenship in terms of a secular state, a single overarching national identity and a set of universal norms. Moreover, the tabloid press attacked him. The debate that followed this lecture was about accommodating Muslim communities on the ground that Williams suggested the introduction of *Sharia* law and the creation of a separate legal jurisdiction for the Muslim community. Moreover, Williams was treated as a misguided liberal intellectual who is undermining the basis of the secular state. Besides, all three main parties criticised him stating that British law must be based on British values. This reaction was indeed a logical attitude from the three main political parties towards immigration and multiculturalism (Gamble 2015: 281).

This whole debate informs a deep rift in liberalism and a view that multiculturalism needs to be accommodated by the liberal secular state which would ultimately change the public sphere and the debates that are appropriate to it. When questioning the values of the liberal secular state, Rowan Williams was indeed making the case for a qualified multiculturalism. In fact, he argued that there is uncertainty about the degree of accommodation that the law can and should give to minority communities. He also posed the problem of the rights that should be accorded to religious groups within a secular state arguing that in respect of Islam, the problem can be solved only by a “crafting of a just and constructive relationship between Islamic law and the law of the UK”(qtd. in Gamble 2015:279).

Nevertheless, multiculturalism’s conception of the public sphere is different from liberal and republican understandings which tend to preserve the integrity of the public sphere. Indeed, the public sphere is an integral part of the idea of the secular state, a sphere of common norms and common interests in contrast to the private sphere. The reaction by British popular press and political parties to the Archbishop’s lecture reveals how strong commitment to those norms remains in British political

culture (Gamble 2015: 287). Hence, multiculturalism challenges this traditional republican conception of the state by raising issues related to the common interests and values that bind people together. Multiculturalism points to the fact that the boundaries of the public sphere are never fixed but are constantly shifting, they can widen but they can also contract.

Traditionally, the public sphere in Britain includes institutions such as Parliament, the Courts, the BBC, the press and the established churches and other institutions in civil society. However, a multicultural society requires a broadening of such institutions of the civil society, that is, a public sphere must be adapted to the needs of a multicultural society. This work has been undertaken by intellectuals whose arguments have been caricatured as ‘state multiculturalism’. Admittedly, there is no such unified doctrine but rather varied sources from which multiculturalism draws, including the Austro-Marxists such as Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, who advocated cultural autonomy for the nations of the Habsburg Empire which is an early formulation of the idea of a community of communities, liberal pluralism and the respect for difference (Gamble 2015: 288).

Moreover, a commitment to pluralism, which ensures that all cultures be accorded a minimum respect and understanding, has resulted in abandoning the idea of a homogeneous national society and national culture, and emphasising the need for a dialogue with all communities and all faiths becomes necessary if the public sphere is to remain inclusive and the state legitimate. This is the very idea that underpinned the Archbishop’s speech. Clearly, in defending the liberal secular state, he wanted to broaden its basis to deal with the reality of a multicultural society (Gamble 2015: 288).

However, the reaction to the speech has been fierce because the recognition of Britain as a multicultural society remains an issue in contention within the public sphere. Again, Roger Scruton¹ made a coherent argument explaining why the liberal secular state should not be changed in the way suggested by the Archbishop and many liberal public intellectuals. Scruton argued that Western civilisation has been held

¹ *The West and the Rest: Globalisation and the Terrorist Threat* (2002).

together not by religious faith but by a political process. He added that though Western civilisation is Christian, it is different from Islam because for Islam the “gate of ijihad is closed so that the divine law, Sharia cannot be adjusted or added to, only studied for the meaning it contains” (qtd. in Gamble 2015: 289).

Scruton’s argument was that Roman law was fundamentally secular. Thus, by detaching law from the demands of religion, an abstract system of rights and duties was modified and then re-emerged in conceptions of the modern state with its secular idea of citizenship and its bounded territorial jurisdiction and conceptions of sovereignty and law. Scruton argued that radical Islamism emphasises the uniqueness of Islam and its contradiction with all other civilisations particularly the Western understanding of politics. It is obvious from Scruton’s argument that it showed the Western exceptionalism and the impossibility of any redefinition of the rules governing the liberal secular state to reflect the new realities of a multicultural society. It also entails that a Western secular state cannot be reconciled with the principles and practices of Islam or any other faith community that privileges its faith above the claims of citizenship (Gamble 2015: 289).

However, the adoption of a moderate secularism would permit the accommodation of Muslims in the context of a multicultural liberal state as it has already accommodated Christians in the past. Indeed, Habermas¹ has rightly announced the transition to a post-secular society, “in which secular citizens have to express a previously denied respect for religious citizens, who should be allowed, even encouraged, to critique aspects of contemporary society and to find solutions to its problems from within their religious views” (qtd. in Modood 168-69).

By way of a brief conclusion, one might argue that a liberal secular state should be conceived in a pluralist way, in which the public sphere ruled by the values of tolerance, pluralism and rationality has to be preserved. The discourse of multiculturalism has undoubtedly contributed to reinforcing and reasserting the

¹ See Jurgen Habermas, ‘Religion in the Public Sphere’. *European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2006.

importance of the public sphere as it opened a genuine debate about the nature of contemporary society.

- *Multicultural Britain*

While opponents of multiculturalism like Roger Scruton claim that the liberal secular state may have unity or diversity but not both, theorists of multiculturalism like Parekh and also the Archbishop of Canterbury claimed that liberalism can find ways to balance unity and diversity. Indeed, they believe that the liberal secular state is much likely able to guarantee respect and tolerance for minorities. Rowan Williams makes the distinction between cultural habits and matters of faith and discipline explaining that matters of faith should be accommodated. This needs certainly a complex negotiation between the majority community and the minority community. In this context, Parekh argues that since no culture is perfect or represents the best life, all can benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures; and to facilitate this, all cultures should be open, self-critical and interactive. Stuart Hall has also tackled the question of widening political communication and political education in a liberal state exploring the way in which identities are constructed, represented, and negotiated allowing different projects to emerge, and different possibilities to be identified (Gamble 2015: 291).

Bernard Crick¹ as a strong defender of multiculturalism challenged the assumption that Britain must have a single national culture to retain its identity, pointing out that there is no incompatibility between Britishness and multiculturalism because Britain has for long been a multicultural state, a multicultural society; and the idea of Britishness has been correspondingly fluid, and subject to evolution and imaginative reconstruction. For him the notion of Britishness is embodied above all in the secular character of the British state with its emphasis on law, Parliament, tolerance and rights. Precisely because Britain contains more than one national identity, it can more easily accommodate multiculturalism and develop a model that maintains unity around the acceptance of British values and institutions while

¹ See *Crossing Borders: Political Chapters* (2001).

respecting the diversity of faiths and cultures. Crick sought to replace a subject culture with a citizen culture, to recognise the multicultural character of the British state while developing the languages and practice of a common citizenship (Gamble 2015: 291-93).

3.3 Intercultural Dialogue

Dialogue is, undoubtedly, foundational to multiculturalism. Indeed, Parekh has aptly developed a version of dialogical multicultural philosophy based on the idea that each society needs to reach some agreement on values and practices which would become over time part of society's moral structure of its public life (Parekh 2006: 268). Parekh has definitely been influenced by Gandhi's interculturally or intercivlisationally dialogical perspective. Indeed, Parekh acknowledged that he has been following Gandhi's excellent intercultural experimentation. He drew on Gandhi's intercivlisationally and inter-religiously dialogical approach to moral and political thought and practice (Pantham 56).

It is interesting to examine Parekh's influenced multicultural dialogical approach to political theory as it serves to bridge the cultural and moral division between the liberal and non-liberal traditions and avoids the limits of ethnocentric and relativist approaches to cultural and moral diversity. Thus, commenting on Ghandian influence on Parekh's intercultural dialogical approach to political theory is undeniably important to understand Parekh's own contribution to multicultural theory.

In essence, Parekh was fascinated by Gandhi and especially with his intercivlisational and inter-religious moral political philosophy which initiated the non-violent struggle led by the Indian Freedom Movement for national unity and independence and culminated with the social-religious reform and regeneration of Indian society (Pantham 58).

Just like Gandhi, Parekh values human beings and considers their common well-being as a highest political value. Parekh also emphasises Gandhi's revision of the liberal individualist conception of rights and duties stating that:

Gandhi rightly argues that every man owes his humanity to others, that he is a recipient of ...indispensable and non-repayable gifts...and that his inherently unspecifiable moral duties and obligations extend far beyond those based on consent, promise, contract and the membership of a specific community...The vast bulk of moral relationship stretches out to men and women in the community's remotest past and the most obscure corners of the globe. (Parekh 2006:197)

Moreover, Gandhi redefined religion in terms of spirituality rather than theology placing according to Parekh the individual at the centre of the religious search; he liberated religion from the stranglehold of traditionalism and liberalism, encouraged fresh reading of scriptures, and made space for an inter-religious dialogue (Pantham 59).

Thus, Parekh recognises Gandhi's intercivilisational and inter-religious dialogical approach to be essential for correcting liberalism's non-dialogical political perspective. In fact, Parekh notes that: "Gandhi's political theory cuts across several moral, religious and philosophical traditions and rests on an unusually broad philosophical foundation" (Parekh 2006: 195). More specifically, Parekh examined Gandhi's reformist discourse in a *satyagraha* campaign in 1925 against a practice of untouchability and unapproachability¹ in the town of Vykkam in the then princely State of Travancore. Gandhi experienced "a mixed mode of discourse involving a dialogical process to reach out to a very wide audience which he could not have done if he had relied on a wholly rationalist mode of discourse"² (Pantham 60).

Then, Parekh noticed that "his mixed mode of discourse was perhaps the only mode of discourse possible in a society that was highly differentiated and deeply divided." Parekh considers that liberal political theory could not fit a multicultural society because it monoculturalises the public realm around a political conception of liberal justice, which is free standing from, but tolerant of, multiculturalism in the so-called private sphere of the citizens' lives. According to Parekh, the liberal/Rawlsian framework which combines monocultural, that is liberal public realm with a

¹ It was an effective practice of the caste Hindus at Vykkam to prevent the untouchables from using the public roads passing by the side of a temple.

² Note that political and social theories centre on logics of conflict, abstract rationality and legal mechanism.

multicultural private realm should be rethought so that to prevent monocultural public realm from marginalising cultures that are confined to the private realm (Pantham 61).

On the other hand, Parekh rejects liberalism's atomistic conception of the individual and also the view of the individual privileging liberty over equality; he accepts the values of human dignity, constitutionally guaranteed rights and critical rationality and toleration. Parekh explains that the political imagination of any cultural community has its limits; that is why it is necessary for every living culture to be in dialogue or interaction with other ways of life. He adds that different cultures can "correct and complement each other, expand each other's horizon of thought and alert each other to new forms of human fulfilment" (Parekh 2006:167).

Parekh acknowledges the fact that liberalism is hospitable to cultural diversity; he is strongly committed to liberal values, yet he goes beyond considering "cultural diversity to be a vital human good and calling for so designing our political and economic institutions as to foster dialogical engagements between different visions of the good life." He expounds his vision as follows: "A moral and political discourse is conducted in different languages, the public reason is not homogeneous but plural, that the public realm should not be culturally neutral or bland but multiculturally oriented ...and...we might....profitably explore a religiously sensitive forms of secularism" (Parekh 2006: 368-70).

Parekh writes that liberalism "needs to develop a similar spirit of openness and self-criticism if it is to measure up to the moral and intellectual challenges of our globalising age" as did Gandhi with his intercultural dialogue being aware of the limits of his own religious tradition, he learnt from other religions. Thus, intercultural dialogue is essential in a multicultural society as a means to resolve conflicts related to cultural practices as polygamy (Parekh 2006: 372). To illustrate the importance of intercultural dialogue, Parekh uses aptly, after 11 September 2001, an imaginary dialogue between Gandhi and Bin laden to show the possibility of a dialogical narrowing of their differences, noting essentially their similarities as being deeply religious, anti-imperialist and refusing the claim that Western civilisation represents

the only or best form of the good life. This reveals clearly his strong belief in dialogue as the possibility of self-criticism and self-improvement (Pantham 63).

Gandhi has definitely contributed to the dialogue between civilisations. Indeed, on 18 May 1908 in Johannesburg, Gandhi made an impressive contribution to a debate on interracial relations in the British Empire; he distinguished between the dividing mode of encounter between civilisations and races, and the combining mode of interactions between them. He advocated strongly the latter mode saying that: “If we look into the future, it is not a heritage we have to leave to posterity, that all the different races commingle and produce a civilisation that perhaps the world has not yet seen?”(qtd. in Pantham 69).

Unsurprisingly, Parekh’s work mirrors this intercultural democratisation as he declares that his dialogically constituted multicultural society “sees itself both as a community of citizens and a community of communities, and hence as a community of communally embedded and attached individuals” (Parekh 2006: 340). It should come as a little surprise that for Parekh, any theory of multiculturalism rooted in distinctly liberal values is structurally ill-equipped to appreciate the specificity of non-liberal cultures; so, he concludes that, liberal values need to be contested in an inter-cultural dialogue.

Finally, one can endorse Parekh’s conclusion that an institutionalised dialogue between liberal and non-liberal cultures is required, and that liberalism’s theoretical basis for a multicultural society is morally inadequate, therefore, “we need to rise to a higher level of philosophical abstraction. And since we cannot transcend and locate ourselves in a realm beyond liberal and non-liberal cultures, such a basis is to be found in an institutionalised dialogue between them” (Parekh 2006: 369). A multicultural society is therefore, dialogically constituted, it does not privilege any particular vision of the good life but accepts and cherishes cultural diversity.

CHAPTER V: REPRESENTING MULTICULTURALISM IN COLOURED BRITISH LITERATURE

Literature is a public forum in which British social history and identity is analysed. Indeed, British literature offers a forum for coloured British writers to bring new insights and imaginations to British literature as a whole. I have explored and analysed thoroughly multiculturalism in Britain throughout the previous chapters; with hindsight, I must say, I have been tempted from the beginning to explore multicultural and national identity issues in British fiction, and more specifically novels by ‘non-white’ British writers. Thus, this chapter explores how an increasingly multicultural Britain is defined through literature and especially through coloured British literature. However, it is worth noting that in the mid-1990s there were few universities in Britain which offered courses in British literature including ethnic minority writers. Clearly, multiculturalism as a lived experience in Britain was not reflected in many universities courses on British literature.

A central starting point is identifying which writers are British, and recognising them as being part of a British literary canon. Hence, the importance to situate coloured British literature and shed light into the contribution of coloured British writers in British literature as a whole. Therefore, this chapter aims at analysing Britain’s coloured literary canon with the assumption that literature can be a mirror to society.

It is important to be clear about the choice of the term ‘coloured British’ instead of ‘black British’ in this chapter, as I will explain later that the former in my opinion encompasses, in addition to, people from Africa and the Caribbean, Asian writers; hence, it seems more accurate to use an all-encompassing word; however, I will continue to use the term ‘Black British’ since it is widely used by literary critics.

A further aspect studied here is to explore how the multicultural character of Britain analysed in the previous chapters affects the domain of literature. Ultimately,

the writers reveal through their works how multiculturalism and postcolonial issues are played out in contemporary Britain.

I will focus on novels about multiculturalism published since 1990, and in particular on those published since the new millennium. When I refer to multicultural London, I mean a form of communal diversity brought about by post-war immigration from former British colonies to the former imperial centre following the end of Empire, which Lars Ole Sauerberg has referred to as ‘the implosion of Empire’ (Perfect 5).

Thus, this chapter focuses exclusively on literature about migrants to London from former British colonies and their British-born children. Moreover, I will focus on works of character-driven realism that have the ambition to depict faithfully multiculturalism in Britain. My emphasis is on illustrative works of literature about multiculturalism. The work of Hanif Kureishi is important as it contributed to the enrichment of the coloured British canon alongside two debut novels of the early 21st century, both of which were celebrated for their explicit celebration of multiculturalism in London.

What is also interesting to explore in this chapter is the character of the novels, their genres, forms of expressions and representations. The ultimate goal is to investigate the themes and concerns that shape and define them. My primary concern is with their representation of multiculturalism with the assumption that literature however realistic it claims to be, writers’ ideas remain subjective as a consequence of the influence of their background. The question at issue is how multiculturalism is represented and whether these novels are realistic in their depiction of a British multiculturalism. Do these texts reflect multicultural Britain?

As I have commented throughout the previous chapters, notions such as multiculturalism and identity are being re-examined, and the very terms of the debates about such issues are being disputed in this new century characterized as a period of significant soul-searching. Similarly, literature about multiculturalism has become central to this process of self-examination (Perfect 8).

Moreover, authors' ethnic backgrounds are being used to interpret their work in general and their literary portrayals of London as a symbol of diversity. The writers analysed here are from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and their characters are representative of their own ethnic and cultural backgrounds. My contention here is that British literature and more specifically coloured British literature has been important in defining Britishness. This chapter will show that coloured British literature has contributed efficiently in providing a definition of British identity, about who is included and who is excluded, and ultimately to the promotion of multiculturalism as a lived experience. It is interesting to explore how national identity has been rewritten in British literature.

The ultimate aim of this chapter is to see whether multiculturalism is presented as a blessing or a curse by the novelists, and if the novels studied are realistic or not about this aspect of British society. The last question is about how contemporary coloured British literature has helped to negotiate better ways of being in an increased diverse world. Thence, in order to develop these points and analyse the novels of multiculturalism, I will make use of postcolonial theories, focusing particularly on Edward Said and Homi Bhabha's works on postcolonialism.

1. Situating Coloured British Literature

Analysing British literature is, undoubtedly, a not easy task as literature has always responded symbiotically to social, political and cultural changes. Indeed, Britain has moved from being a great empire to a more diminished position. Moreover, post-war immigration and the end of the twentieth century devolved national identities has considerably changed the four nations of the United Kingdom and transformed ideas about British literature.

Many literary critics have accurately questioned the excessive literary focus on Anglo-English writers and the exclusion of non-white British authors. Therefore, the 'culture wars'¹, in British literature, have been recurrent to discuss issues related to

¹ The term was first used in the USA; it refers to collisions of cultures and to debates over multiculturalism, immigration, religion, gender and identity issues.

multiculturalism, immigration and identity. It is, therefore, essential to explore how national identity has been rewritten in British literature over the last century to include coloured British writers in the literary canon. In this section I will explore how the term ‘Black British’ was used to refer to non-white people in Britain, and how writers have changed white-centric ideals.

One way of clarifying our understanding of coloured British literature is by first defining the very term ‘Black British’ relying mostly on Stuart Hall’s work, and then defining coloured British literature with the assumption that writing by coloured British in Britain should simply be called ‘British Literature’. Yet it must be pointed out that I have deliberately chosen to use the term ‘coloured British’ in my titles instead of ‘black British’ as is common in Britain because, in my view, the former is a more inclusive term that encompasses people of Asian origin.

1.1 Defining Coloured British Literature

Some authors have rejected the label ‘black British literature’ as it implies marginalisation when related to ‘white British literature’. In fact, Fred D’Aguiar in an essay written in 1986, *Against Black British Literature* argued that the very phrase ‘Black British’ confine the creative imagination of such writers though it should know no boundaries. Moreover, Salman Rushdie refuted in an essay on *Commonwealth Literature* (1983) the existence of black British literature arguing that “the category is a chimera” which comprises different traditions united only by their proponents’ pigmentation alongside their British citizenship or residence. The very phrase ‘Black British’ has been considered as reductive and divisive (Ledent 16).

It is often argued mistakenly that ‘black British literature’ refers to a literary tradition which developed only after the Second World War, in the wake of the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*, the ship that in 1948 brought Jamaican immigrants to London, and was therefore assumed to be the starting point of the black presence in Britain, forgetting the body of work produced by earlier generations such as Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* written in 1789. Moreover, if black British literature were to be viewed as a time-limited phenomenon attached to post-war immigration to

England, it would become irrelevant to a younger generation of writers born in England, sometimes of mixed parentage, like Anglo-Jamaican Zadie Smith. Accordingly, 'black British' literature cannot be limited to displacement and migration since its representatives are more Britons than their predecessors and more interested in the here and now than their ancestral culture.

But before proceeding, it is important to clarify the meaning of the term 'Black British' in literary studies and the tense debate that surrounded its emergence and development.

- *Definition of 'Black British'*

The very meaning of 'Black British' is difficult to settle. Indeed, in the United Kingdom the term can either refer to people of African, African-Caribbean descent or refer through discourses of 'political blackness' to people of African, African-Caribbean, Asian and Arabic descent; yet in the discourses of political blackness this has led to the formation of black British intellectual identities. In fact, in the 1960s, 70s and 80s political blackness became a political means for identification through which intellectuals of colour addressed racism and social justice. It has become crucial for Black intellectuals to take part into the British political discourse which ultimately enabled them, as stated by American Critical Race Theorists to "name the contours of racism in society" (qtd. in Warmington 5).

The term 'black British' was used in the mid-1970s by many non-white people as a political identity. Indeed, the word 'Black' was used in Britain to refer to people of South Asian, African, and Caribbean descent who immigrated to Britain whereas in North America it refers only to people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent. Therefore, the word 'black' is used as a political tool rather than referring to mere colour or a cultural essence. The question at stake is how the term 'Black British' came to include most non-white people in Britain and how writers have changed white-centric ideals of Britishness (Prince 82).

Of course, the political blackness discourse in post-war Britain found roots in the American civil rights movement, and also in the struggles over education,

immigration and racism in Britain. Moreover, it came as a response to the political discourses of the 1950s and 60s which tended to describe migrants from former colonies as 'coloured' and 'immigrant'. British blackness also had powerful antecedents in the anti-colonial alliances of the early twentieth century (Warmington 6).

Moreover, Alison Donnell's *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (2002) contends that the use of the term 'Black British' as a cultural identity is one that has been ambivalent and conflicted, though it remains a profound common connection. Donnell sees the political term as a way to express resistance and protest against a white national culture that appeared to be monolithic and to resist black stereotypes presented in the media. She argues that: "The politicisation of black consciousness in the 1970s- when the media cocktail of race riots, mugging and carnival led to a powerful and damaging representation of black youth as criminalized and subcultural- was clearly a reaction and opposition to state racism and offered a vital, if limited, platform for self-representation." In the 1980s perceptions about Black British culture moved from a "black presence in Britain to the black dimension of Britain" (qtd. in Prince 93-94).

On the other hand, blackness was used as a metaphor for evil or alien groups. Indeed, for centuries Anglo-English people referred to feared or unknown groups as 'black' though these were light skinned people from countries like Spain and Wales. This explains that in the twentieth century non-whites were all referred to as 'Black'. Surprisingly, the umbrella term 'Black British' was deployed as a political identity shared between second generation immigrants from very different cultures who organised collectively against their common experiences of institutional and individual racism (Prince 83).

Clearly, the common experience of British colonisation shared by immigrant communities allowed them to assemble under an organisational term 'Black British' and which constituted a tool for social protest. However, some academics have

questioned the adequacy of such term. For instance, Pratibha Parmar¹ discusses this 'fragile alliance' and the history of the term, she said: "This united us in a fragile alliance against racism, since we experienced British institutional racism in very similar ways. However, in recent years this strategic use has lost its currency as questions of ethnic differences and national identities begin to take primacy" (qtd. in Prince 83).

Thus, at the end of the twentieth century the meaning of 'Black British' changed as it refers to people of African and African-Caribbean descent. Other terms are being in use as 'black and minority ethnic', commonly shortened to BME and also sometimes the word 'coloured' is used, though some consider that it has a racist connotation. Hence, the term 'Black British' continue to be used in the 21st century yet with some discomfort.

It is worth noting that in the late 1980s the term 'Black British' no longer unified people of colour through a strong common political identification and was replaced by more specific ethnic identities. Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* shows confusion over the designation, the protagonist states: "two of us were officially 'black' (though truly I was more beige than anything" (167). Indeed, some argued that 'black' identities cannot unite disparate cultural identities.

Obviously, the umbrella term 'Black British' was beginning to lose favour among ethnic groups; hence, the announcement by Stuart Hall of the 'cultural turn' which was not meant a turning to culture as a refuge from political struggle but the turning of a critical gaze on to black culture as it emerged out of political struggle (Warmington 103).

- *The Ethnic Turn*

The 1990s were marked by what is known as the 'ethnic turn'. Indeed, critics of political blackness argued that referring to people of colour as black obscured their historical, cultural and social diversity. It was thought that the shift from 'race' to

¹ She is a cultural Studies critic and filmmaker.

‘ethnicity’ as a category would encourage us to think in terms of the interplay between open categories of culture, faith, language and nationality. Those who emphasized the progressive possibilities of addressing social inequalities via ethnic and cultural models often invoked Stuart Hall’s pioneering conceptualization of ‘New Ethnicities’. Hall has rightly argued that:

the plurality of antagonisms and differences that now seek to destroy the unity of black politics, given the complexities of the structure of subordination that have been formed by the way in which we were instead into the black diaspora, is not at all surprising. These are the thoughts that drove me to speak, in an unguarded moment, of the end of the innocence of the black subject or the end of the innocent notion of an essential black subject. (qtd. in Warmington 130)

Stuart Hall, as a black thinker, has rightly questioned since the 1980s the homogenizing tendencies of British political blackness. Indeed, Hall has noted the dominance within political blackness, among other things, of certain forms of African-Caribbean maleness, the marginalization of women, and the exclusion of South Asian voices (Warmington 6)

In his seminal work *New Ethnicities* (1988), Hall has sought to decenter blackness. Indeed, Stuart Hall announced the cultural shift as ‘black’ became a pluri-signifying category that was destabilized by other cultural affiliations to class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. According to Hall, blackness is a politically constructed term which is disintegrating, yet he insists that it remains important because the political and ideological struggle over ‘blackness’ continues (Prince 94).

Clearly, *New Ethnicities* have not replaced political blackness, but it proclaimed the necessity of a critical self-reflection though many contemporary black British intellectuals remain part of the political blackness discourse. Furthermore, terms as ‘black and minority ethnic’ (BME) are being used in social policy to replace blackness which does not refer only to people of African descent (Warmington 6).

As James Procter has rightly argued, the emergence of political blackness represented a shift from being “black in Britain to being black and British.” Quoting

Paul Gilroy, Procter in *Dwelling Places: Postwar Black British Writing* (2003) argues that this involves a radical deconstruction of the idea that “blacks are an external problem, an alien presence visited in Britain from the outside” (qtd. in Warmington 7).

Therefore, one has to concede that the phrase ‘Black British’, used by black people, implies the possibility of a British identity comprising multiple ethnicities. However, Hall proposes a new reading of black British life which rejects notions of black identities as homogeneous, stable, continuous and authentic held mainly by policy-makers, race relations experts or even black thinkers themselves. In *Ethnicity: identity and difference* (1989), Hall argues that collective identities of class, nation and race had faltered. Though he is keen to insist that it does not mean getting rid of identity, as if “wandering in an endlessly pluralistic void”, but that identity has to be recognised as “a cover story for making you think you stayed in the same place, though with another bit of your mind you do know you’ve moved on. What we’ve learned about the structure of the way in which we identify is not one thing, one moment. We have now to reconceptualise identity as a process of identification and that is a different matter” (qtd. in Warmington 99). Hall argues, again that:

Blacks in the British diaspora must, at this historical moment, refuse the binary black or British...the aim of the struggle must be to replace the “or” with the potentiality or the possibility of an “and”. That is the logic of coupling rather than the logic of a binary opposition. You can be black and British, not only because that is a necessary position to take in 1992 but because even those two terms...do not exhaust all our identities. Only some of our identities are sometimes caught in that particular struggle. (qtd. in Warmington 100)

This notion of identity, of ‘identification’, as a dynamic account of social selves was the recurrent theme of black British cultural studies. In fact, Black British cultural theorists were acutely conscious that when identity was regarded as in process, in production rather than static, black communities were confirmed as historical agents, actively re-imagining black subjectivity, re-imagining British social and cultural life (Warmington 100).

The ethnic turn has also been endorsed by a prominent theorist of ethnicity over political blackness, Tariq Modood¹. In fact, he interrogated the ‘racial dualism’ which he considered as the legacy of the African-Caribbean –dominated radical black politics of the 1960s and 70s. For Modood, “long historical experience of white racism and the knowledge of its contemporary existence in Britain” had meant that black and anti-racist politics was over influenced by three core assumptions. The first was that “being white or not is the single most crucial factor in determining the sociological profile of any non-white group in contemporary Britain”, and that race was assumed to dwarf and determine profiles of class, gender, employment, education, faith and ethnicity. The second, Modood argued, was that “until racial prejudice and discrimination in all its forms is eliminated ...all non-white groups...will form a racial underclass.” Finally, in direct reference to the hothouse of British Black Power, Modood queried the belief that the “only way ‘black’ people can improve their condition as a group is through political militancy and/or substantial state action; they are, therefore, a natural ally and integral component of left-wing movements”(qtd. in Warmington 131).

Obviously, Modood recognises the pervasiveness of racism; however, he recognised the existence of a static model of identity that too rigidly linked race, colour and socio-economic disadvantage. More particularly, Modood argued that black/white racial dualism excluded the experiences of South Asian communities. He explained that the inclusive definition of political blackness did not include Indian and Bangladeshi communities or the public identities of communities for whom language, faith and ethnicity did not match with political blackness (Warmington 131).

But some have argued that Modood while distancing himself from British political blackness, his approach may risk a retreat into a particular form of racialization, wherein South Asian communities are seen to possess ‘culture’, while African-Caribbeans possess only ‘colour’. For instance, in her article *Beyond Black: Re-thinking the Colour/Culture Divide*’ (2002), Claire Alexander queried the growing sociological preference for disaggregating black Britishness. While acknowledging the potential reductionism of cleaving to simplistic notions of unified blackness,

¹ See *Not Easy Being British: Colour, Culture and Citizenship* (1992).

Alexander also argued that the theoretical splintering of Caribbean and Asian categories was premature, since in many communities African-Caribbean and Asian populations continued to experience similar disadvantages in education, housing and employment. Neither had the decentring of political blackness, necessarily pluralized black histories or increased the visibility of Asian experiences. Alexander, suggested that, in fact, Caribbean and Asian communities had become framed by two opposing models of difference: African-Caribbean had come to symbolize vibrant cultural diversities in post-war Britain, embodied in *Windrush* histories and Black History Months; in contrast, Asians, and Muslims particularly were used in news media and policy discourses to signify closed cultures at odds with contemporary liberal Britain (Warmington 131-32).

In an essay entitled *Speaking in Tongues* (2009), Zadie Smith talks about people who think wrongly that we live in a post-racial world; she asserts instead that the “reality of race has diversified”, that to be black and British or to be multi-racial is moving away from fixed stereotypes and assumptions. Fixed notions about behaviours, accents, and values (held by white communities and communities of colour) are changing to views of “the many coloured voice, the multiple sensibilities” and acknowledgment that “most of us have complicated back stories, messy histories, multiple narratives” (qtd. in Prince18)

- *The Definition of Black British Literature*

The question of what constitutes a British writer and what marks a piece of writing as British has been tackled in 1998 by the editors of the *Paris Review* who dedicated an edition to ‘New British Writing’. Many writers provided answers to these questions helping, therefore, to define British literature at the end of the twentieth century. While Julian Barnes considered that the whole question is related to the nationality of the writer, Malcom Bradbury explained that the question has grown harder than ever to answer since, “Nationality in literature, certainty of voice, clarity of tradition, inheritance of power, the English lineage, is no longer a clear and definable thing.” Furthermore, he viewed British writing as an international, cosmopolitan and

constantly shifting canon, “after the Norman invasion, again in the adventuring of the Renaissance, again in the intellectual cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, again in the world-wandering era of Romanticism and so on” (qtd. in Prince 55).

As a literary critic and novelist Malcom Bradbury identified the complications of the British designation in *The Modern British Novel* (1993). Indeed, his attempt to define British literature reveals obviously a difficulty aligning authors in terms of national identity in his own international, global-village age:

‘British’ is a term open to many arguments, not the least because many of the most important novelists sailing under this flag of convenience are not British at all. Henry James was American, Conrad was Polish, George Moore and James Joyce were Irish, Wyndham Lewis was born on a ship at sea; many of the writers we claim today as part of British writing have names like Ishiguro, Okri, Rushdie, Mo, Kureishi, and Zameenzad. Meanwhile many British writers live and think elsewhere, and have seen their tradition very much from the outside. However, far we go back, the ‘England’ or, to use the now preferred term, ‘British’ tradition has always been in some basic sense international, linked with travel, exile, emigration and exterior influence. And the idea of reading any literature, even one as eclectic and pluri-cultural as the British, in national terms has increased in difficulty in our international, global-village age.(qtd. in Prince 56)

Again, Bradbury identified “familiar elements of English literature” that are still found in British writing, in addition to the newer shifting canon which includes “a magic realism and the exigencies of new Caribbean and Indian voices and the power of Scots, Irish and Welsh voices.” Though Bradbury described the history of Otherness in British literature giving the historical and contemporary examples of pluri-culturality, he seemed less at ease with the question of national identity. He explained that the parts of British writing with “names like Ishiguro, Okri, Rushdie, Mo, Kureishi, and Zameenzad” sometimes self-identified as international authors (Prince 55).

Further, Bradbury chose writers who contributed to shaping aspects of national tradition as parts of British literature, “including writers when they seem important or fundamental to the notion of a shaping tradition (like James, Conrad or Joyce), but not encompassing those who are not nowadays best seen in the light of some other lineage – as are, I think writers like Patrick White, Nadine Gordimer, or Chinua Achebe”

(qtd. in Prince 57). Yet, Bradbury was one of the earliest critics to include ethnic minority authors in the British canon.

We might go further and ask how can we define Britain's concept of its national identity and literature? Malcom Bradbury when analysing the fiction of the 1980s and 90s described British fiction as growing "ever less British" since it was beginning to reflect a "variety of nationalities" and a "multiplicity of different Englishness." He suggested that: "Perhaps something was indeed ending: a familiar notion of Englishness and the literary conventions that had come to express it...British fiction...felt less like the writing of a common culture than of a multiplying body of cultures...extending and varying the prevailing notions of what the British novel might be" (qtd. in Prince 80).

Bradbury called the end of the century British fiction "fragmentary, pluralistic, multi-cultural and depthless". He explained that "while George Orwell had famously described England as a family with the wrong members in control, it now seemed there was no family at home at all, no familiarity, nothing in control." In his novel, *Doctor Criminale* (1992), Bradbury explained, "Now we say we live in the age of pluralism, the age without an Absolute Idea. For once we are adventuring into history without an idea...it is an age of everything and nothing"(qtd. in Prince 80).

Interestingly, Bradbury as other British critics seems, on the one hand, recognising and encouraging "multiplicity of Englishness" and the "extending and varying" of "the prevailing notions of what the British novel might be", though he also worries over British literature in "the age of pluralism" and could only see fragmentation, depthlessness and nothingness when Anglo- England becomes slightly peripheral and no longer sees itself as a center. For these reasons, when coloured British writers talk about being British, they mean something other than white. But other critics believe that Britishness is beginning to move to "the decidedly mixed ethnicity of a culture now unignorably a compound of former insiders and newer

outsiders.” Pratibha Parmar¹ has aptly captured this ambiguity when referring to British literature, arguing that “the fact that British national culture is heterogeneous and ethnically differentiated is something that still needs hammering home to those who are persistent in their view that to be black and British is an anachronism” (qtd. in Prince 111).

1.2 The Categorisation of Coloured British Writers

It is clear that colonial and post-colonial history have rendered the categorisation of coloured British writers particularly complex; though the term ‘black British literature’ was used currently in the 1970s and gained even more currency in the 1980s. The term referred to writing by authors living in Britain whose origins are to be found in former British colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Thus, it was at that time rather a political label more than a racial one which referred to a common experience of postcolonial migration, alienation, and discrimination, along with a subversive assertion of attachment to Britain. For instance, writers of Asian origin such as Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi, both of Indian heritage were in the 1980s and 90s, without any problem, included in a wide-ranging category.

Nevertheless, the term ‘Black British’ nowadays no longer describes a large scope of writers but include conventionally authors of African and Caribbean descent, while writers of Asian origin are today subsumed under the ‘British Asian or Asian British’ banner as is the case with the best-selling writer Monica Ali (Ledent 16). Despite this seemingly change in categorisation of Black British writing, the boundaries are not completely neat as evidenced by the presence in the ‘black British’ category of an author like Guyana-born Pauline Melville who is of Caribbean heritage but ethnically white. One might suggest that the ethnic delineations inform a growing gap between communities once bound by a shared status as racial and cultural outsiders. Hence, I suggest the use of ‘coloured British’ instead of ‘Black British’ in order to encompass different ethnic minority writers of African-Caribbean and Asian descent.

¹ Born in Kenya and lives since the mid-1960s in Britain; she is mostly known for her film ‘The Colour of Britain’ (1994).

Another interesting issue that has been raised is about the Britishness of some 'black British' writers. Indeed, it has been argued that some 'black British' writers have multiple cultural allegiances. For instance, Caryl Phillips, a British writer born in St Kitts who lives in the US has claimed a multi-faceted, Atlantic identity which he describes in *A New World Order* (2001) as encompassing the Africa of his ancestors, the Caribbean of his birth, and Britain where he was brought up and educated and which had a crucially formative effect on his world-view. His writing, no doubt, offers a reflection on the meaning of Britishness, and explores various ways in which Britain has been shaped as a consequence of the arrival of migrants on its territories. This example shows clearly the difficulty in delimiting the scope of black British writing in an age of globalisation.

While it is true that some authors identified as international writers like Salman Rushdie, others like Hanif Kureishi have wondered how many British-born generations it took until one might be labelled 'British' or 'English' or 'Scottish' or 'Welsh' without question. If Rushdie raised the question of the multinational writer whose position in the national literary tradition is complicated, he, unambiguously, distrusts the view of literature that values expressions of nationality arguing that it is too focused on the search for an authentic national voice (Prince 66).

The question at issue is about whether it is relevant to evaluate authors under transnational strategies rather than in specific national traditions. Critics tend to adopt non-national designations choosing titles like 'Commonwealth', 'postcolonial' and 'cosmopolitan'. James Procter in *Dwelling Places* describes this as "the deterritorialising tendencies of diasporic discourse, in which issues of dislocation and transnationalism have dominated the agenda" (qtd. in Prince 66). However, this tendency has the effect of solidifying ethnically-derived versions of national identity. One can argue that in an increasingly trans- and multi-national world, the study of the formation of national identity remains relevant. In fact, eliding authors into transnational categories can erase real concerns regarding how literary canons and nations are formed and how homogeneous definitions of literary canons and nations can be subverted.

Moreover, the tendency to internationalize ethnic-minority, multinational authors residing in Britain and who are British citizens, and putting them into categories of ‘Commonwealth’, ‘global’, ‘postcolonial’, or ‘new literature’ poses the question of the validity of such undertaking. Therefore, the question is why has it not been taught as ‘British writing’?

It is true that some authors choose a cross-national identity of their birth country, but most of them ask for the ‘*Colour of Britain*’¹ to reflect the colours of its citizens. Procter aptly describes one of the reasons for “the prolonged critical neglect” of Black British writers in the British literary landscape as “the placelessness of those post-national, post-colonial, diasporic vocabularies and frameworks used to describe black cultural production” (qtd. in Prince 67). Therefore, by the end of the twentieth century, British literature was increasingly influenced by Black British authors exploring colonisation and empires, in such works as Ben Okri²’s *The Famished Road* (1991) and Salman Rushdie³’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983).

However, the inclusion of those writers under the banner of ‘British Literature’ disconcerted some white readers. In fact, in the 1990s Geoff Dyer described in *Anglo-English Attitudes* (1992) his feelings of alienation as he had no point of reference with the ‘new’ multicultural writers. This assumption clearly reveals a pervasive view of England and Britain as homogeneous identities, and ultimately a white definition of Englishness and Britishness (Prince 39).

Dyer went further in his denial of a ‘New Breed’ along with his apparent xenophobia, comparing mixed ethnicities in America to his own Anglo- English heritage:

While Hardy’s Durbey fields are astonished to find that they are distantly related to an aristocratic French family, Americans tend to be disappointed if they do not have the blood of at least four or five nations coursing through their veins. “I’m one part Italian, two parts Irish, one part Jewish and one part Native American” they explain, certain that they are becoming more interesting –more American- with every race mentioned. By that reckoning...I’m a dull dog indeed. I am English, so are my parents and so were my grandparents. In contrast to the

¹ This is the title of Pratbha Parmar’s film.

² He was born in Nigeria and lives now in England.

³ He was born in India, moved to England to attend school at 14.

narrator of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* – “a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed” – I am a very ordinary sort of Englishman.(qtd. in Prince 40-41)

Similarly, other critics have worried about the decline of the ‘English’ and ‘British’ novels¹ revealing a veiled xenophobia as their definition of the English or British novel remained exclusive. One can think of a response of Ben Okri, in *Of Poets and Their Antagonists* (1992), who states:

It is those who are served ...of their own truths, of their own histories, those who are secretly sickened by what they have become, who are alarmed by the strange mask-like faces that peer back at them from the mirrors of time, it is they who resist the poetic...They have to suppress the poetic, or accept it only on blurred terms.(qtd. in Prince 41)

While Dyer seeks to suppress the margins in an attempt to redefine ‘literariness’, and therefore representing British literature, Okri engages in an academic debate that mirrors the continuation of the colonisation project. This multicultural debate in itself recalls the end of the twentieth century concern with an identity impacted by an imperially designed object/ subject. Indeed, Australian literary critics Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge² aptly captured this nebulous area, describing the post-colonial experience:

There is always in the colonial regime a tantalizing offer of subjectivity and its withdrawal which, for the colonised, momentarily confirms their entry into the world of the colonizer only to be rejected by it. The colonised never know when the colonizers consider them for what they are, humans in full possession of a self, or merely objects.(qtd. in Prince 36)

Again, the British fiction of the end of the twentieth century explores these two positions. Some authors evaluated what it meant to be a British object when they felt alienated in what their educational training taught them to think of as a tolerant Mother Country. While other authors, who identified as subjects, wondered about the things that have defined Britishness and the British Empire in the last century (Prince 36).

¹ Even since the 19th century.

² See “What is Post (-) Colonialism?” *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (1994).

Furthermore, Salman Rushdie has propelled the object into the position of subject, in what he calls ‘the chutnification of history’¹ in his novel *Midnight’s Children*. In fact, the postcolonial protagonist, who is one of the 1,001 children born in the first hour of India’s independence, looks for an identity for himself among the debris of a partitioned India and a dwindling British Empire. He finds out that his own history along with the history of both countries will have to be absorbed in order to achieve this chutnification process; the protagonist asks: “Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have seen done, of everything done-to-me ...to understand me,you’ll have to swallow a world” (qtd. in Prince 42). Clearly, Rushdie’s subject/object position informs the issue of the evolving British identity which involves swallowing many diverse worlds.

On the other hand, women writers took part into the debates and unite as both objects and subjects of the empire. However, unlike white women writers whose status improved in post-war literature, Black British women writers were denied connectedness to national identity. It was assumed that they were from somewhere else. The “perpetual white question, where do you really come from?” further reinforced the isolation and sense of unbelonging. Patricia Duncker² expressed aptly the feeling of many black women writers: “We...have been here for a long time and are here to stay. Yet our voices and histories are suppressed in order to maintain the lie that we are going back or will be sent back” (qtd. in Prince 49).

Indeed, Black women writers suffer a double marginalisation, that of race and gender as argued by Jacqueline Roy. This explains why Black British women writers wrote about their marginalisation, displacement and lack of rootedness in such novels as Buchi Emecheta’s autobiography *Head Above Water* (1986) and *Second Class Citizen* (1974). Later, Zadie Smith joined these writers to assume completely taken-for-granted multicultural society (Prince 49-50).

While some critics are keen to keep a homogeneous white Anglo-English ‘Ideal’, others believe that the definition of English and British should change.

¹ The use of this expression epitomizes Rushdie’s blending of Hindi and Urdu words with English, which reflects India’s hybrid culture. Note that ‘chutney’ is a sauce or a dry base for a sauce used in the Indian cuisine (chutney+ fication means the process of becoming chutney).

² See *Sisters and Strangers: An Introduction to Contemporary Feminist Fiction* (1992).

According to Cunningham, “The directions that the best of new ‘English’ novels are taking (moves them) emphatically away from mere Englishness, into the decidedly mixed ethnicity of a culture now unignorably a compound of former insiders and newer ‘outsiders’” (qtd. in Prince 53).

On the other hand, Allan Massie, in a study related to British novels of the 1970s and 80s, announced the death of the ‘English’ novel as a consequence of a growing world market in publishing. He explained:

It is no longer possible to impose narrow categories on the novel. Thirty years ago it was still possible to write of “the English novel”; such a title would no longer make sense... (the world publishing market) makes authors like Rushdie who make use of, and appeals to other cultural traditions attractive to a publisher...novels which draw from more than one culture, which have a cosmopolitan or transnational tone, may have a better chance of selling world-wide.(qtd. in Prince 57)

Though Massie attempts to offer a comprehensive view of British fiction, he shows indeed an unease when choosing parameters of British literature which seemed exclusive to white Anglo-English authors while those appealing to other cultural traditions are evaluated as non-English in a ‘transnational space’ (Prince 57).

In contrast, Martin Amis, who was interviewed in 1995 by *Stuff Magazine* about the changing complexion of ‘English’ literature, an American interviewer commented: “considering the recent Booker Prize winners, you could say English literature is just as ethnically diverse (as American literature).” Amis replied: “You’re dead right! They are what we call the Commonwealth writers, the old Empire. And they had a tremendous effect on English writing. Liberated us all and brought colour and diversity into what was a grey area. I wonder how we did without them, and I don’t think we did very well, really. The English novel was becoming a very grey thing” (qtd. in Prince 58).

Caryl Phillips is certainly one of the writers who, as stated by Amis have this power of de-greying the contemporary novel and rewriting or altering imperial history. His postcolonial writings reflect on race, gender, class bias, and his feelings of rootledness in modern society. Besides, the Man Booker Prize has short and longlisted

many books by ethnic minority and post-colonial writers, many of whom were from Britain, who have been very powerfully de-greying the English and the British novels¹ (Prince 60).

1.3 Towards the Recognition of a Coloured British Canon

Many Anglo-English writers have complained about the increased focus on ‘exotic’ writers and the ‘people from elsewhere’ while those who have tried to discuss such issue have been accused by the British press and some literary circles as being ‘multiculturalist’, too ‘politically correct’ or too ‘thin-skinned’ as was the case of Salman Rushdie (Prince 13).

On the other hand, the exclusion of coloured British writers from the British literary canon has been built on the assumption that literature cannot be reduced to a mirror of society and that an analysis of literary aesthetics is a superior method of literary analysis. In *The World Republic of Letters* (2007) Pascale Casanova comments on this type of presumption and how it leads to considering the “oldest literary nations” as the model, that is the classical literary canon, against which peripheral literatures are ahistorically and nonnationally measured, he states: “The classics are the privilege of the oldest literary nations, which in elevating their foundational texts to the status of timeless works of art, have defined their literary capital as nonnational and ahistorical – a definition that corresponds exactly to the definition that they have given of literature itself” (qtd. in Prince 13).

This has resulted in Britain in adopting literary classics as the measure against which definitions of a literary aesthetic are analysed. However, resistance to these literary presumptions has developed in Britain and translated into changed feelings about Britishness and British literature. As Rushdie declared in *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), “we are here. And we are not willing to be excluded from any part of our heritage; which includes ... the right of any member of this post-diaspora community to draw on its roots for its art” (qtd. in Prince 110).

¹ Many authors whose books have been selected for the Booker Prize were being discussed as ‘English’ authors.

Significantly, coloured British authors were included in curricula to counteract Anglo-English centric educational materials that were common in British schools of the 1970s and 80s. For instance, in the 1990s the National Curriculum included a category for A-levels called ‘Literatures from around the World’ where Black and minority ethnic British writers were often studied. For instance, Zadie Smith, Monica Ali, and Hanif Kureishi, whose novels are studied here, have been included in the academic syllabi as they received enormous critical attention (Prince 37).

It is worth noting that in the 1990s universities outside of the Oxbridge tradition started teaching ‘new literature’ also called ‘global literature’, ‘minority discourse’, or ‘emergent literatures’. Indeed, ethnic minority, women and Commonwealth writers were studied as ‘new literature’ to students from working class background and who were representing diversity. However, in the late 1990s there were only few non-Anglo-English authors taught in British literature courses. Salman Rushdie was the exception as he was occasionally studied in British literature (Prince 63).

One has to argue that studying non-white ‘postcolonial’ authors separately poses a serious problem that is overlooking what constitutes inclusion or exclusion in the British literary canon, and national identity likewise. Hence, Salman Rushdie assumed in *Imaginary Homelands* about the prevalent classification ‘Commonwealth literature’, that this category permitted “academic institutions, publishers, critics and even reader to dump a large segment of English literature into a box and then more or less ignore it.” He added that the term was an invention, that it made little sense and was possibly racist and nationalistic. For Rushdie the Commonwealth literature is “a fiction ...created solely by critics and academics who have proceeded to believe in it wholeheartedly” (qtd. in Prince 62).

Afterwards the category ‘Commonwealth literature’ was replaced by ‘Postcolonial literature’ and on ‘Cosmopolitanism’. This new classification of the ‘transnational’ and ‘postcolonial’ are indeed attempts to resituate the center though the problem identified by Rushdie takes a new form (Prince 63). However, some critics argue that teaching a ‘new literature’ that is a non-traditional canon in English has the merit to avoid commodification of ‘Otherness’ while others consider that the

idea of a separate coloured British literature has to fade away and that writing by coloured British authors should simply be called 'British literature' (Prince 112).

Yet 'coloured British literature' has become in itself a category known for its originality and vigour. Indeed, its growing popularity has been accompanied with number of literary prizes awarded in the last ten years or so to British writers with roots in the Caribbean and Africa, such as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize to Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* in 2004, and the numerous awards garnered by Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* in 2000 among them the Whitbread First Novel Award, the *Guardian* First Book Prize, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction, two Ethnic and Multicultural Media Awards and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Awards (Hadjetian 7).

The British fiction as a whole has benefited since the 1960s onwards from Britain's specific colonial history, which has influenced several writers such as Zadie Smith and Monica Ali. A canon of contemporary multicultural fiction has emerged recently thanks to works of coloured British writers. Many authors studied in this chapter have succeeded in achieving canonical status, including Zadie Smith and Hanif Kureishi (Perfect 28). More significantly, 'coloured British' writing has been recognised in academic circles in Britain and abroad with publications on the topic in the last few years such as Lyn Innes's *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000* (2002), and Mark Stein's *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (2004).

Moreover, 'coloured British literature' has become visible thanks to the activism of some influential black thinkers, especially the cultural theorist, Stuart Hall who produced a significant body of theoretical work at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and also Paul Gilroy¹ who promoted writing by black Britons in works such as *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987). Besides, John La Rose², a poet and essayist, was one of the first black to

¹ He began his career as Hall's doctoral student at Birmingham.

² He was from Trinidad and died in 2006.

possess publishing houses¹ and bookshops in Britain, and was known for organising the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, held in London from 1982 to 1995. He contributed significantly to the diffusion of black writing in Britain and abroad (Ledent 16-17).

One has to admit that ‘coloured British’ writing is characterized by its variety and originality, qualities which have contributed to the invigorating effect it has had on English literature. It has played a decisive role in the thematic and formal renewal of a variety of literary traditions. Even though it seems impossible to pin down a typical ‘coloured British’ fiction, it appears that recurrent preoccupations are to be found in coloured British fictional writing which are part of its specificity such as interest in history, ‘otherness’ and race. The themes tackled reflect obviously the coloured British writer’s cultural background and the search for identity; hence, the birth of the multicultural fiction.

Fortunately, the sense of exclusion felt by coloured British writers has not given rise to a literature of victimization; on the contrary it has given birth to a tradition of writing that promotes heterogeneity while continuing to write about culture, gender and race. The 21st century has certainly seen the emergence of new coloured British writers who contributed significantly to the changing literary landscape in Britain alongside the emergence of a new interest for novels about multiculturalism in Britain.

2. Locating Novels of Multiculturalism

The political, social, and cultural change that marked Britain since the end of the Second World War and the dismantling of the Empire has been felt in contemporary fiction since the novel has always translated social and political changes. Indeed, British literature has constituted a cultural space in which the issue of immigration along with wider political issues have been articulated.

Admittedly, the middle of the twentieth century saw the emergence of novels addressing the experiences of migrants from former British colonies to London which has been ultimately transformed by these new comers. The 1980s were also marked by

¹ He founded New Beacon Books in 1966.

the emergence of postcolonial theory and with it the publication of novels by writers who were either migrants to Britain or the children of migrants to Britain (Perfect 11).

British writers from South-East Asia, Africa and the Caribbean descent have produced significant works that challenged the traditional forms of British fiction. Indeed, postcolonialism and immigration to Britain have produced a multicultural context for writers living in Britain and whose cultural and ethnic heritage is varied. They have focused in their novels on the inevitability of the relations between Imperial and Post-Imperial Britain from a new post-colonial perspective, giving therefore birth to the 'Great Immigrant Novel'.

More significantly, the beginning of the 21st century has been marked by the portrayals of the city of London's ethnic and cultural diversity with the publication of two debut novels which explicitly celebrated multiculturalism in London, respectively Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, both have been successful as they have been adapted for the screen, and have received enormous critical attention.

Furthermore, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is no doubt a seminal text in contemporary fiction about multiculturalism as it received most critical attention and has been adapted for television, though it has not been as commercially successful as Ali and Smith's debut novels. Indeed, Kureishi has frequently addressed the multicultural and multi-ethnic character of London which made of him a key voice in debates about multiculturalism (Perfect 27).

There is a tendency among critics to assume that novelists who are either migrants to London themselves or the children of migrants write exclusively about their experiences. For instance, Zadie Smith¹ is a British-born daughter of a white British father and a Jamaican mother, her own cultural background has clearly informed her portrayal of Irie Jones in *White Teeth*. But one has to argue that even if there are biographical similarities between Zadie Smith and *White Teeth*'s Irie Jones, Smith has really depicted a multicultural London through a wide range of characters

¹ Born in North London in 1975, she attended the University of Cambridge, and began her literary career with short story publications in the *Mays Anthologies*.

like Samad and Alsana Iqbal who are from Bangladesh and also the Chalfens who are English (Perfect 10).

Unsurprisingly, Hanif Kureishi has admitted that *The Buddha of Suburbia* is chiefly an auto-biographical novel in which he describes his own situation as an English who was struggling to find out his own identity as the son of an Indian father, and an English mother. This multicultural influence brought by those writers contributed to the cultural enrichment of the contemporary British novel and manifested itself in terms of styles and subject matters (Bentley 66).

Thus, discussing multicultural novels requires of course a description of the contexts informing these novels. As we have seen in the previous chapters, many key events have impacted on Britain over the last thirty years and have been used, as we shall see, as source material for coloured British writers. For instance, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, the 9/11 terrorist attack is being addressed, describing the impact it has on the multiethnic area of East London, as well as the Oldham riots (Bentley 7).

Novels like Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), and Caryl Phillips's *The Final Passage* (1987) exemplify this new interest in depicting British multiculturalism. Those writers are representative of multicultural novels, and have been prolific since the beginning of the millennium. As those novels combine well multiculturalism and the search for identity, I have chosen to analyse them. Among them, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* is undoubtedly the most representative novel of multiculturalism¹.

All the novels discussed here are set in the old colonial centre in which the interactions of a multicultural community that carries with it legacies of Britain's colonial history are explored. Moreover, representing youth and the experience of growing up in Britain is a common theme of the British novel. Indeed, the *Bildungsroman*² allows the description of the social and cultural environments in which the main protagonist moves. It also allows the description of society from a

¹ It was translated in more than 20 languages and even adapted for a television series in 2002.

² It was born in the early 18th century.

fresh perspective. Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* belong to Bildungsroman genre. In addition, the experience of the first and second generation Asian British community was a new subject in contemporary fiction at the time, and Hanif Kureishi paved the way for a generation of writers who came after him, including Zadie Smith and Monica Ali (Bentley 22).

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* narrates the experiences of a generation of immigrants who came to Britain in the 1950s alongside second generation immigrants who were born and have been brought up in Britain. It is undoubtedly a multi-generational novel that explores migrant communities and ethnic diversity represented by three interconnected families of the Joneses, the Iqbals and the Chalfens. Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is one of the most controversial novels about multiculturalism which portrays the empowerment of its female protagonist; it is often likened to Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*¹. Indeed, the Bangladeshi community of Brick Lane claimed that the novel portrayed them in a negative light; however, some literary critics perceived the novel as an iconic work in its representations of cultural difference. Caryl Phillips's *The Final Passage* is a novel about migration and exile; it focuses on a young family from a Caribbean island who travel to London in the late 1950s, the husband Michael, the wife Leila and their son Calvin. Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* recounts the growth of the central character and narrator Karim through his adolescence into adult age, and his final coming to terms with his own hybrid identity (Perfect 115).

Thus, the novels studied here will be read as postcolonial novels since they speak of race and multiculturalism in postcolonial London. Their characters are concerned with questions of history, inheritance and identity which are commonly found in postcolonial literature. Therefore, postcolonialism shall be presented along

¹ The decision to make a film on the London Street provoked protests from some local residents.

with two influential theorists of postcolonial studies, namely Homi Bhabha¹ and Edward Said² whose works are important in interpreting the novels.

The question under debate is about the ways these selected novels explore the issue of multiculturalism, and whether multiculturalism is celebrated or questioned in these novels. Thus, any exploration of these novels requires considering the portrayals of London as a former centre of the Empire, the depiction of a British multicultural, and finally whether the construction of Otherness by the West is being undermined by the writers within a postcolonial perspective.

2.1 The Portrayals of Multicultural London

London today is according to many British newspapers, “the multilingual capital of the world”, the “most ethnically diverse city”, and even “the most cosmopolitan city in the world.” The overall picture is that London has “300 languages, 50 non-indigenous communities with populations of 10,000 or more, with virtually every race, culture and region able to claim at least a handful of Londoners.” *The Guardian*³ has also observed that, “Never have so many different kinds of people tried living together in the same place before. What some people see as the great experiment of multiculturalism will triumph or fail here” (qtd. in Salverda 17).

Clearly, the presence of so many different peoples in the city of London is a proof of its openness as a city of immigration, and also a testimony of immigration as a fact of life. London’s cultural and linguistic diversity has today found artistic expression and representation, as we shall see, through works of successful writers who did write about the multi-ethnic and multicultural London.

While Doris Lessing, for example, in her story *In Defence of the Underground* (1987) describes the great diversity of people –white, black, brown, yellow, Indians, French, Americans, Arabs, English- she meets in the London underground, but she never makes those people speak, remaining without voice as ‘other people’. However,

¹ He was born in 1949 in Bombay; he was also influenced by Edward Said.

² He was born in Jerusalem in 1935; he went to university at Harvard and Princeton.

³ February 2005.

today the portrayal of London has completely changed. It is worth noting that the novels analysed here address completely different ‘Londons’. For instance, the North West London of Smith’s *White Teeth* is a different place from the East London borough of Tower Hamlets portrayed in Ali’s *Brick Lane*. The novels offer to the reader realistic accounts of London. Perhaps London is more than a geographical location which represents plurality, but it is itself ‘plural’ as there are several ‘Londons’ (Perfect 26). In the mid-twentieth century, London was the former centre of Empire, and in the early 21st century it seems that her status as a centre of global finance continues to make the city so diverse. One might ask: how much has London been transformed by migration from former British colonies and how is contemporary London represented in these novels?

Both *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane* use stereotypes as textual strategies to celebrate 21st century London as a vibrant multicultural metropolis. In this regard, *White Teeth* has been referred to by the judges of the 2000 Whitbread Award as “a landmark for multicultural Britain, as well as a superb portrait of contemporary London” (qtd. in Perfect 199).

In her debut novel *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith portrays a capital in which voices are heard with words borrowed from other languages and new accents, after a decade of postcolonial London representations by writers such as Andrea Levy and Salman Rushdie. Besides, Zadie Smith’s novel presumes a British multiculturalism in which ethnic minority types are represented as quintessentially British. Indeed, in an essay Smith describes her own neighbourhood in London where mixed race and ethnic minority British children are found together. She declares that she writes about London as it is, made up of a variety of people and culture (Prince 51).

Indeed, *White Teeth* is set in Willesden in North London which represents the old colonial centre but also the every day experiences of people living in this area and their intermingling that reflects the life in multicultural London. Most parts of the novel are set in late twentieth century multicultural London and told mainly between 1974 and 1999. The characters of *White Teeth* live in Willesden Green, a suburb in the

north-west London Borough of Brent¹. When Archie and Clara Jones move from a “stinking room in Cricklewood” to “a newly-acquired, heavily mortgaged, two-storey house in Willesden Green”, at first Clara does not like the area as it is “ugly and poor and familiar”, but after turning a corner she is amazed of the greenery, beautiful oaks, tall houses, parks and libraries but her impression changes again when she sees suddenly smaller houses and derelict shopping centres. The home of the family is “somewhere midway between the trees and the shit”, but Clara likes it although it is “not as nice as she had hoped but not as bad as she had feared” (Smith 46-48). It is like the mixed- couple, a hybrid place with a nice and wealthy part and a poor and bad one, a house in-between two worlds (Hadjetian 80).

On the other hand, Samad and Alsana Iqbal, too, move from “the wrong side of Whitechapel” to Willesden Green and live now “four blocks on the wrong side of Willesden High Road.” But Alsana likes it although it is “not as nice as Queens Park” (Smith 54, 62). Alsana notices the various people living in Willesden when she walks along the shops of the High Road, “Mali’s kebabs, Mr Cheungs, Raj’s, Maljovich Bakerie” (Smith 63), and a Jamican hair salon. Clearly, the area reflects the presence of immigrants in London and therefore the new multicultural British identity. Alsana explains that there are a lot of nationalities but not many of each group which refers to Willesden as a mosaic of cultures and people.

Furthermore, Archie and Samad’s favourite pub O’Connell’s Pool House, in which women are not allowed, is a symbol of the multicultural society. It is a hybrid place, “neither Irish nor a pool house.” It is run by an Iraqi Abdul-Mickey, a tradition in his family to add an English name to ‘Abdul’; the hybridity of the name represents the unification of the East and the West. Accordingly, the suburb of Willesden Green constitutes a hybrid space which represents the hybridity of its population. This area even if it is located at the margins of London, it still belongs to Greater London. For instance, the Indian restaurant where Samad works is in Leicester Square, right in the centre of London, suggesting that immigrants are moving slowly from the periphery to the centre and are being more accepted in Britain (Hadjetian 82).

¹ It is the second most culturally diverse in London.

Peter Ackroyd¹ said: “London has always been a vast ocean in which survival is not certain”(qtd. in Hadjetian 83). The characters in *White Teeth* manage to survive in their multicultural microcosm of Willesden Green. The only thing immigrants want from London is “nothing nothing space please just space nothing please nothing space” (Smith 519), and ultimately London offers them this space.

On the other hand, *Brick Lane* is a realist and satirical novel which portrays the Bangladeshi community in the East End of London. However, it has been criticised by the members of the Bangladeshi community² living in this area because it represents them as backwards and of limited education. The book has even been considered by representatives of the Sylhet community as a despicable insult to Bangladeshi at home and abroad. But others like Bernard Crick³ consider Monica Ali as “an Anglo-Bangladeshi Dickens: broad humour, grounded in unexpected, detailed and humane observation of the lives of poor immigrants in a precise London location.” Crick observed too that: “*Brick Lane* helps the immigrant cause more than a dozen guilt-stirring polemics” (qtd. in Salverda 23).

But ultimately, in her novel Monica Ali attempts to represent the Bangladeshi community of Brick Lane that has been rarely represented in British fiction, through her main character Nazneen. Monica Ali has been denied by her critics the right to write about the Bangladeshi community on the ground that she has little knowledge about this community as an Oxford-educated woman brought up in the north of England. Clearly, Monica Ali’s choice to speak for this under-represented community recalls Gayatri Spivak’s essay, ‘*Can the Subaltern Speak?*’ (1988) in which she claims that the absence of representation of marginalized groups maintain their powerlessness in the public sphere (Bentley 84).

Hence, Monica Ali’s novel offers a textual space in which the subaltern can speak. Clearly, the marginalized could find a public voice and could be heard through one major medium, which is fiction. Indeed, fiction can produce a representative voice

¹ See *London: The Biography* (2000).

² Most of the community are from South-East Asia and particularly the city of Sylhet a region in the north east of Bangladesh.

³ The then New Labour government’s adviser on the civil society and citizenship.

by adopting the marginalized position of the subaltern. Obviously, this has been the aim of Monica Ali to speak on behalf of a group of Bangladeshi women settled in Britain through the character of Nazneen. This explains her choice of realism in terms of the use of Standard English and a third-person narrator (Bentley 85).

London is perceived by the protagonist as offering wealth as she is amazed by the furniture and wealth that she finds in her flat which she thinks cannot be compared with the wealthiest man in her Bangladeshi village and her father was the second wealthiest man. By the end of the novel, the protagonist Nazneen loses her husband but ironically she has “found herself” in 21st century London. Indeed, *Brick Lane* portrays London, and especially Tower Hamlets in 1985, as a city that offers a ‘home’ for immigrants even to those who have initially felt alienated there (Perfect 20).

On the contrary, *The Final Passage* portrays rather an unwelcoming London for immigrants, a London in which migrants encounter despair. Indeed, *The Final Passage*’s protagonist Leila decides to leave her homeland and travel to Britain only to be with her mother who has travelled to London in order to seek medical attention. But unlike her compatriots, Leila does not naively believe that, “every coloured man in England have a good job that can pay at least \$100a week” and that “... life over there can be good” (Phillips 104). Even before leaving her island, Leila is not sure whether London would welcome them, “there was work there, wasn’t there? And there was opportunity?” (Phillips 95). Thus, from the start London is for Leila an unwelcoming place, “Even before she got to the hospital the endless views of decay and poverty only made her feel more depressed. She often wondered why London Transport did not put dark glass in the windows of the buses on some routes...her route to the hospital was one of those that would benefit” (Phillips 129).

Even when her husband Michael finds a job, his Jamaican colleague Edwin explains that, “... you not going make any money here. And before you been in this job a week you going start dreaming of home. And I don’t mean dream, dream, I mean nightmare, dream” (Phillips 168), recalling strongly Leila’s interrogations. Clearly,

London of the 1950s is characterized by these images of decay as the result of the war which destroyed most of the buildings and caused economic problems.

Moreover, her husband Michael left her after her mother had died, having apparently decided to make a life for himself in the city. Then, Leila who does not know where her husband is, has to face the prospect of life as a single mother. She must decide whether to return to her homeland or to stay in London. Accordingly, Leila finds herself utterly defeated and alienated in London, and resolves desperately to return to her home, reasoning that, “England, in whom she had placed so much of her hope, no longer held for her the attraction of her mother and new challenges” (Phillips 203). Clearly, *The Final Passage* identifies London at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century as a city that can be hostile to migrants mainly due to racism. The novel also describes London as a place in which female migrants face hardship and adversity (Perfect 117).

Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* uses two genres of the 19th century, the Bildungsroman and the ‘Condition of England’ novel. Just like Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, Kureishi’s novel traces the development from childhood to adulthood of one character Karim Amir during the 1970s, and like *Pip* in Dickens’s novel, Karim passes through several social spheres, thus allowing Kureishi to discuss issues of cultural politics namely, class, race, sexuality and gender. It also traces the cultural history of Britain (Bentley 161).

The Buddha of Suburbia is about the cultural significance of space; even the title makes allusion to location. The novel begins in the suburbs, in Beckenham in South London where Karim feels restricted and increases his desire for “trouble, any kind of movement, action ...”; by contrast, London “seemed like a house with five thousand rooms, all different” (Kureishi 3,126). Thus, Karim passes back and forth between suburbia and the city. However, in the final chapter of the novel, when Karim returns from America to England, he describes London with the same disgust with which he used to refer to the suburbs each time he returns to visit his family. He says: “I walked around central London and saw that the town was being ripped apart; the

rotten was being replaced by the new, and the new was ugly. The gift of creating beauty had been lost somewhere. The ugliness was in the people, too. Londoners seemed to hate each other” (Kureishi 258).

Clearly, Karim feels alienated in a place in which he felt once at home which is contrasting with the excitement he describes at the beginning. Moreover, as he returns to London, Karim visits a dentist, who upon seeing him, asks his nurse: “Does he speak English?” to which Karim replies: “A few words” (Kureishi 258). Here again Karim feels as an outsider, who is not even addressed by the dentist but is assumed to be unable to represent himself, he is thought to require being spoken for though ironically Karim is the narrator (Perfect 42).

A further aspect present in the novel is about the movement that the protagonist makes from the suburbia to London. Thus, how far London offers a chance to flee suburbia and lower middle class influences, and does the anonymity of London provide the basis for a new self, to create something new, and leave the past behind? Of course, living in the suburbs means being in the periphery, so the temptation of the city is greater. Besides, the suburbs do not offer anything, whereas the city seems to have everything a young person is longing for. This is the whole dilemma of Karim. For him, “people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness”, so that, in the end, their lives are dominated by “dullness” (Kureishi 8). For him, Browley belongs to Greater London, but it is not comparable to the inner city. Karim himself makes this clear when introducing London to the reader: “In London the kids looked fabulous; they dressed and walked and talked like little gods. We could have been from Bombay. We’d never catch up” (Kureishi 128). This scene reveals how different both worlds are; Karim appears to be intimidated by the Londoners although he has lived in only a few miles distance from the ‘real London’ for years.

2.2 The Celebration of Multiculturalism

Zadie Smith and Monica Ali’s debut novels are *par excellence*, novels of multiculturalism since they do offer a cosmographic depiction of multiculturalism in

Britain. The key question is how both writers explore the issue of multiculturalism in their debut novels.

Zadie Smith explores the issue of multiculturalism in *White Teeth* through sameness and difference. Indeed, the novel recognises the universality of human experiences and growing up. For instance, Smith describes in the first half of the novel the mid-life crises that both Archie Jones and Samad Iqbal go through, suggesting that universal human concerns are shared across cultural and racial divisions. *White Teeth* points towards the ultimate 'sameness' of different ethnic and cultural groups, "there is no one more English than the Indians, no one more Indian than the English"(Smith 327). At the same time, Smith recognises that cultural difference determines the path of each individual. Archie's attempted suicide at the opening of the book is the result of his divorce from his Italian wife Ophelia though he is saved by Mo, the Bangladeshi butcher, and he starts a new life with Clara Bowden, a black Caribbean woman thirty years his junior. Similarly, Samad Iqbal goes through a crisis as he feels guilty after he had an affair with the white, English teacher Poppy Burt-Jones that led to his sudden interest in his religion and the Bangladeshi culture he abandoned when he settled in Britain (Bentley 54).

Clearly, through these individual stories Smith makes the point, as stated by Parekh, that multiculturalism accommodates both sameness and difference through balancing shared values, customs and meanings across a series of cultural groups co-existing in the same nation. This interplay of sameness and difference is best exemplified in the title of the novel. Indeed, teeth are a universal human characteristic, and yet everyone's teeth are different and then a marker of individuality. Irie, Magid and Millat visit a racist old widower who informs them, "When I was in the Congo, the only way I could identify the nigger was by the whiteness of his teeth"(Smith 171). Therefore, distinguishing individuals on the basis of a characteristic that marks out their similarity is challenged by the text as part of cultural construction (Bentley 55).

In order to represent the multicultural nature of contemporary Britain, Zadie Smith has included a wide range of characters and narratives in her debut novel *White*

Teeth. The novel tackles many issues of multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and colonial legacies. The novel is a celebration of pluralism and the coming together of different cultures, ethnicities and races. It also reveals the struggle of individuals caught up within a postcolonial world (Bentley 52).

Smith chooses a realist mode and uses an omniscient narrator to tell the personal stories of characters who have different ethnic cultures and backgrounds: the three interconnected families of the Joneses, the Iqbals and Chalfens. This represents a variety of ethnicity that includes English, Asian and Caribbean as Archie Jones, who describes himself as from good old English stock, is married to Clara Bowden, a black Caribbean who has a secret white-colonial grand-father; Samad and Alsana Iqbal are originally from Bangladesh; and finally Joyce and Marcus Chalfen, who are introduced in the second half of the novel, are from a middle-class background, Joyce being a white English, and Marcus East European Jew.

The novel offers a microscopic image of multicultural Britain at the end of the millennium. Thus, through the portrayal of generations of British, Smith is keen to show that the old categories of race are no longer appropriate to describe the ethnic diversity of 21st century Britain. Indeed, she writes:

This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. (Smith 326)

Clearly, Smith is echoing Stuart Hall's thinking on ethnicity that race is no longer a useful means of differentiation as Britain's ethnicity is made up of a series of identities. Similarly, Smith focuses on the mixing of ethnicity and that each individual is multicultural as a consequence of the cultural influences and also biological heritages. Smith's position moves beyond the idea of 'hybrid' identities which again suggests a 'mix' of discrete race or ethnicities. For instance, Irie Jones, who has a complex 'racial' background as her father is English and her mother is Caribbean,

symbolises this new kind of ethnicity, one that Smith presents as the new model for contemporary Britain (Bentley 54).

It has been suggested that *White Teeth* believes in the accidental and unpredictability. Indeed, some critics have noted that central to its celebratory account of multiculturalism, the novel delights in the unpredictability of the future. Dominic Head calls the novel a “celebration of the contingent and chaotic stuff of social life, an enactment of a haphazard but vibrant multiculturalism.” Peter Childs suggests that the novel makes the case that the future is always to be “enriched by cultural commingling, accident and chance” (qtd. in Perfect 77).

Therefore, the novel celebrates the contact between different people of different ethnicities, cultures, histories and ultimately “adventitious collisions” (Smith 23). In this way, London becomes the site of a vibrant multiculturalism in which mass immigration from former British colonies would bring about a heterogeneous community. *White Teeth* seems inexorably to endorse a model of multiculturalism that is premised on unpredictability yet it suggests that tensions between Britain and its postcolonial migrants can ultimately be overcome and consigned to the past (Perfect 78-79). For instance, after Archie’s “decided-upon suicide” at the beginning of the novel which failed because he is saved by Mo, he finds himself in “a past-tense, future perfect kind of mood” (Smith 3, 18). In this frame of mind that, “by means of the entirely random, adventitious collision of one person with another”, he meets Clara Bowden, his future wife, by “accident”. “Past tense, future perfect” becomes a recurring motif in *White Teeth* suggesting a belief in the past being ‘tense’ and the future being ‘perfect’ (Perfect 80).

But ultimately, it is Irie’s unborn-child¹ that will make the three families converge at the end of the novel, connecting them, and ensures connectedness in the future. Indeed, the child, which Smith suggests will be a girl is to have white British (Archie), black Caribbean (Clara) and Bengali (the Iqbals) heritage. Moreover, the birth of the child in London at the very dawn of the new millennium suggests the birth

¹ Fathered either by Magid or Millat.

of a twenty-first century 'multicultural' generation of Britishness. Clearly, the novel makes the case for the happy convergence of white British, represented by Archie who belongs to the working class and the Chalfens representing the upper-middle-class with the two largest immigrant communities, black Caribbean and South Asian. The message conveyed here by the novel is clearly that the tension between Britain and its postcolonial immigrants would become increasingly irrelevant as their convergence can bring about a new generation as represented by the 'multicultural' child that Smith unveiled at the end of the novel.

Finally, *White Teeth* offers an optimistic vision of the future of multicultural London represented by this image of the child who represents the end of a generation of conflict. The novel goes about optimistically endorsing its unknown future. In the final passages of the novel, Smith points towards possible futures and yet refuses to endorse them:

And is it young professional women aged eighteen to thirty-two who would like a snapshot seven years hence of Irie, Joshua and Hortense sitting by a Caribbean sea ...? And could it be that it is largely the criminal class and the elderly who find themselves wanting to make bets on the winner of a blackjack game, the one played by Alsana and Samad, Archie and Clara, in O'Connell's, 31st December 1999, that historic night when Abdul-Mickey finally opened his doors to women?

But surely to tell these tall tales and others like them would be to speed to myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect. (Smith 541)

But even if the novel refuses to unveil the future, it still retains a certain optimism towards it, and the whole novel has been crafted to demonstrate the success of the 'great immigrant experiment' of the twentieth century.

Brick Lane through its characters namely Nazneen, Chanu and Karim conveys the idea that accommodation and blending of Western and Eastern cultures is necessary for an individual with a cross-cultural background and living in Britain. Monica Ali gives voice to a marginalized community in Britain but on Western terms as she uses a realist form. While Ali celebrates the individual empowerment of marginalized women in the Bangladeshi community, she criticises the male characters,

namely Chanu and Karim which can be read provocatively as a critique of the politics of difference and multiculturalism, and therefore to a culture that feels itself to be under threat (Bentley 92- 93).

However, in *Brick Lane* there seems to be no contact between the Bangladeshi community and the white population. In fact, the characters in the novel only observe the English without seeking any contact. For example, the “tattoo lady” who lives opposite Nazneen and Chanu is just observed by Nazneen who thinks sometimes:

going downstairs, crossing the yard and climbing the Rosemead stairwell to the fourth floor. She might have to knock on a few doors before the tattoo lady answered. She would take something, an offering of samosas or bhajis, and the tattoo lady would smile and Nazneen would smile and perhaps they would sit together by the window ...she thought of it but she would not go ...Nazneen could say ... two things in English: sorry and thank you. (Ali 19)

One can guess from this passage that Nazneen unlike the other characters in the novel is inclined to establish contact with the white population living in Brick Lane, but the handicap of the language prevents her from having such contact with the “tattoo lady”. Nazneen is therefore ready to integrate from the beginning in this hostland even if she constantly remembers her homeland.

If some have claimed that *Brick Lane* propagates cultural stereotypes, one has to admit that it celebrates integration and the potential for adaptation in Western societies through her protagonist Nazneen who is able unlike her husband Chanu to embrace British culture. Moreover, Ali’s recourse to stereotypes may be explained as an attempt to emphasise her protagonist’s final integration into multicultural London. Moreover, *Brick Lane* celebrates the adaptability of both its protagonist and the multicultural London (Perfect 116,129).

2.3 Constructing Otherness: A Postcolonial Perspective

The legacy of colonialism has, undoubtedly, been the most far reaching influences on Britain in terms of its position in the world. The term postcolonialism has been used to describe this new era, and theories have developed in many fields to explain and assess

the impact of this enormous shift in the political organisation of the world (Bentley 17).

Edward Said has rightly showed in his seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978) that literature has served to define a 'positional superiority' of the West in relation to the peoples and cultures of the Orient. Thus, postcolonial literature's aim has been to readdress the way in which ethnic minorities have been constructed in British literature. This has resulted in the emergence of what became known as 'coloured British fiction' (Bentley 18).

One of the best ways of understanding how the 'Other' has been constructed, one needs to consider Edward Said's seminal work on *Orientalism*, alongside Homi Bhabha's contribution to postcolonial theory. In the light of these theoretical frameworks, one can analyse how the construction of Otherness is being handled in the novels studied in this chapter.

- *An Overview of Orientalism*

First of all, Edward Said defines *Orientalism* in these terms:

I mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent. The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient- and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist- either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism.(2)

It is worth mentioning that the term 'Orientalism' was not invented by Edward Said of course, it is an institution dealing with the Orient¹ which started in the late 18th century with the period of colonial imperialism. It was "a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient"(Said 3). Edward Said is regarded as the most influential theorist of Orientalist and postcolonial studies and is said to have transformed the study of literature and culture. *Orientalism* is the model analysis of colonial discourse and a basis for postcolonial literary theory; it is a discourse of the

¹ Until the 19th century the Orient consisted of India and the Bible lands, and nowadays the Orient and the East equal Islam which stands in opposition to the West.

West about the East. For Edward Said, the European expansion went hand in hand with a huge advance in the institutions and content dealing with Orientalism; and the separation between the East and the West started with Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1789 (Hadjetian 41-44).

Edward Said shows clearly the West's attempt to construct the rest. Said explains that many well-intentioned scholars have attempted to provide a discourse through which the 'Other' is represented; however, they did not pay much attention to the complexities being represented. Edward Said was influenced by Gramsci and Foucault. Indeed, from Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, he could describe the intertwining relationship between power and knowledge over the Orient. His concept of discourse presents a linguistic apparatus through which the articulation of knowledge becomes an expression of power. And through Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony he could explain how the influence of certain ideas about the East prevailed over others and how the elite were able to control the masses (Hadjetian 45).

Moreover, Edward Said was the first to connect the term with the representation of the Orient for political aims. Indeed, he explains the reasons for the development of *Orientalism*, saying: "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilisations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (1).

Again, Edward Said explains that the Orient was "invented" and "orientalized" in the minds of the Europeans, he adds: "It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries" (57). Moreover, Said argues that the West divided the world into an 'exotic'¹ East and a 'normal' white West or, in postcolonial terms into 'self' and 'other' or 'us' and 'them' (Hadjetian 47).

¹ It makes reference to the cultures in Asia, Africa and South America, it expresses feelings of hatred.

In short, *Orientalism* is a “cultural and political phenomenon” that questions the European idea of the Orient and the “willed imaginative and geographic division made between East and West” (Said 354). The division between East and West is shown by the Prime Meridian at the Old Royal Observatory in the London suburb of Greenwich (Hadjetian 45).

Admittedly, stereotypes about the East are used for the construction of otherness. In fact, the British self- cultivates the feeling of superiority to the countries which were British colonies as if this perspective has “the status of scientific truth.” Edward Said has rightly described this feeling as Britain never thought that the people in the colonies did not appreciate “the good that is being done to them by colonial occupation” (33).

Constructing otherness on stereotypes is indeed making generalisations about cultural differences between the East and the West such as that “Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same”, they lacked accuracy and logic and were untruthful and their statements contradictory, they are liars and “in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race” (Said 38-39). For Said the Orient was regarded as “if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West” (41). Europe wanted to control, schematise and manipulate the Non-western rest of the world which it regarded as other and as “the live province, the laboratory, the theatre of effective Western knowledge about the Orient” where “domestications of the exotic” and “mental operations” could take place (43-60).

According to Said the West has created an ideologically manipulated and unrealistic image of the East in order to create the ‘Other’¹. This has ultimately resulted in the creation of a negative alterity, that is, an absolute Otherness that contrasts with the Self positive identity that is Eurocentrism² privileging only and exclusively European cultures. Moreover, the Orient described as a place of mystery, barbarism, backwardness, and ‘exoticism’ became a mirror image of what is inferior to

¹ For Said, the ‘Other’ refers to the Far, the Middle and the Near East.

² Its opposite is ‘ethnocentrism’.

the West, and turned into a danger for the West symbolising “terror, devastation...For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (Said 60).

In his work, Edward Said uses a quotation of Karl Marx in order to describe the representation of the Orient by the Occident, “They cannot describe themselves; they must be represented” as the colonisers thought that the colonised had no culture or history independent of the colonisers (qtd. in Hadjetian 49). The consequence of this division is that the Oriental becomes more Oriental and the Westerner more Western as both behave as they were expected to behave and people just see what they expect to see. Myths about the Orient became therefore self-fulfilling (Hadjetian 50).

Said’s aim was to fight against these clichés, a wrong European representation of the Orient and against colonial thinking. His ultimate aim was to bring the East and the West together and to make one out of the two. He was optimistic about the relation between Eastern cultures and the West because he believed that the division between the Orient and the Occident is “not an eternal order but a historical experience whose end, or at least partial abatement, may be at hand” (Said 354). He expressed his hope for a more neutral Western analysis of the East one day (Hadjetian 51).

On the other hand, Homi Bhabha’s contribution to postcolonial theory is also important as he introduced the concept of ‘fixity’ which he explores in *The Other Question* (1994). In fact, he explains that colonial discourse uses fixity to construct Otherness. This fixity becomes apparent when the colonizers reduce the colonised, the ‘Other’ to a fixed stereotype, to something rigid, unchanging and repetitive. In this way, the ‘Other’ is reduced to something that can be known and managed.

In the light of these theoretical frameworks, one can see how this question of constructing Otherness is tackled in three novels studied here, namely *Brick Lane*, *White Teeth* and *The Buddha of Suburbia* as their authors do provide a deep insight into this recurrent issue in postcolonial studies.

As far as the novel *Brick Lane* is concerned, it is interesting to consider the principal character Chanu who cherishes the Bengali literary tradition as he dreams of establishing a Bengali library in the area, yet he is made the object of ridicule by his

wife Nazneen. One can read this episode of the novel from a postcolonial perspective, as it suggests the absence of respect for and the ignorance of Bengali literary traditions¹, and conflicts between cultural values (Salverda 21).

While Chanu's dreams remain unfulfilled, Nazneen achieves emancipation and embraces the new opportunities she discovers in London. It seems that *Brick Lane* engages in a debate which tries to negotiate between traditions of a male-dominated culture and a new set of London values specifically liberty, individualism and the opportunity to develop one self. Clearly, Nazneen is seeking a new identity making therefore a cultural transaction while mocking her own husband (Salverda 22).

Again, otherness is being constructed and commodified in *Brick Lane* as revealed by the comments of Chanu to Nazneen that the presence of Hindu effigies in Brick Lane restaurants is not indicative of the arrival of new cultural group in the area, but of the ongoing commodification of cultural difference there, "Not Hindus. Marketing. Biggest. God of all." The white people liked to see the god. For authenticity, said Chanu" (Ali 373).

In *White Teeth*, the children music teacher Poppy Burt-Jones shows neo-colonial tendencies in her representation of the exotic East. In fact, she is attracted to Samad because of his exotic appearance comparing him to Omar Sharif, which reflects the colonial attraction to the exotic. She speaks of including more Indian festivities in the school calendar as they are "so much more ...colourful" (133); ignoring the fact that Samad is not Indian. She then generalises and judges from his appearance that he is Indian inventing therefore a Samad that does not exist but like she wants him to be. Poppy's comments reduce Samad's origins to a mere celebration of exoticism (Hadjetian 88).

Furthermore, Joyce Chalfens is attracted by exoticism. Indeed, she wants to have Millat around as she is fascinated by the exoticism of Irie and Millat and calls them "brown strangers" who are "really stimulating" for her children, this recalls the

¹ Note that the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, who is constantly cited by Chanu, won the Nobel Prize in 1913.

fascination colonisers have felt towards exoticism (Smith 326). Joyce has also a negative view of the Jones and the Iqbals concerning their family background although she does not know them. For her, Samad is a blind fundamentalist and a barbarian and Alsana incompetent, passive and culturally narrow-minded, "... but she's so incompetent...it makes me so...I mean, imagine letting your husband take away one of your children and do God knows what with the other one..." (333). Obviously Joyce has in mind the stereotypes about the uncivilised Oriental men, and suppressed and stupid women and makes generalisations without even thinking.

In the colonial mind as in Joyce's such inferior parents are not capable to educate their children, and it is the responsibility of intellectuals like the Chalfens to educate children as Irie and Millat because only they have the "good genes". They regard themselves as superior and with their behaviour they represent an attitude the colonisers used to have (Hadjetian 92).

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Hanif Kureishi through the Amir family disrupts possible common stereotypical conceptions of the Indian community in Britain. They are indeed a culturally heterogeneous family and they seem to have adapted easily to the country they live in, despite the ingrained ethnic prejudice on the part of many white people that are shown in the novel.

The novel exploits the idea of the exotic other, and satirically exploits the way the other is constructed as exotic, both through the figure of karim's father Haroon, *The Buddha of Suburbia* from the title, and through karim. In fact, Haroon reinvents himself as the exotic, representing for a group of white middle-class people the role of an Indian religious guru. The irony lies in the fact that for the group of white people, this Indian, who is in fact a Muslim, performs their own expectations of what 'Indianness'¹ is. In fact, Haroon's fake spirituality has only been acquired through books he bought in England, as is stressed, in a satirical tone, by the narrator: "I ran and fetched Dad's preferred yoga book...from among his other books on Buddhism,

¹ This form of spiritualization reaches the West via pop culture in the 1960s.

Sufism, Confucianism and Zen which he had bought at the Oriental bookshop in Cecil Court Off Charing Cross Road” (Kureishi 5).

Nevertheless, it is through his own reinvention as the other, that Haroon could move from the suburbs to lead a more upper-middle-class life in London. Karim too manages to move away from the suburbs through a theatre role where he personates an Indian. The director asks Karim to play “someone from your own background”, that is “someone black”; and although Karim thinks that he “didn’t know anyone black, though he’d been at school with a Nigerian” (Kureishi 170). He accepts the role choosing to impersonate his tragicomic relative Changez as he had never been to India. The role he performs of a dumb, naïve and economically irresponsible Indian is viewed by the theatre critics as “hilarious and honest” (228).

One can also use Bhabha’s theory of mimicry to understand Karim’s impersonation of the ‘Other’. For Bhabha:

Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference...The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing.(qtd in Glabazña 71)

According to Bhabha, Indians imitating Englishness whether out of the need to survive or in pursuit of profit, operate in an “area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double” (qtd. in Glabazña 71).

In the case of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim’s on-stage impersonations of the most stereotypical forms of Indianness means returning the colonial gaze by way of a complete mockery of these colonial clichés. His on-stage excesses mirror the stupidity of the colonial discourse. Kureishi clearly undermines Eurocentric stereotypes. For instance, when Shadwell, the director of the theatrical adaptation of *The Jungle Book* in which Karim plays *Mowgli*, commands the reluctant Karim to put on an Indian

accent justifying this by “Karim you have been cast for authenticity” (147), Karim takes this authenticity way too far.

Clearly, both Haroon and Karim undermine the idea of representing otherness. According to some critics, *The Buddha of Suburbia* represents the ‘Other’ as an object of consumption of the center, as Karim must impersonate essentialist stereotypes of cultural and ethnic identity that he knows to be a construct and product of colonial discourse (Glabazna 70). All in all, both Karim and Haroon utilize different forms of Orientalist stereotypes putting into a subversive play the whole history of British colonialism, which is well described by the critic Graham Huggan¹ in the following statement:

Minorities are encouraged, in some cases obliged, to stage their racial/ethnic identities in keeping with white stereotypical perceptions of an exotic cultural other. Yet as Kureishi makes clear, such stagings can be seen on one level as parodies of white expectations and, on another, as demonstration of the performative basis of all identity formation. (qtd. in Glabazna 72)

3. Reflecting Multicultural Issues

Contemporary multicultural British fiction has particular interest in subject matters and formal techniques. Issues around ethnicity, national identity and the legacies of postcolonialism, and the way in which history and narratives of the past affect the present have been a fruitful source for the contemporary British fiction over the last 40 years. Indeed, many writers have been interested in the impact of colonialism and postcolonialism on British identity and culture as well as the influence of the British Empire on people in the former colonies and in Britain (Bentley 195).

It is, therefore, impossible to discuss multiculturalism in Britain, as reflected in its coloured British literature without talking about classism, race along with racism, and cultural identity as all these issues intermingle. Thus, our discussion will be centred on the way class and race interact with cultural identity, and ultimately how racist practices might undermine race relations and the formation of cultural identities, within postcolonial interpretive frames. These are mostly the common themes tackled

¹ See *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (2001).

in the novels analysed here, yet they do deal with other issues of less importance for our study. Hence, our focus will be on these themes associated with the multiethnic nature of contemporary Britain.

3.1 The Intersection between Class and Race

Social class has always been considered a category that lies at the foundations of British society and has remained one of the principles of self-identification in Britain. In *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali deals with the intersections between class and race in Britain within the British-Bangladeshi community. Indeed, with the character of Chanu, clear class restrictions teach the working classes to constrain aspirations and not to reach above themselves. For instance, Chanu who reads the ‘greats’ of British literature realizes that he cannot rise above his assigned class no matter how much of the Brontës, Thackeray, or philosophy he reads.

Moreover, the whole Bangladeshi community is subject to harassment by white Supremacists. This is what Chanu sees as a question of class, reasoning that:

It is the white underclass, like Wilkie; who are most afraid of people like me. To him, and people like him, we are the only thing standing in the way of them sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, then they are above something. If they see us rise then they are resentful because we have left our proper place. That is why you get the phenomenon of the *National Front*. They can play on these fears to create racial tensions, and give these people a superiority complex. The middle classes are more secure, and therefore more relaxed. (Ali 24)

For Chanu the white people would not like the non-white people like him to leave their ‘proper place’ regardless of their education. This is why Chanu cannot succeed in Britain; he is treated like any other illiterate Bangladeshi person. Therefore, through the character of Chanu, Monica Ali reveals class and race conflict faced by ethnic minority in *Brick Lane*, showing that the intermingling of class and race renders the prospect of improvement more difficult than for the white working class people.

On the other hand, class awareness is a central issue in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. In fact, the novel portrays the British class system as Kureishi adopts a comprehensive

approach to class. The question is how class is depicted, what makes someone belong to a certain class, and why do people want to break out. The critic Susie Thomas¹ reads class in Kureishi's novel, comparing it to Dickens's *Great Expectations*, she explains:

In all Kureishi's work there is an emphasis on how race can affect class and vice versa. Migrants lose status on arrival in England, like Jeeta, a princess, who is seen as just another 'Paki' in corner shop and looked down on by white Londoners. But Kureishi also shows that upper-class Indians, like Changez, can feel little solidarity with poor immigrants from India, whom they despise for failing to speak English. (qtd. in Glabazna 73)

Yet for Rita Felski², the significance of class in Kureishi is that he depicts class divisions as a fact of British social reality, and as liable to transgressions and permutations due to the cosmopolitanism of post-war British life, she states:

The Buddha of Suburbia is a story about the permeability of class divisions and the new possibilities of social mobility in postwar Britain. Karim eventually becomes a successful actor, escaping his suburban origins for a bohemian metropolitan world of artists and upper-middle-class intellectuals. But the novel also traces the tenacity and continuing power of class distinctions, as Kureishi's hero is constantly confronted with the differences between his background and that of his friends. (qtd. in Glabazna 74)

Before proceeding, it is indispensable to comprehend the British class system; the term 'social class' is important in Britain, as it derives from the belief that a person's class belonging affects one's opportunities in society. Lower middle class is said to be the social class with the lowest reputation in the entire history of class theory; the class for whom it seems hardest to claim pride of membership.

Furthermore, it is seen as a rather negative identity, a category usually applied from outside, by those of higher social status, or retrospectively, by those who once belonged to the lower middle class and have since moved beyond it. It is even understood as a non-identity. For instance, Charlie and Karim endeavour to belong to another social group, Charlie attempts to join the newly founded morbid punk

¹ See *Hanif Kureishi: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (2005).

² See *Nothing to Declare: Identity, Shame, and the Lower Middle Class* (2000).

movement, whereas Karim, in contrast, aims to raise his social status by becoming an actor.

To comprehend upward social mobility referred to in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, one can make use of Bourdieu's most influential concept of *Habitus*¹ in his theory of class. Indeed, for Bourdieu social difference is based on different access to economic resources and power, namely economic, social and cultural capital². Thus, the idea of *habitus* explains why a given social structure is so durable and difficult to be substantially changed (Schneider and Lang 90).

Moreover, upward social mobility may undermine the notion of 'durability' in Bourdieu's *habitus* concept; however, boundaries between social classes themselves are not generally blurred by individuals that cross them. Thus, the issue of *habitus* boundaries is particularly interesting when looking to the intersections between social and racial or ethnic boundaries. Bourdieu uses, then, the term 'habitus transformation' to focus on the process of the conversion that individuals have to undergo when moving from one social class to another because the transformation in *habitus* of immigrants is a necessary condition for social ascension. *The Buddha of Suburbia* questions the seemingly natural social order by showing that it is possible to cross social boundaries; even Bourdieu mentioned what he called 'habitual unsettledness' in his own trajectory from the peasant country-side to high academia (Schneider and Lang 91).

Again, social mobility enables the protagonist to perform this migration of status and prestige, and signifies that class is not a fixed construct. Two varieties of social mobility are commonly acknowledged: intra-generational and inter-generational mobility. Both of them are represented in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Haroon and Princess Jeeta, for example, were born into a high caste in India. After they had gone to England, their social status had declined dramatically. The social development from the lower middle class English Haroon to his upper middle class son Karim, in contrast

¹ It refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences.

² It refers to the collection of symbolic elements like skills, tastes, posture and material belongings that one acquires through being part of a particular class.

marks an inter-generational one. Given that, Kureishi has rightly stated in an interview that his characters always try to expand their sense of self, “struggling against an original sense of class that they’re trying to throw off” (qtd. in Glabazña 66).

It is worth noting that white-collar works account for the whole lower middle class in addition to the bourgeois including shopkeeper, builders and other service businesses. The petit bourgeois are represented in the novel by Anwar and Karim’s uncle Ted. The former is a proprietor of a small grocer’s shop, and the latter runs a central heating business. Being predominantly male, the self-employed pride themselves on masculine values such as competitiveness and individualism. This is apparent by the parties Ted and his wife Jean had given in the heyday of “Peter’s Heaters” because they were “a little king and queen in those days –rich, powerful, influential”, and their guests were the “most important builders, bank managers, accountants, local politicians and businessmen ...” (Kureishi 41-42).

Kureishi’s novel portrays British life very precisely in terms of ethnic mix as the self-employed bourgeois are less dominated by white than any other class. Anwar is a perfect example of the influence of ethnic groups on British society. Furthermore, *The Buddha of Suburbia* tackles the question of class through the description of working-class housing estates in South London: “The housing estates looked like make shift prison camps; dogs ran around; rubbish blew out; there was graffiti. Small trees had been planted with protective wire netting around them, but they’d all been snipped off anyway. The shops sold only inadequate and badly made clothes. Everything looked cheap and shabby” (224.)

Therefore, the novel describes white working-class from a distance, and the only character, Terry is presented as being typical. Karim recognises that such areas produce much of the right-wing sentiment that results in racial violence that he and his family experience. At the same time Kureishi makes it clear that these areas can be culturally misrepresented especially by middle- class commentators. Indeed, Karim comments in his analysis of 1970s theatre: “The writers took for granted that England, with its working class composed of slags, purple-nosed losers, and animals fed on

pinball, pornography and junk-food, was disintegrating into terminal class struggle. These were the science-fiction fantasies of Oxford-educated boys who never left the house. The middle class loved it” (207). Here, Kureishi shows that the English middle classes re-impose stereotypes of both ethnic and white working class culture. But the novel is also keen to distance itself from the kind of romanticizing of the working classes that is an aspect of Terry’s political outlook (Bentley 168).

3.2 Dealing with Racism: Between Overt and Covert Racism

The arrival of immigrants from former British colonies to the former centre of the Empire has from its start on been regarded as a problem. Indeed, the Empire is said to be ‘striking back’, and the negative reception which the immigrants experienced can be explained by Britain’s imperial past and the British feeling of superiority. Robert Southey¹ describes well the British feeling of superiority: “A remarkable peculiarity is that they [the English] always write the personal pronoun I with a capital letter. May we not consider this Great I as an unintended proof how much an Englishman thinks of his own consequence?” (qtd. in Hadjetian 15).

In this sense, Hanif Kureishi presents in an essay published in 1986, *The Rainbow Sign* a view of the type of racial discrimination he had experienced in the mid-1960s, stating that Britain was still a racist society when writing this essay; he comments:

The evil of racism is that it is a violation not only of another’s dignity, but also of one’s own person or soul; the failure of connection with others is a failure to understand or feel what it is one’s own humanity consists in ... a society that is racist is a society that cannot accept itself, that hates parts of itself so deeply that it cannot see, does not want to see- because of its spiritual and political nullity and inanition- how much people have in common with each other. (qtd. in Prince 56)

Both Rushdie and Kureishi point to the anti-multicultural climate in Britain where racism even in intellectual conversations is covered with jockey twists of irony, and if one cannot grasp these ‘levels of irony’ or the ‘inverted commas’, he will be called

¹ See *Letters from England* (1951).

unreasonable or humourless while this clearly hide extraordinary levels of racism (Prince 57).

Arguably, some have tried to explain acts of racism by the very presence of non-white immigrants from the former colonies whose infiltration may cause the changing colour and culture of Britain. Yet, Salman Rushdie reveals in *Imaginary Homelands* the fallacies of common racist ideas about ethnic minority British and immigrants explaining that the “immigrants...come because they were invited ... People travelled here in good faith, believing themselves wanted” (qtd. in Prince 86). Clearly, Rushdie reminds Mrs. Thatcher who was afraid of being ‘swamped’ by immigrants that they were indeed invited to migrate by the Macmillan government of the time. Again, he describes Britain “the one you inhabit is determined by the colour of your skin.” For him, few white people except “for those active in fighting racism, are willing to believe the descriptions of contemporary reality offered by blacks” (qtd. in Prince 87). Therefore, the core question is how racism is dealt with by the authors of the four novels analysed here. Do the writers describe overtly a racist society or on the contrary, deal with this sensitive issue in a more subtle manner?

In *Brick Lane* racism is described as hidden in British society, especially with Chanu who is expecting a promotion for a long time but which would never come while his white colleague Wilkie far less competent gets the promotion. For Chanu colour can be a barrier to further development in his career. He tells Nazneen about his thoughts of not getting a promotion for which he has high expectations. Obviously, Nazneen accepts all his ideas of racial discrimination; she tells her friend Razia: “My husband says they are racist, particularly Mr Dalloway. He thinks he will get the promotion, but it will take him longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem” (Ali 72).

Obviously, Ali makes the point that racism is embedded in British society though it is hidden as shown in the following comment made by Chanu: “All the time they are polite. They smile. They say ‘please’ this and ‘thank you’ that. Make no

mistake about it, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in the back” (Ali 72).

Indeed, Monica Ali does not talk about racial issues specifically, but it can be detected through conversations and descriptions of events. Hence, *Brick Lane* is probably one of the first novels that described the events of 11 September 2001 in New York and their impact on local level, showing through these events very subtly, the reality of racism towards Muslims in Britain. The narrator describes: “A pinch of New York dust blew across the ocean and settled on the Dogwood Estate. Sorupa’s daughter was the first, but not the only one. Walking in the street, on her way to college, she had her hijab pulled off. Razi wore her Union Jack sweatshirt and it was spat on” (368). This passage shows the local response to 9/11 in terms of racist attacks on individuals belonging to the Bengali community of Brick Lane whether they wear a Muslim dress or a western one like Razia who experiences the same racist attacks despite wearing her Union Jack sweatshirt.

Although *White Teeth* tackles serious subject matters, it uses satire as a major element to avoid the didacticism of political correctness. Despite the seriousness of the issue of racism, Zadie Smith chooses to combine racism with comic in order to present British society in a critical light. Smith tackles the issue of racism subtly as she believes that racism is absurd and out-of-date as today no one can even remember “E-Knock someoneoranother”(62). In Smith’s opinion, people should “just get on with things, just live together ...in peace and harmony” (194), and forget racism as it is a “silly-billy nonsense”(63).

At the beginning of the novel, a racist event in Britain has an impact on the Iqbal’s life. Indeed, Enoch Powell’s speeches¹ against immigrants are the reason why the Iqbals leave their home in Whitechapel in London’s East End for Willesden Green. Alsana is shown shocked by the events and explains their move in these words: “Willessden was not as pretty as Queens Park, but it was a nice area. No denying it. Not like Whitechapel, where that madman a E-Knock someoneoranother gave a speech

¹ Referred to in chapter II, Powell gave anti-immigrant speeches in Walsall, Eastbourne and the well-known in Birmingham *the River of Blood* speech.

that forced them into the basement while kids broke the windows with their steel-capped boots. Rivers of blood silly-billy nonsense” (Smith 62-63).

Perhaps the most significant example of racism is when Samad is involved with the Parent-Teacher Association at his sons’ school as he is against the celebration of the Harvest Festival. Indeed, a dialogue takes place between Samad and the headmistress Mrs Owens:

‘The Harvest Festival is part of the school’s ongoing commitment to religious diversity, Mr Iqbal’... ‘And are there many pagans, Mrs Owens, at Manor school?’... If we removed all the pagan festivals from the Christian calendar’... I’m afraid, said Mrs Owens, doing her pleasant-but-firm smile and playing her punchline to the crowd, ‘removing Christian festivals from the face of the earth is a little beyond my jurisdiction... But this is my whole point. This Harvest Festival is not a Christian festival... (129-30)

In this passage Smith shows Samad scrutinizing the school’s policy on religious tolerance and equality while Mrs Owens is shown in her illogical support of the school’s religious traditions. Clearly, Smith draws attention to the issues of race and ethnicity in the educational system. At the same time, she satirizes attempts by officials to avoid any accusation of unfairness or racism as the chairwoman Miss Miniver reminds herself that she cannot be racist as she had read a pamphlet by the Rainbow coalition which is an alliance of different sections of society that are underrepresented (Bentley 56).

In general, *White Teeth* provides a positive representation of modern race relations; however, characters are sometimes victims of racism. Although the children were born in Britain they face racism because of the colour of their skin, and even a white man like Archie is victim of racism because of his wife. Since, Archie is married to a black woman Clara, he is victim of racism at work. Indeed, his boss asks him not to bring his wife for dinner; the reason is clear her skin colour, and gives him several free luncheon vouchers. Archie seems to not notice the racism behind this act ; and although his boss says he would spit “on that Enoch Powell”, he is racist as he does not accept Archie's wife due to her skin colour and thinks that Powell

nevertheless “does have a point...a saturation point, and people will begin to feel uncomfortable” then, he tells Archie that “there are some people around here, Archie and I don’t include myself here- who just feel your attitude a little strange” (72). Obviously, though Archie’s boss insists that he is not racist, he acknowledges that Enoch Powell may be right in his xenophobia. Such moments reveal the tension between the liberal rhetoric of acceptance and tolerance and the reality of actually accepting difference.

More importantly, *White Teeth* recounts the episode of the protests in Bradford on 11 January 1989 over Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* through Millat and his friends who are described boarding a train to Bradford to join the protests:

Millat knew nothing about the writer, nothing about the book ... But he knew other things. He knew that he, Millat, was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people’s job; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives; that he could be a dentist or a shop-keeper, but not a footballer or a film-maker; that he should go back to his own country; or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshiped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. In short, he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country, until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands. (233-34)

Even if it seems ridiculous for the reader that Millat takes part in the protest without having even read the book, this scene makes it clear that the experiences of racism have led to this decision. Samad and Alsana spot Millat on television taking part in the burning of Rushdie’s book, her “pixilated second-son beneath her picture-framed first” (237). On his return to the house, Millat discovers his mother burning many of his treasured possessions in the garden as a punishment. This explains also his later joining of an Islamic fundamentalist group KEVIN, as racism brings the young Muslims back to their religion as it is a way of expressing their identity although not all of them are really religious (Perfect 85; Hadjetian 96).

Besides, overt racism in *White Teeth* does not materialize in the form of “angry young men” but rather on a calm, elderly white man. Indeed, Irie, Millat and Magid taking part in the project of “helping the community” on the occasion of the celebration of Harvest Festival, they have to bring charitable donations of various foodstuffs to Mr J.P. Hamilton. Initially frightened by them, he invites them into the house where he and the children have tea. Hamilton starts showing overt racism towards the children, as he talks about his being in the Congo during the Second World War where he spotted “the nigger by the whiteness of his teeth” (171). Furthermore, when Millat tells him that his father was also in the war and that he also “played for England”, Hamilton rejects this out of hand, stating authoritatively that there “were certainly no wogs No Pakistanis... Quite out of the question” (172), going on to tell them to stop telling “fubs” or their teeth will rot. Then, Irie starts crying quietly, and the three “dun-coloured visitors” left the house before Hamilton can “see whether his advice meant anything to them; and Millat shouts “You stupid fucking old man” (173); the three find themselves “running to get to a green space, to get to one of the lungs of the city, some place where breathing was possible” (174).

This is clearly the most overt racism that one can identify in *White Teeth*, which is indeed confined to the house of the elderly Hamilton while it is “possible to breathe” in urban areas of London. Thus, what is suggested here is that overt racism in contemporary London is a cultural anachronism that is increasingly receding into small, domestic spaces as time goes, rather than something persistent; even Hamilton has “a voice that even the children sensed was from ...a different era” (169), reinforcing the fact that racism is located in a domestic environment . While the Iqbals and the Joneses seem ignorant of one’s traditions and beliefs, they are not racist towards each other, with the implication that racism may persist in small domestic pockets in Britain, but it is to have no place in the heritage of the new generation of British represented by Irie’s unborn-child (Perfect 88).

The Buddha of Suburbia describes scenes of direct racism experienced by non-white characters in seventies Britain. Unlike *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth*, racism in *The Buddha of Suburbia* takes several forms and can be found at all levels of society.

For instance, in the area where Karim's cousin Jamila lives is "full of neo-fascist groups" (56); and there are many accounts of physical attacks and intimidation, the shop owned by Jamila's parents, Anwar and Jeeta is attacked by racists. Later, her husband Changez is violently attacked by a group of National Front supporters who attempt to carve "NF" on his chest with razor blade (224). Another example of racism is directed towards karim by 'Hairy Back', the father of Helen, a white girl with whom Karim starts to go out with, "we don't want you blackies coming to the house", then he sets his Great Dane on him, a scene that culminates in the dog ejaculating on karim's back (Bentley 163).

This racism comes mostly from the working and lower-middle class environment where karim lives. There are other apparent racisms coming from the liberal middle and upper-class circles where karim becomes an actor though this form of racism seems more subtle. For example, karim's first performance in theatre is an adaptation of *The Jungle Book*, produced by the minor producer Shadwell. Karim, forced to play a cultural stereotype in his portrayal of *Mowgli*, is ironically "blacked up" because his skin is not quite dark enough, and he is even more humiliated as he is again forced by Shadwell to speak in a mock-Indian accent though he resists by "suddenly relapsing into Cockney at odd times"(158). Karim feels completely humiliated performing this role because Shadwell is indeed forcing him to return to a subordinate position somehow re-colonising him as if his new English identity is not appropriate. Clearly, he is placed in an un-authentic position as commented later by Jamila, "it was disgusting, the accent and the shit you had smeared over you. You were just pandering to prejudice" (157).

Shadwell's behaviour towards karim is an example of what Paul Gilroy has identified as 'cultural racism', that is a form of prejudice that does not focus directly on biology but attempts to re-establish a power relationship based on the perceived cultural practices engaged in by a particular ethnic group (Bentley 164).

The novel expounds in the issue of racism explaining its causes, but the novel puts the accent on the legacy of colonialism as the dismantling of the British Empire

has resulted in a sense of superiority felt by the white characters who developed this way of thinking following the years of decolonisation. Karim's father Haroon aptly explains that: "The whites will never promote us...they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (27). Shadwell too looking at Karim, seems to understand the ironies of this postcolonial situation, yet he endorses a discourse based on racial difference:

What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism have given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India Company could see you. What puzzlement there'd be. Everyone looks at you. I'm sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you're from Orpington. (141)

Shadwell's discourse obviously identifies the reasons behind the kind of racism Karim suffers from, which are the contradictions and prejudices caused by his hybrid identity. Karim of course, reacts to these forms of racism developing a desire for revenge that is against the old colonial power. For instance, in the scene in which he is in the car of 'Hairy Back' with his daughter Helen, Changez, Jeeta and Jamila, he thinks: "Had he known that 4 Pakis were resting their dark arses on his deep leather seats, ready to be driven by his daughter ... he wouldn't have been a contented man" (78).

Clearly, Karim is using the very language of racists seeking a kind of post-colonial revenge just like his father Haroon, saying at one point: "You couldn't let the ex-colonialists see you on your knees, for that was where they expected you to be. They were exhausted now, their Empire was gone; their day was done and it was our turn" (250). Jago Morrison has rightly commented that, "the comic effectiveness of scenes like this depends on our willingness to participate in a kind of ironic 'post-racism'" (qtd. in Bentley 165).

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* also reflects on the effects of racism through his protagonist, Karim. In fact, the latter considers the fate of Gene, the suicide ex-lover of Eleannor, the upper-class English woman with whom Karim has an affair:

Sweet Gene, her black lover. Killed himself because everyday, by a look, a remark, an attitude, the English told him- they hated him; they never let him forget they thought him a nigger, a slave, a lower being. And we pursued our English roses as we pursued England; by possessing these prizes, this kindness and beauty, we started defiantly into the eye of the Empire and all its self-regard ... we became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it. But to be truly free we had to free ourselves of all the bitterness and resentment, too. (227)

In this passage, Kureishi reveals the effects of racism and the desire for revenge which is itself a continuation of an exchange of exploitation. What Kureishi suggests as a remedy is to reject the discourse of superiority of the white colonial which causes this desire of revenge, in this way the legacy of colonialism can finally be removed. By the close of the novel, this idea of colonial superiority and also the desire for revenge seem to have faded away as suggested by the reflection made by Haroon to a magazine reporter that: “there has been no deepening in culture, no accumulation of wisdom, no increase in the way of the spirit.” (264), suggesting that English culture has suffered during the post-war era but at the same time this is told in a form of sympathy for England (Bentley 166).

Racism is prevalent in Phillips’s *The Final passage*. Indeed, Leila and Michael constantly face overt racism when looking for accommodation. For instance, they can everywhere read signs such as “No vacancies for coloureds”, “No blacks”. “No coloureds” (156). Surprisingly, this overt racism that characterized Britain in the 1950s is even accepted by those who are its victims. Indeed, when Leila reads these signs she “felt grateful for their honesty”, and Earl her mother’s friend reflects that, “some people just don’t like us and I guess we have to deal with it”(156). Clearly, this fatalism makes of Britain an unwelcoming place for those immigrants who came to Britain because they were invited as stated by Salman Rushdie.

Furthermore, Leila feels alienated by London, and it is a source of pathos. The London buses which Leila takes every day to visit her mother in hospital are used by the author as a symbol of London. For example, on her way to hospital – “a journey that she makes more than one hundred times before her mother dies” Leila passes a sign that reads “IF YOU WANT A NIGGER NEIGHBOUR VOTE

LABOUR”(130,122). It seems obvious that Leila’s every day experience of simply riding a London bus keeps reminding her that she is not welcomed by Londoners, even despised because of the colour of her skin (Perfect 18).

Accordingly, it is in this racist climate that characterized Britain in the 1950s, the 1960s, 1970S and the last decade of the 20th century that the characters of the four novels have to negotiate their cultural identity, and ultimately find their place in multicultural Britain.

3.3 Negotiating Cultural Identity

Writing novels about London is for the writer, in general, choosing a realist genre to express the experience of immigrants and their cultural transformation that often includes an existential remix of values new and old. This process can change immigrants into alienated citizens, but it can also bring unexpected opportunities, transforming immigrants into integrated and even successful citizens. The immigrant has to be able to handle the challenges and opportunities that await him or her in London.

Evidently, the Empire affected Britain’s identity and society, and immigration from former British colonies too affected the national self-image of a white British nation as the British self- understanding is undergoing a shift away from the traditional viewpoint to an awareness of changed circumstances. The second and third generation of immigrants have started the transformation of Britain and especially of London into the multicultural society it is nowadays (Hadjetian 16).

A central issue in the novel of multiculturalism is that of identity and its transformations. Indeed, the multicultural novels deal with the issue of identity as their protagonists have to face their postcolonial background and come to terms with their hybrid identity. A person’s cultural identity is formed by values and behaviour patterns of a certain community the person belongs to in daily life (Hadjetian 63).

The internal demographic composition of Britain is no doubt complex due to the existence of a series of national identities alongside ethnic minorities. Postcolonial

theories have attempted to bring answers to issues related to identity. Indeed, Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity has brought some answers to the issue of cultural identity. Hybridity refers to the way in which two or more cultures combine in colonial and postcolonial relationships, but rejecting the power relationship between the colonised and the colonizer. Therefore, children of 'mixed-race' marriages could be described as hybrid in a cultural sense. Besides, Bhabha identifies what he calls the 'third space' as cultural space that rejects the binary oppositional framework in which race and the idea of ethnic origin has often operated. The third space is in itself a new hybrid that contains two heritages that have contributed to its formation (Bentley 20).

White Teeth explores the lives of three families, the Joneses, the Iqbals, and the Chalfens, and primarily the tensions between first and second generation immigrants¹. Indeed, all the novels analysed here reveal generational conflicts. Samad Iqbal, although being an educated man is obliged when he comes to England to work as a waiter in a restaurant owned by his cousin Ardashir. Very quickly Samad experiences a feeling of displacement as he has lost his position in society, "I am not a waiter, I have been a student, a scientist, a soldier..." (58). For him at his arrival, he wanted to work in a security firm but "nobody wanted to hire Paki bouncers" (142).

Besides, it becomes difficult to Samad to keep up his traditions, he gets in conflict between Western and Eastern values. Even though he tries strongly to be a good Muslim, he is sometimes tempted by secular temptations. He fears that he cannot be a good father as he himself has been corrupted by the West, therefore, he is against the westernization of his twins Magid and Millat, fearing that they marry white women, as expressed in this passage: "it makes an immigrant laugh to hear the fears of the nationalist, scared of infection, penetration, miscegenation, when this is small fry, peanuts, compared to what the immigrant fears- dissolution, disappearance." He adds: "they have both lost their way, strayed so far from what I has intended for them. No doubt they will both marry white women called Sheila and put me in an early grave"(Smith 327). Then, to control the Western influence on his sons, he sends Magid to Bangladesh to have a Muslim education. But when Magid returns not as a Muslim,

¹ One generation born in the first half of the 20th century and one born in its latter half.

Samad has to learn that the “imaginary homeland” does not exist anymore or has never existed but in his mind (Hadjetian 65).

Samad is obviously caught in the past, “Because this is the other thing about immigrants (fugees, émigrés, travellers) they cannot escape their history anymore than you yourself can lose your shadow” (466). He even glorifies the memory of his great-grand father Mangal Pande who is said to have fired the first shot in the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Samad represents the struggle between the past and the present, making his integration difficult as a first generation immigrant, he also knows that he is not accepted in England:

These days it feels to me like you make a devil pact when you walk into this country. You hand over your passport at the check-in, you get stamped. You want to make a little money, get yourself started...but you mean to go back! Who would want to stay? Cold, wet, miserable; terrible food, dreadful newspapers- who would want to stay? In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Like you are an animal finally housebroken. Who would want to stay, But you have made a devil’s pact... it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognisable. You belong nowhere. (407)

In this passage, Samad expresses well his feelings of alienation in Britain as belonging nowhere, it is difficult for him to make his Bengali self-die and to overcome the dichotomies between West and East in his mind. He is as well “unsuitable to return” because he has been away from his home too long (Hadjetian 66).

In contrast, Samad’s wife Alsana, who is certainly not a submissive woman, does not want to return to Bangladesh, she is more realistic than her husband. However, she also fears that her sons become too much westernalized. For instance, she fears that the Chalfens take away Millat from her as “they are Englishfying him completely! They’re deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion”(345). For her, traditions and roots have another meaning for second generation immigrants, and that she has no choice and has to let them “live their hybrid lives” (235). She even tries to explain to Samad that everybody nowadays is hybrid and that “it’s still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe” (236).

Accordingly, Alsana unlike Samad manages to integrate into British society as it is shown in her hybrid clothing, wearing trainers with her Saris; furthermore, she is shown in the scene about the hurricane in Britain in 1987 as confident in the British institutions, she is indeed, “a great believer in the oracle that is the BBC” (220), and in other “favoured English institutions, amongst them Princess Ann...” (221); therefore, she is part of the cultural mosaic of Britain.

White Teeth shows how postcolonial history continues to affect people’s actions in the present, and the influence it still has in the formation of individual identities. This is well seen in the narrative of Magid and Millat, Samad’s twins, who are physically the same, but both are subject to very different cultural experiences. While Magid is sent by his father to Bangladesh to stop his contamination by Western ideas, Millat remains in Britain. However, ironically a cultural inversion happens as Magid returns from Bangladesh not as expected and hoped by Samad, reconnected with his Eastern roots, but as a reflected Englishman, a late product of British colonisation, imbued with Western ideas and ideologies of British imperialism as the educational system in Bangladesh was established by the British. Millat, on the contrary, is first influenced by American gangster movies and later by Islamic fundamentalism (Bentley 57).

Though the twins have the same cultural background, each of them developed his own identity, because as stated by Stuart Hall cultural identity is filled with “critical points of deep and significant difference” impacted by the “continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power and making identity not a fixed ‘essence’ but a ‘positioning’ (qtd. in Prince 71). Homi Bhabha views this ‘positioning’ referred to by Stuart Hall as the space we negotiate between ‘prescribed’ and ‘performative’ history in which identity gets constructed. Again, Hall explains that instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, we should think of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process. This explains why Samad’s ‘planned’ identity for his sons could not succeed (Prince 71).

Therefore, Samad's expectations are not fulfilled because Millat engages in Islamic fundamentalism that he cannot recognise as a legitimate Muslim-practice. This tellingly reveals the antagonism between first and second generation immigrants. While the first generation struggle to protect their roots remaining locked in their past, the second generation tend to reject their history and seek to find their place in Britain, but ultimately both of them face the difficulty of identifying themselves with a stable and clear identity because the weight of the past is still present for those generations of immigrants.

It is true that *White Teeth* celebrates multiculturalism, but it also explores how the coming together of personal history and colonial history can become a negative force. Towards the end of the novel, the encounter between Magid and Millat reveals the power of such force:

Because we often imagine that immigrants are constantly on the move ... weaving their way through Happy Multicultural Land. Well, good for them. But Magid and Millat couldn't manage it. They left that neutral room as they entered it: weighed down, burdened ... They seem to make no progress. The cynical might say they don't even move at all- that Magid and Millat are two of Zeno's headfuck arrows, occupying a space equal to Mangal Pande's, equal to Samad Iqbal's. The two brothers trapped in the temporal instant ... In fact, nothing move ... Because this other thing about immigrants ('fugees, émigrés, travellers): they cannot escape their history anymore than you yourself can lose your shadow. (465-6)

Smith shows how identities formed in the present are influenced by inherited discourses such as Empire and colonialism. Through Magid and Millat, Smith shows multiculturalism as a displacement of the legacies of colonialism that continue to impact on individuals in the present, and not certainly as a panacea for the problems of Britain's relationship with its own colonial past. Indeed, Magid and Millat seem trapped in conflicts because of the colonial histories. She makes use of Zeno's paradox¹ to represent the twins who though seemingly moving individually on their own trajectories they remain motionless because of their immovable antagonism towards each other (Bentley 60-62).

¹ It relates to the situation in which an arrow in flight is seen in motion over a period of time, and yet at any single instant of time it can be said to be motionless.

Here, Smith shows that multiculturalism, through Magid and Millat's positions represent an impasse. However, at the end of the novel through the figure of Irie's unborn child, there is still a hope for a forward-looking model of multiculturalism. Indeed, the father of the unborn child cannot be identified, Magid or Millat which represents an escape from the past, "Irie's child can never be mapped exactly unspoken of with any certainty. Some secrets are permanent. In a vision, Irie has seen a time. A time not far from now, when roots won't matter any more...she looks forward to it"(527). Clearly *White Teeth* celebrates 'fluidity' with its characters discovering that identity is not stable and can be changed at will as Magid moves from being a quiet, studious Asian boy to "Mr white trousered Englishman with his stiff upper-lip" (454).

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* tackles questions of belonging and how an immigrant can become a permanent or transient member of multicultural Britain in the 21st century. In fact, Monica Ali emphasises Nazneen cultural difference at the beginning of the novel using the technique of defamiliarization; this narrative technique identified by the Russian school of formalist criticism has been defined by Viktor Schklovsky¹ as: "the technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged"(qtd. in Bentley 87). Therefore, Ali uses this technique of making the everyday appear unfamiliar in order to convey Nazneen's sense of alienation in her new environment. For instance, after having received a worrying letter from her sister Hasina, she decides to lose herself in the City:

She looked up at a building as she passed. It was constructed almost entirely of glass...The entrance was like a glass fan, rotating slowly, sucking people in, wafting others out...The building was without end: Above, somewhere, it crushed the clouds. The next building and the one opposite were white stone palaces ...Men in dark suits trotted briskly up and down the steps in pairs and in threes. They barked to each other and nodded sombrely...Nazneen, hobbling and halting, began to be aware of herself. Without a coat, without a suit, without a white face, without a destination. (56)

¹ In an essay "Art as Technique" written in 1917.

Here, Ali uses defamiliarization to describe the newer buildings in Bishopsgate, an area geographically close to Brick Lane, as they appear to Nazneen as drawn from fantasy because she belongs to a different culture, but they would seem familiar to people living in Britain. Even the behaviour of people is described which makes Nazneen seem more different from the other people in terms of clothing and racial characteristics. In fact, the end of the passage accentuates the cultural distance of Nazneen from other people living in this area. This passage also emphasises her feeling of alienation as she has inherited from her mother the belief in fate , “As Nazneen grew she heard many times this story of How You Were Left To Your Fate...fighting against one’s Fate can weaken the blood. Sometimes, it can be fatal” (15). This reveals how Nazneen’s future is already mapped out which restricts her power to decide (Bentley 88-89.)

Her powerless position is revealed in her marriage with Chanu and her travel to Britain, but her eventual empowerment is hinted at when she discovers the ice skater on TV:

Nazneen held a pile of the last dirty dishes to take to the kitchen but the screen held her. A man in a very tight suit ...and a woman in a skirt that barely covered her bottom gripped each other as an invisible force ...The woman raised one leg and rested her boot (Nazneen saw the thin blade for the first time) on the other thigh, making a triangular flag of her legs, and spun around until she would surely fall but didn’t ...she stopped dead and flung her arms above her head with a look so triumphant that you knew she had conquered everything: her body, the laws of nature and the heart of the tight-suited man. (36)

Here again, Ali uses defamiliarization to describe the romantic image of a woman freed from all constraints and which becomes for Nazneen a symbol of freedom. It is worth noting that Monica Ali uses recurrently clothing as an indicator of cultural identity. For instance, Nazneen’s close friend Razia does not like her friend wear saris, but is often described wearing western clothes as in the scene in which she is described wearing a Union Jack sweatshirt, suggesting her acceptance of British culture. In another passage Ali makes the connection between clothing and identity when

Nazneen tries to imitate the dance of a jatra girl, she gets tangled up in one of her saris; this experience produces an epiphany:

Suddenly she was gripped by the idea that if she changed her clothes her entire life would change as well. If she wore a skirt and a jacket and a pair high heels then what else would she do but walk around the glass palaces of Bishopsgate ... And if she had a tiny tiny skirt with knickers to match and a tight bright top then she would –how could she not? – skated through life with a sparkling smile and a handsome man who took her hand and made her spin, spin, spin.

For a glorious moment it was clear that clothes, not fate, made her life. (277-78)

It becomes clear for Nazneen that one could control his identity by simply having control over what he wears. Her empowerment is confirmed at the end of the novel as Nazneen is shown skating in a sari representing a hybrid confluence of the two cultures that have made up her identity, and Razia's assertion that, "This is England ... You can do whatever you like" (492), is indeed a comment on the dress of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi dress and a Western footwear, and the confirmation of the empowerment and cultural freedom gained by Nazneen (Bentley 90).

In the final chapter of the novel, Nazneen realizes her dream of ice-skating and speaks of her recent past as a time "before I knew what I could do" (407) , which reveals her final empowerment becoming financially independent, helping through her work of sewing her husband to repay the large loans taken from the old Mrs Islam. Indeed, Nazneen finds her identity, with her solid grasp of English language suggesting her move towards independence and liberation in multicultural London as she realizes, unlike her husband Chanu, that London may offer economic opportunity for those wanting to grasp it (Perfect 118).

But more significantly, Nazneen's decision to stay in England is indeed motivated by the last letter she received from her sister Hasina: "Sister I sitting in my eclectic light room write to you and I asking Him to put light in my heart so I see more clear the ways" (364). In fact, the letter serves in the text as a device to finally persuade Nazneen to remain in London, one can read the narrator comment: "The plane left tomorrow and she would not be on it" (365).

All in all, it is the very inconclusiveness of Hasina's narrative that pushes Nazneen to conclude her own because Monica Ali clearly juxtaposes these two narratives, one that recounts through Hasina's letters a life of misery, suffering and subjugation, and the other one of gradual emancipation. Ultimately, Nazneen is determined not to be simply "left to her fate". She is able to understand the society in which she lives, she does not lose her identity but rather discovers it (Perfect 124).

On the contrary, Chanu is presented as disillusioned with British society after years spent in England. At the beginning of the novel he views Britain as a land of humanism, fairness and opportunity. He undertakes an Open University degree as his degree from Dhaka University is not valued in Britain. He also praises the British social security system that will not allow people to starve when they are unemployed. However, he realises after years that he will not have any promotion. His disillusionment even increases when he becomes a taxi driver.

This clearly shows the legacy of colonialism on individuals in the present. Once Chanu celebrates English culture as an appropriate colonial subject, then later he reversed colonisation by taking money from the nation that had exploited his people in the days of Empire, he informs his family of his plans to go 'home': "You see, when the English went to our country, they did not go to stay. They went to make money, and the money they made, they took it all out of the country. They never left home. Mentally. Just taking money out. And that is what I am doing now. What else can you do?" (214).

He finally decides to return to Bangladesh, a reversal of his plans while Nazneen decides to stay in Britain, choosing to raise her children whose cultural hybridity is, variously, both a wonder and an anxiety to her. Indeed, Chanu's daughters reject Bangladeshi culture to the great disapproval of their father who does not accept their westernization; but the novel rejects Chanu's criticisms of the effects of British culture on his daughters. For instance, at Dr Azad's house, Chanu is firmly put on his place by Azad's wife who shows proudly her position as a Westernised Muslim woman: "Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children

will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes!" (113). This is revealing of cultural difference in terms of gender, as Chanu resists the Westernization of his daughters, Mrs Azad celebrates the freedom gained by her daughter and in general the empowerment of women in contemporary Western society because they accept British culture (Bentley 91-92).

On the other hand, Karim, the young Bangladeshi who provides work to Nazneen as a seamstress and with whom Nazneen has an affair, is just caught up in the complexities of postcolonial identity. In fact, when speaking Bengali, Nazneen notices that Karim stutters while he speaks normally English. This shows clearly his difficulty coming to terms with one of the influences on his cultural identity. Karim is the perfect example of the second generation immigrant who although has been brought up in Britain, is still struggling with his Bangladeshi heritage and the British culture, as it is revealed with his involvement in underground local politics, joining the Bengal Tigers, a Muslim group to resist the leaflet war initiated against them by the Lion Hearts, a right-wing gang in Tower Hamlets (Bentley 92).

The performativity of cultural identities is emphasised in the end of the novel when Nazneen realizes that she and Karim have "made each other up"; that to him she is "the real thing" simply because she represents "an idea of home. An idea of himself that he found in her" (380), thus questioning the construction and representation of otherness (Perfect 122).

More importantly, Monica Ali focuses on the impact of roots and history on identity formation. She mentions that among the immigrants, there is a tendency of thinking to go back home as commented by Dr. Azad, who is Chanu's friend that immigrants "don't ever really leave home ... These migrants will never save enough money to go back... Every year they think, just one year..." (24), referring to this as "Going Home Syndrome". So, Ali makes it clear that if first generation Bangladeshi immigrants failed to integrate, this is because they had in mind to go back home, even

Chanu the well-educated man resorted to return to his homeland, realizing that “we have not been able to make our way. We have tried...” (320).

Kureishi explores cultural identity through geographical spaces. Indeed, the novel moves from suburbia to the sophisticated urban spaces of London. The historical legacies of colonialism and diaspora have also resulted in new cultural spaces in Britain, which correspond in many ways to Stuart Hall’s concept of ‘new ethnicities’. Indeed, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Hanif Kureishi explores the themes of cultural space with the issue of identity (Bentley 160).

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Hanif Kureishi deals differently and unequivocally with the question of identity. Indeed, the novel deals with the question of Englishness in the late 20th century alongside the meaning of Indianness. The main protagonist, Karim who introduces himself at the very beginning of the novel as “an Englishman born and bred, almost but a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from old histories” (3). Karim is indeed a hybrid figure, his father is an Indian who came to Britain in the 1950s and his mother is a White English, this explains his perception of himself as a ‘new breed’.

The narrator refers to this “odd mixture of continents and blood” introducing the reader to the problems he is facing with his ethnic identity. Karim mentions that perhaps the cause for his boredom is living in the suburbs. He struggles to make sense of his life. For him moving into London clearly represents a movement from the margins to the centre. As is invoked in the text, this is like re-possessing the Empire, “So this was London at last, and nothing gave me more pleasure than strolling around my new possession all day” (126). This is clearly reminiscent of Stuart Hall’s concept of new ethnicities in which old racial categories, fixing people within monolithic groups such as black and white are no longer appropriate.

Theoretical standpoints from the work of Homi Bhabha are used to reveal Karim as a hybrid character who challenges Cartesian notions of identity. Therefore, Karim’s hybridity makes him different from the others despite being part of suburban England lower middle-class culture. He is, therefore, both an insider and outsider, and

his experiences are to a large extent determined by his cultural in-betweenness (Bentley163). The novel ends as Karim is thinking “about the past and what I’d been through as I’d struggled to locate myself and learn what the heart is” (283-84). Indeed, Karim’s epiphany at the banquet celebrating his contract with the soap opera producers reveals to him that building a more stable sense of self might be beneficial in the pursuit of personal happiness (Glabazña 76).

On the other hand, Karim’s attitude towards his father reveals his ambivalence towards his Eastern part background. Indeed, sometimes he is shown as respecting his father who throws off his old suburban life and chooses a new spiritual life with Eva, the white woman with whom he has an affair. But other times Karim when referring to his father as ‘God’ because he adopts the persona of an Eastern mystic, he is actually mocking him criticising therefore the Indian culture.

Ultimately, acting is for Karim a key to find out his whole self as he realizes that “If I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it” (213). And at the funeral of his uncle Anwar, Karim makes a surprising emotional discovery, “I did feel, looking at these strange creatures now- the Indians- that in some way these were my people and that I’d spent my life denying or avoiding that fact” (212). Apparently, Karim comes to the conclusion that his sense of incompleteness, the feeling “as if half of me were missing”, is due to the denial of his Indianness. Clearly, karim is able to reconcile himself with his own history, accepting this hybrid identity.

The Buddha of Suburbia makes clear the differences between first and second generation immigrants through the opposition between Karim and his father Haroon, who in spite of having lived in England for more than twenty years, did not know his way around the place as becomes evident in the following passage: “Dad had been in Britain since 1950 –over twenty years- and for ...Yet still he stumbled around the place like an Indian just off the boat ...” (7). Moreover, when Haroon and Anwar arrived in England, they are shocked by the crude reality of everyday life in post-war London, riddled by poverty and hunger, while they have idealized the Great British

Empire. Haroon's feeling of displacement is associated to his going down the social ladder as he becomes in England a black immigrant as "people called you Sunny Jim". Clearly, Haroon who initially comes to study law never fulfils this ambition because of the shock of seeing Britain for real. Haroon realizes that the British think wrongly that "they still have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (27), recalling Rushdie's¹ comment about England that the immigrants' children were growing up "isn't the England of fair play, tolerance, decency and equality- may be that place never existed any way except in fairy tales" (qtd. in Glabazña 67).

Furthermore, Karim's father Haroon is the suburban Buddha referred to in the title. His ability allows him to use the image of the exotic mystic and to exploit cultural stereotypes for his own advantage. He, therefore, is able to take money of the suburban, white middle class, using in this way cultural identities to turn the exploitation back on the colonial centre. Karim's father has indeed a fluid cultural identity as he is shown as a "lapsed Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" while continuing his day job as a suited civil servant. Haroon's spiritual transformation permits him to escape the pressures placed on him by Western consumer capitalism, and ultimately allows him to reach a level of authenticity through embracing an Eastern religion (Bentley 165).

In addition, Hanif Kureishi explores the cultural practices in Indian culture through the character of Karim's uncle Anwar. The latter is a more traditional Muslim than Haroon with whom he came to England; however, he experienced an immigrant mid-life crisis just as do Samad Iqbal in *White Teeth*. Anwar tries to maintain his patriarchal power over his family, and particularly with his rebellious daughter Jamila. He goes on a hunger strike to make her marry the man he has chosen to be her husband, attempting therefore to impose Indian traditions on the second generation of immigrants who have been brought up in England. Haroon explains this tendency first generation immigrants have to return to their traditions: "we old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India" (74). However, Anwar's expectations are disappointed as ironically Changez, the husband who came

¹ *Imaginary Homelands* (1991).

from India, is physically unable to run the shop. As Bart Moore-Gilbert¹ argues: “At the root of Kureishi’s objections to Anwar’s ‘nativism’ is its reliance on fixed and essentialist conceptions of identity which replicate precisely the assumptions that the author most deplors in the cultural nationalism of the host culture” (qtd. in Bentley 167).

Moreover, Karim makes a connection between Anwar’s stand as a devote Muslim and his father’s discovery of Eastern philosophy stating: “perhaps it was the immigrant condition living itself out through them. For years they were both happy to live like Englishmen. Now, as they aged and seemed settled here, Anwar and Dad appeared to returning internally to India or at least to be resisting the English here...” (64). This is the whole plight of the first generation immigrants who cannot escape their ambiguous past although time and place have changed.

Briefly, the novels studied here show that second generation immigrants form their identities differently to the first generation, as they are more able to negotiate ways of being British via their heritage and across various boundaries including those of class, gender and culture, and finally taking advantage of the changing circumstances of life in Britain. In this final chapter, I have shown the literary diversity of contemporary Britain and the contribution it has brought to British literature adding new dimensions of meaning and imagination. But ultimately these works of coloured British writers may serve a social purpose informing the British people about first and second generations of the newcomers who are habitually regarded as ‘strangers’ and ‘different’.

The merit of fiction of multiculturalism is therefore to show that the ‘Other’ is actually a rather cultural construction which needs a complete reworking. This then is the message conveyed by coloured British literature that we all share a common humanity that unites us. Coloured British writers will certainly continue to address issues pertaining to cultural identity, racism and the legacies of postcolonialism; in addition to political and cultural events such as the ‘War on Terror’. Besides, issues

¹ See *Hanif Kureishi* (2001).

raised by postcolonialism will continue to provide material for investigations in the encounters between cultures. Therefore, multiculturalism will obviously remain a source of inspiration for British writers.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued that multiculturalism is related to culture, thus building any theory of multiculturalism means above all theorizing culture, and providing ultimately a coherent response to cultural diversity. Therefore, I have critically considered and discussed the major strands of thought that sought to provide an understanding of the good life, namely moral monism and culturalism. While monism failed to see that human nature is culturally reconstituted, the culturalists could see that human beings are culturally embedded but have failed to understand culture's internal diversity. This has led contemporary liberals to provide a better understanding of culture and its role in human life; amongst them Kymlicka who has made a systematic case for cultural diversity establishing a direct link between multiculturalism and liberal democracy, and explaining that autonomy is a necessary condition of the good life. However, contemporary liberal thinkers while grounding their theory of cultural diversity on liberal principles did mistakenly divide all ways of life into liberal and non liberal. Thus, after balancing the different responses to cultural diversity I have shown the limits of liberalism, and I have endorsed the approach to cultural diversity provided by the prominent political philosopher, Bhikhu Parekh who drawing on the works of liberal and pluralist thinkers has explained that though societies have different conceptions of the good life, human beings do share some common practices and values which are universally binding, and he has proposed cross- cultural dialogue between cultures to reach universal principles based on liberal as well as non-liberal values.

Many scholars have tried to define culture from different perspectives, but I have retained the all-encompassing definition offered by Parekh for its usefulness, "it is a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives" (2006:143). Though Raymond Williams could offer a more theoretical analysis of culture in which

he showed the variations of meaning of the term, explaining that any adequate theory of culture must include the three definitions: the ideal, the documentary and the social definition of culture. Williams demonstrated unequivocally the nature of culture, which is dynamic, not static and creating meanings as cultures carry interpretations of the world we inhabit. I have, then, argued that human beings are shaped by their culture and could take a critical view of it but the question of evaluating and respecting cultures has been divisive; while the idea of judging a culture in its own terms is rejected, cultural relativism rejects ethnocentric judgments because all cultures are equally valid patterns of life. Hence, Parekh made the point that all cultures are multiculturally constituted, seeing cultures more than just options, complementing and correcting each other, making therefore a case for cultural diversity. The question that cultures are valuable and deserve equal respect also divided scholars; but Parekh has reached the conclusion that all cultures have worth and deserve basic respect, but they are not equally worthy and do not merit equal respect as some are more egalitarian than others.

I have explained that from a historical perspective, the idea of multiculturalism emerged distinctly in Western Europe with the rise of nationalism and as a reaction against the culturally homogenising nation-states. Clearly, nationalism as an ideology based upon the principle of superiority of the Western culture was destructive of any multiculturalism imposing assimilation and subordination in Europe during the 18th and 19th century. Thus, multiculturalism is part of a larger human rights revolution reacting against racialist ideologies that propounded the superiority of some people and cultures conceived by the West. However, after the Second World War the United Nations replaced these racialist ideologies with a new ideology of equality of races and people which gave rise to a series of political movements starting with the struggle for decolonisation and the struggle against racial segregation in the USA to the struggle for multiculturalism and minority rights which has emerged from the late 1960s in modern societies as ethnic minorities and immigrants rejected assimilationist views of the wider society.

I have also shown that multiculturalism as a term is definitely very controversial; it has been defined in different ways by political theorists and academics depending on its usage. So, because of the profusion of literature on multiculturalism, it is very difficult to retain a single definition; but Stuart Hall has rightly stated that the term has negative meanings as it is often equated with an essentialized notion of ethnicity and should be deconstructed. He uses the term adjectivally preferring to talk about the multicultural question to circumvent the negative meanings of the term, drawing a clear distinction between an adjectival 'multicultural' and a substantive 'multiculturalism'. I have thus retained 'the interactive, ideological and pluralist definition' provided by Parekh that all cultures can benefit from dialogue with others, and through this dialogue the hegemony of the dominant culture is challenged. Multiculturalism is then basically a celebration and philosophical justification of multicultural society.

Furthermore, I have extensively defined multicultural Britain focusing on the debates about immigration and the subsequent issues of race, racism, belonging and the ambitious project of re-designing Britishness in an age of diversity. I have clearly assumed that any conception of a multicultural Britain should take into account all the debates surrounding immigration, race and national identity. Clearly, Britain has responded since the 1960s to the challenge of diversity that resulted from post-colonial immigration by adopting multiculturalism and rejecting assimilationist views. The ensuing immigration debate has been racialised by the New Right marking, therefore, the end of the post-war consensus which established a mixed economy, full employment and the welfare state; and did definitely have an impact on immigration and multicultural issues as it made of Britain a prosperous nation. The open door policy adopted by Britain from 1948 to 1962 transformed Britain into a multi-racial society where race and colour were meaningless. However, the 1958 race riots combined with the anti-immigration campaign held by Enoch Powell and ultimately the New Right ideology of the Thatcherite era was to put an end to the Consensus era and reveal difficult race relations. The New Right adopted a citizenship discourse which exploited people's anxieties about minority immigrants, and which was directed

against the post-war era because social rights for them would undermine citizenship, revealing the contradictions embedded in this discourse which combines libertarian individualism and republican nation-ism. Thatcher denied the multi-cultural and multi-racial characteristics of British society through her concept of ‘one nation’ and ‘active citizens’ discourse based on building national identity without imperial ties in a strong nation. And while the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act and the subsequent acts imposed restrictions on immigration, the 1981 Nationality Act marked definitely the abandonment of Britain’s imperial ties with Commonwealth countries. The New Right’s claim that immigration control fostered good race relations was contradictory as the successive enactment of immigration acts revealed Britain’s stance towards immigrants while claiming equal treatment of minorities through British race relations polity.

Indeed, contemporary politics of race and racism are deeply linked to multiculturalism as a social practice which responded to the fact of immigration. I have demonstrated how and why multiculturalism is used in constructing and even inventing contemporary race discourse. Britain has always governed the minorities in terms of ‘race relations’ since the 1960s, taking a series of anti-discrimination measures known as Race Relations Acts to manage the crises in which race was presented as a problem in the context of social and economic decline in order to conceal the real economic crisis. Clearly, the state has to play a major role in the politics of race as the very idea of race was definitely the result of state practices. In Britain the development of racial ideology started with the racialization of public discourse and the racialization of the vocabulary. I have in this respect endorsed Stuart Hall’s analysis that race is a social and political construct which has real social effects as racialized difference has legitimised practices of racism and materialized in the discourses of racism. However, as a social practice, I have suggested that multiculturalism serves at describing the contemporary politics of race and racism and reflect better the influence of anti-racism on race discourse since it recognises the fact of social and cultural diversity. In this perspective, Stuart Hall has been inclined to view ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ in their social and cultural contexts making a clear

distinction between and adjectival 'multicultural' and a substantive 'multiculturalism'; used adjectivally multiculturalism refers to a social practice to manage the problems of diversity. I have also explained that the idea of race was central in shaping the modern European nation-state founded on nationalism as the latter has played a role in racist practices and its exclusion of racialized others from the boundaries of the nation-state, like in Britain immigration control was based on ideas of racialized nationalism. However, the state with its endorsement of cultural diversity has adopted a new approach to the politics of race. The New Labour government passed Race Relations legislation aimed at fighting discrimination. Of course the British state attitude towards minorities has changed with the recognition of minorities' rights, and the state's race discourses of the 20th century which considered minorities as outsiders were replaced by discourses that recognise cultural diversity and adopt a new configuration of identity and belonging though the politics of nationalism continue to shape the state's politics of race. I have then suggested that multiculturalism encourages a rethinking of a new nationalist ideology which would include instead of excluding racialized others within existing modes of nationalist belonging.

Placing stress on the importance of national identity in the forging of a multiculturally diverse society, I have focused on the future place of Britishness in 21st century multicultural Britain which has to face the challenges of immigration, devolution, globalization and the Brexit. Some have questioned the utility of Britishness as a political identity for the four nations of Britain calling even for the break-up of the UK into its component parts; hence New Labour's project of reinforcing Britishness. I have argued that devolution would mean exclusion for ethnic minorities who could not identify as Scottish or Welsh and would undermine their position in a multinational Britain. However, New Labour's asymmetrical devolution which provided a different level of self-government to national minorities did succeed thanks to the strategy of multi-level governance to reinforce Britishness as a central value allowing ethnic minorities to embrace Britishness as well as their own identity in a devolved Britain. Brown's project to revive Britishness did stress the multicultural and multinational basis of the UK; it was meant to reconstruct the British state on the

basis of key values and qualities that unite all the peoples of the union and resolve the English question caused by the asymmetrical union. Britishness in New Labour's discourse is, therefore, a much inclusive identity which would integrate an increasingly diverse society; it is more attractive for ethnic minorities who could identify with Britishness because of its republican connotation. I have, finally, suggested the possibility to re-design a concept of Britishness for 21st century multicultural Britain because Britishness as a collective identity is constantly being reshaped, as explained by Stuart Hall, identity is always in the process of making and transformation. Thus, Britishness is compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism because it is a fluid identity always in the making, and the best hope for the survival of Britishness is in the promotion of national and ethnic identities as complementary identities in a multinational, multicultural and infinitely diverse Britain of today.

Besides, multiculturalism has been approached as a prescriptive term which refers to the policies adopted by the state to manage cultural diversity. I have focused on the recognition of minorities' cultural rights and the policies adopted especially by New Labour's governments to promote integration and equality. While Thatcher's one nation discourse ignored and rejected the minority groups' quest for cultural survival imposing homogeneity over diversity and erasing difference, multiculturalists alongside New Labour recognised minorities' rights to their cultures which constitutes the basis of the 'politics of recognition'. Therefore, the politics of difference would lead to accommodating minorities on the grounds of equal respect, equal treatment, and equal opportunity. I have tried to state clearly the importance of recognising cultural rights in a multiethnic society. However, many liberals like Brian Barry oppose to grant cultural rights to minority groups, privileging individual equality over cultural rights because for him granting special rights to minority groups would threaten the principle of egalitarian impartiality; while multiculturalists like Bhikhu Parekh consider cultural rights as important in achieving equality because equal treatment can be achieved only by considering all cultures' differences, and that communities are better able to defend the rights of their members. However, I have shown when discussing the Rushdie controversy and its handling by Parekh and Barry

that it is difficult to strike a balance between individual rights and group rights. I have come to the conclusion that in a multicultural society as Britain one cannot simply offend a religious group who has the right to dignity and equal respect on the basis of one's individual right to freedom of expression.

I have also considered the different citizenship discourses developed in post-war Britain revealing the British state's acknowledgement of the politics of recognition as an important path towards a full embrace of multiculturalism. While in the Consensus era Britain maintained the tradition of *Civis Britannicus Sum* as ethnic minorities benefited from national solidarity of the welfare state, the New Right era saw the introduction of the concept of one nation which meant cultural homogeneity reducing, therefore, significantly social rights of minorities. I have, then, compared the Crick Report on citizenship education and the Parekh Report, considering their significance for the politics of difference. I have, unambiguously, concluded that the Crick Report's conception of citizenship has failed to adequately take account of cultural difference for the sake of unity as it embodies the very notion of 'universalism'; in contrast, the Parekh Report on the future of multi-ethnic Britain offers a model of multi-ethnic citizenship; questioning the concept of Britishness as representing a form of consensus that did not take account of cultural differences. The Parekh Report clearly made a significant advance in terms of promoting theoretically the politics of difference striking a right balance between difference and universality, and highlighting the interdependence of difference and unity. Drawing on Parekh and Charles Taylor's thought I have suggested that the recognition of difference is compatible with a unifying model of political community and that multiculturalism is not incompatible with liberal universalism, on the contrary achieving justice is best secured through recognising cultural difference while adopting universal norms of inclusion. Hence, the politics of recognition of difference should be recognised and accommodated.

The question of accommodating cultural minorities is essential in a multicultural society in order to achieve equality across difference, as it has been demonstrated by multiculturalists. I have explained that the accommodation of

minority practices is grounded in the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity because as explained by Parekh cultural differences may affect significantly opportunities available to people. I have also explained that in a multiculturally diverse society, equality entails either identical treatment or differential treatment as sometimes to secure equal treatment between different cultural groups a differential treatment is required if these different treatments represent different ways of realising the same right. I have, then, come to the conclusion that in a multicultural society accommodating minorities rests on the principle of equality as well as other reasonable considerations.

I have argued that Britain has adopted multicultural policies to manage cultural diversity, tackle discrimination and reduce inequalities; still it has been identified only as 'modest' adopter of multiculturalist policies since it has been mainly interested in integrating ethnic minorities only as subordinate part of the nation. I have also observed that Britain has had the tendency to rely on government reports to implement policies. While the Thatcher government was reluctant to introduce multicultural measures despite the recommendations of the Scarman Report into the riots in Brixton in the 1980s, New Labour tended to distance itself from the discourses of both the Consensus and the New Right eras, advocating the 'Third Way' which emphasised community and solidarity to build a cohesive 'one nation' in which individuals realise themselves. Clearly, New Labour celebrated the diversity of Britain and supported a policy based on respecting individual autonomy and rejecting an assimilationist policy which tends to deprive individuals of free choice. It also rejected a state-supported multicultural policy which could deprive individual members of free choice by unfairly restricting the range of cultural options available to them. However, the outbreak of the 2001 riots widely blamed on multiculturalism led to the beginning of a new era in Britain questioning multiculturalism and responding to the challenges posed by the riots. I have shown that the reports into the disorders informed the evolution of government policies as a response to the riots as they revealed their causes identifying mainly de-industrialization of the northern cities as the main cause. Clearly, all the recommendations found in different inquiries and strategies of the

British government reveal a focus on integration as a model that would replace 'difference policies'. New Labour clearly have adopted in the light of all these strategies a new integration strategy combining the concept of integration with the concept of active citizenship distancing itself from discourses of assimilation and multiculturalism. First introduced as a foundational concept in multicultural Britain by Roy Jenkins in his speech to the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants in 1966, the concept of integration was restated and renewed by the Commission for Racial Equality in its attempt to re-evaluate the policy of multiculturalism. Jenkins' definition of integration of ethnic minorities has definitely shaped concept of social and community cohesion that clearly influenced multicultural policies in Britain.

I have also focused on the thesis of self-segregation and the danger of fracturing British society advanced by critics of multicultural policies. Even if their findings were mainly the fracturing of local communities as Asians and whites were now leading what the Cattle Report called 'parallel lives' with little communal dialogue and much inter-communal hostility, I have shown that the reports did not mention any link between multicultural policies and the civil disturbances, but have rather highlighted that the real problem is incomplete multiculturalism, demanding more multiculturalism and recommending more interaction between communities to rectify patterns of residential and educational segregation caused by racism and combined with discrimination in housing ; it was more importantly the product of the New Right's two-nation approach that created housing disadvantages for ethnic minorities and which led to frequent inner city riots in the 1980s. I have shown that the thesis of segregation was the result of racialized discourses of community that failed to understand cultural differences, and the result of socio-geographical concentration of minorities by the local authorities, not self-segregation. I have suggested that segregation was used in the community cohesion discourse and presented as an impediment to the cohesive communities.

This explains the embrace of ideas of community cohesion, as recommended by the Cattle Report to manage the incorporation of ethnic minorities who have failed to integrate. Therefore, Britain used the concept of community in adopting policies

directed towards racialized communities as the state has always used community as an apparatus of its racial politics. I have argued that community as embraced by New Labour was not a means for distancing New Labour from its own past or from Thatcherite rule but rather as a means for the reconfiguration of the society and the relationship between the state and its citizens. It proved inadequate as a policy because it could not tackle the question of class inequalities between ethnic minorities and the white-working class. The government policies did not tackle socio-economic inequalities; there were instead a ‘culturalization’ of policies of community cohesion meaning that the cultures of ethnic minorities were blamed for the lack of community cohesion.

Thus, I have suggested that the 2001 riots provided New Labour government with social pretext for developing its new communitarian approach to race politics. The reports into the riots attributed the lack of social order to a failure and decline of community; echoing Goodhart’s social psychological argument that growing immigration and multiculturalism were undermining the common culture, trust and solidarity. Goodhart wrongly assumed that there is a mechanical, deterministic relationship between social solidarity and ethnic diversity. I have, thus, argued that New Labour’s community discourse has put responsibility upon minority groups implying that certain types of cultural difference are incompatible with the idea of community and singled out minority groups as problematic. So, the governmental logic of community cohesion does not rely on the communitarian ideas as set out by Etzioni, that is a model of incorporative social interaction, but instead it undermines communal association through behavioural requirements set out by the state. The British state targeted mainly minorities to respond to the 2001 riots as both Asian communities and the white working class have been represented in community cohesion discourse as internally divided. But unlike old previous discourses of race and immigration, the new discourse of community cohesion has tended to regard the white working class as a specific cultural ‘ethnic community’ with legitimate needs. In short, New Labour’s communitarian discourse is not unflawed as it has propelled myths of Asian separatism and a white working class ethnicity, building policies on

these grounds. So the British state turn to community under New Labour included existing minorities and whites into a single multicultural framework. Ultimately, I advocated that Britain has entered into a phase of reflexive multiculturalism in which the term 'multiculturalism' has been replaced while some of the strategies associated with multiculturalism continue to influence policy.

I have carefully questioned the assumption that multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a policy is in crisis. I have discussed the arguments condemning multiculturalism, and the debates taking place across Europe and particularly in Britain announcing its alleged failure and even its 'death'. I have thus considered the post-multiculturalist approach to diversity offered by some politicians and public intellectuals, and the eventual replacement of multiculturalism by a new narrative, 'interculturalism'. I have tried to demonstrate that multiculturalism remains an appropriate response to the new challenge of super-diversity even if this heated debate will certainly continue in the future. A narrative of multicultural crisis has been deployed to present multiculturalism as a 'failed experiment', but I have shown the idea that multiculturalism has died is an expedient one, it is constantly renewed to justify the return to the older certainties. I have also demonstrated that the backlash discourse taking place in Western democracies and specifically in Britain was rather a political rhetoric that was meant to conceal the real motivations and that the retreat of multiculturalism was a mere caricature. Even if multiculturalism was presented by New Labour as outdated, this was rather a clever rhetorical manoeuvre as there were no fundamental changes in the racial politics of the British state. The state was still pursuing a politics of multiculturalism and its rhetorical rejection of multiculturalism was simply the continuation of multicultural politics by another name. I have also demonstrated that both as a political philosophy or a policy, multiculturalism has been portrayed wrongly by its critics and opponents. The charge that multiculturalism as a single ideology encourages differentness and fosters separateness as stated in the Cattle Report in 2001 and its image of 'parallel lives' provided much of the discourse about multiculturalism fostering separateness. The backlash discourse against multiculturalism resulted clearly in dropping the word multiculturalism from different

policy strategies but evidence show that there was not a significant public opinion turn against multicultural policies in Britain.

In Britain the backlash against multiculturalism was the consequence of the riots in 2001, an indirect consequence of the 'War on Terror' and the London bombings of 7 July 2005 which clearly subjected British Muslims to state scrutiny. Besides, the backlash discourse aimed at presenting multiculturalism as a threat to national identity and presented a majority culture under threat from Muslim minorities. In this respect, Blair's multicultural response to the London bombings meant the adoption of legislative measures to promote the interests of national security, but this legislation has institutionalised Islamophobia as it has the potential to construct all Muslims as an enemy to the nation. I have suggested that the British Muslims have to adopt a British form of Islam; then Islam would be contained within the symbolic borders of the nation; and ultimately the state would be able to construct an image of multiculturalism in which Islam is seen not as an obstacle but a model. When examining Cameron's controversial speech on radicalisation and Islamist extremism in 2011, I have concluded that this speech which linked between radicalisation and multiculturalism marked a step change in state racism, shifting the anger of the population from government's policies which were destroying jobs and creating insecurity to innocent scapegoats.

I have also dismissed all the attacks against multiculturalism as a political theory and a policy arguing that the anti-multiculturalists mistakenly thought that multiculturalist ideas are illiberal while multiculturalism on the contrary embraces liberal democratic values as its rise has been part and parcel of a larger human rights revolution. The post-multiculturalists though recognised the fact that multiculturalism is based on liberal democratic ideals, attacked theories of multiculturalism considering them defective and responsible for the failure of multiculturalism as a policy. Again, I have argued that the theories of multiculturalism have been mainly misinterpreted; in fact, the charge that multiculturalism involves essentialising the identities and practices of minority groups has to be discarded because multiculturalists have initially attacked essentialist conceptions of national identity and culture. The problem of

essentialism lies, therefore, in the public discourse of multiculturalism and definitely not in philosophical theories not even official policies of multiculturalism.

I have unambiguously argued that multiculturalism is still attractive because while attacking multiculturalism the state was still deploying multiculturalist policies. However, in the last decades a new concept was introduced in the philosophical and public debates to challenge the very concept of multiculturalism and was deployed as a response to the so-called failure of multiculturalism. I have shown that the Council of Europe played a major role in the advocacy of interculturalism as an alternative to multiculturalism; it has been presented as a new approach to diversity which focuses on integration and social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and interaction. I have examined the possibility that interculturalism represents an alternative to multiculturalism focusing on the positive qualities of interculturalism, but while doing so I have ultimately brought back the debate into the utility of multiculturalism. I have demonstrated that when interculturalists contrast interculturalism with multiculturalism the criteria used are not convincing because the positive qualities recognised to interculturalism such as encouraging communication and dialogue, promoting unity and challenging illiberality are foundational in multiculturalism. But more importantly, multiculturalism surpasses interculturalism as a political approach that recognises the fact that individual and groups need to be provided for in the distribution of power as well as reflected in an ethical conception of citizenship. One can conclude that until interculturalism as a political discourse is able to offer an original perspective, it cannot intellectually at least, eclipse multiculturalism. I have also demonstrated that while some have defended an innovative and realistic interculturalism against a discredited multiculturalism, there is little intellectual substance underlying this trend because defenders of interculturalism such as Ted Cantle and the Council of Europe did not explain the differences between intercultural policies and multiculturalist policies, nor did they provide any evidence that interculturalism was superior to multiculturalism. Thus, I have suggested that the good interculturalism versus bad multiculturalism literature is essentially rhetorical rather than analytical meant to revive the political commitment to diversity as there was an

increasing discontent with multiculturalism; this rhetorical contrast between a new interculturalism and an old multiculturalism serves to maintain policies adopted as multiculturalism and simply relabel it as interculturalism. I have unequivocally redeemed the claim that interculturalism could challenge and replace multiculturalism. Intellectually multiculturalism has built an important philosophical literature regarding questions about the nature of culture and its relation to individual identity; interculturalism has not built any substantial theoretical framework. However, dialogue is essential for both paradigms, while multiculturalists like Parekh make intercultural dialogue at philosophical and political levels central to their theories, interculturalists have offered an alternative: dialogue in terms of local encounters. This is one essential point in which multiculturalists and interculturalists complement each other. I have reached the conclusion that the relation between interculturalism and multiculturalism is dialectical as interculturalism can increase the societal support for multicultural policies; multiculturalism is a precondition for interculturalism because interaction can be effective only if the condition of equality is fulfilled. Both are compatible and complementary on the theoretical level, on the policy level as interculturalism is applicable to the level of the civil society while multiculturalism is more appropriate to the state level; they cannot be combined into a single superior form of multiculturalism still they can be mutually reinforcing each other giving rise to an 'interculturally attuned multiculturalism'.

I have concluded that it is possible to re-imagine multiculturalism as an approach that is able to respond to new challenges in an age of globalisation and super-diversity because multiculturalism remains a persuasive response to cultural diversity and is undoubtedly capable to create a society that is socially cohesive and culturally diverse, and strike a balance between the essential elements of minority identities and the shared values of the society as a whole. Multiculturalism aims at building an inclusive society in which all citizens become full members of the political community regardless of their origin. I have suggested that building on an idea of national citizenship is important to rebalance the political multiculturalism of the 1990s which has less emphasised this element of social unity and cohesion; hence my

endorsement of the conclusions of the report of the Commission of Multi-Ethnic Britain that “rethinking the national story, with the minorities as important characters; not obscuring difference but weaving it into a common, multi-stranded identity that all can see themselves and giving all a sense of belonging to each other” (54-55). I have also suggested that multiculturalism emphasises a pluralist conception of the liberal secular state in which difference and diversity are acknowledged, and the Universalist ideas that have underlined the secular liberal state are rejected. A liberal democratic state should construct its national identity that include all its citizens not only through rules and rights, but also through a recounting of the history of the nation in a way that enable citizens of immigrant origin to identify with it. In this respect, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has aptly questioned the values of the liberal secular state, making the case for a qualified multiculturalism; his aim was to broaden the basis of the public sphere to deal with the reality of a multicultural society. Proponents of multiculturalism like Bhikhu Parekh and Stuart Hall have rightly claimed that the liberal secular state is more likely able to balance unity and diversity. I have finally suggested that Parekh’s conception of intercultural dialogue constitutes a way of correcting liberalism’s non-dialogical political perspective bridging the cultural and moral division between the liberal and non-liberal traditions, and avoids the limits of ethnocentric and relativist approaches to cultural and moral diversity. All in all, his dialogically constituted multicultural society “sees itself both as a community of citizens and a community of communities, and hence as a community of communally embedded and attached individuals” (Parekh 2006: 340).

Moreover, I have explored how multicultural Britain is defined through coloured British literature, showing that British literature as a whole has offered a forum for coloured British writers who could bring their new insights and imagination to British literature. First, I shed light into the contribution of coloured British writers to British literature as a whole, though until recently non-white British authors were excluded from the literary canon on the ground that literature cannot be reduced to a mirror of society and that an analysis of literary aesthetics is a superior method of literary analysis. However, there were resistance to these literary presumptions in

Britain as coloured British writers have succeeded in changing white-centric ideals of Britishness and interrogating the black/white racial dualism which tended to exclude South Asian writers. I have argued that while some literary critics have refused the inclusion of ethnic minority writers in the British canon, describing the end of the century British fiction as 'fragmentary', 'multicultural' and 'dephless', and retaining a homogeneous white Anglo-English 'Ideal'; others believe that the definition of 'British' should change, arguing that the English novel was becoming a very grey thing while ethnic writers have this power of de-greying the contemporary novel and rewriting imperial history. I have argued that 'Coloured British Literature' has become in itself a category known for its originality and vigour and that a canon of contemporary multicultural fiction has emerged recently thanks to works of successful coloured British writers whose novels studied in this thesis reveal certainly their impact on British literature. Coloured British writing, as suggested by the choice of the four novels, is varied, original and has an invigorating effect on British literature. It has definitely renewed the themes and forms of literary tradition, contributing significantly to the changing landscape in Britain alongside the emergence of a new interest for novels about multiculturalism.

Then, I have shown that the multicultural character of Britain analysed previously do have an impact on literature as the multicultural novels written by coloured British writers studied here reveal how multiculturalism and postcolonial issues are played out in contemporary Britain. Those works of character-driven realism try to depict a British multiculturalism in which the political, social and cultural change that marked Britain since the end of the Second World War is faithfully depicted, even key events that have impacted on Britain have been used as a source material particularly the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Rushdie controversy with the burning of the book in Bradford in 1989, and the Oldham riots in the 1980s. I have suggested that the novels which have been read as postcolonial novels, focus mainly on the inevitability of the relations between Imperial and post-Imperial Britain from a new post-colonial perspective; they are undoubtedly works of multiculturalism which portray the city of London and depict faithfully a British multiculturalism through portrayals of different

'Londons' offering realistic accounts of London at different periods in time and in different places of the city. London is presented therefore as a diverse city transformed by migration from former centre of Empire to a multicultural city. Besides, the novels narrate the experiences of generations of immigrants who came to Britain alongside second generation immigrants born and brought up in Britain. They are set in the old colonial centre in which the interactions of a multicultural community that carries with it legacies of Britain's colonial history are explored. I have shown, for example, that *White Teeth* celebrates a vibrant multiculturalism in which the ethnic diversity of Britain is described offering a microscopic image of multicultural Britain, and making of each individual a multicultural citizen as a consequence of the cultural influences and biological heritages. The novel is rather optimistic about the future of 21st century multicultural Britain with the recurring motif that "the past is always tense, and the future perfect". *Brick Lane* celebrates integration and the potential for adaptation in Western society through the female protagonist who is able to embrace British culture. Moreover, the novels reveal the struggle of individuals caught up within a post-colonial world. But *White Teeth* suggests that tensions between Britain and its postcolonial migrants can ultimately be overcome and consigned to the past with the birth of Irie's 'multicultural' child.

I have shown that from a postcolonial perspective, the novels reveal that 'Otherness' is constructed on stereotypes, making generalisations that ultimately reveal the limits of the colonial mind which could see only its 'superiority'. In this sense, Edward Said has argued that literature has served to define 'a positional superiority' of the West in relation to the peoples and cultures of the Orient; whereas postcolonial literature's aim has been to readdress the way in which minorities have been constructed in British literature. Therefore, drawing on Edward Said and Bhabha's postcolonial theories which show how the 'Other' is constructed in the colonial discourse, and how the West divided the world into 'self' and 'other' creating therefore an unrealistic image of the East in order to create the 'Other', I have been keen to show how the novels contributed to this intellectual effort of deconstructing 'Otherness'. For instance, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* disrupts

satirically stereotypical conceptions of the 'Oriental' in Britain undermining Eurocentric stereotypes and suggesting the stupidity of the colonial discourse.

I have also focused on the common themes of these postcolonial novels, namely race, racism and the quest for identity. I have shown how the novels handled issues of class and race, and the way they interact with cultural identity; racist practices that undermine race relations; and the impact of colonialism and postcolonialism on the formation of cultural identities within postcolonial interpretive frames. I have explained how the intersections between class and race could make the prospect of improvement for a migrant even more difficult than for the white working class people, though social mobility as described in *The Buddha of Suburbia* remains possible in a British class system showing that it is possible, according to Bourdieu's concept of *Habitus* for immigrants to cross social boundaries. Besides, the issue of racism which is deeply embedded in British society is tackled in all the novels studied. But while Zadie Smith combines the seriousness of the issue of racism with comic presenting therefore British society in a critical light, and at the same time that racism today is absurd and out-of-day despite depicting very subtly scenes of every day racism, *The Final Passage* describes an overt racism against coloured people in fifties Britain; and *The Buddha of Suburbia* describes scenes of direct racism experienced by non-white characters in seventies Britain, but unlike the other novels racism takes several forms and can be found at all levels of society, it comes from different circles starting from the working and lower-middle class whites to upper-class circles. The novel explains that racism is the legacy of colonisation and the British feeling of superiority which leads to a desire for revenge; thus it suggests as a remedy to reject the discourse of superiority of the white colonial which causes this desire of revenge, in this way the legacy of colonialism can finally be removed.

In this racist climate that characterized Britain from the 1950s to the last decade of the 20th century, the characters of the four novels have to negotiate their cultural identity and ultimately find their place in multicultural Britain. Evidently, the Empire affected Britain's identity and society, and immigration from former British colonies too affected the national self-image of a white British nation. The second and third

generation of immigrants have started the transformation of Britain and especially of London into the multicultural society it is nowadays. The protagonists in the novels have to face their postcolonial background and come to terms with their hybrid identities. *White Teeth* shows how postcolonial history continues to affect people's actions in the present, and the influence it still has in the formation of individual identities. It shows how identities formed in the present are influenced by inherited discourses such as Empire and colonialism. *Brick Lane* suggests that if first generation immigrants failed to integrate, it is because they had in mind to go back home, what is known as the 'go home syndrome'; Monica Ali makes clear that women are more able to integrate and discover their identities. Hanif Kureishi shows the difficulty to accept the hybrid identity for the protagonist who finds himself in a position of cultural in-betweenness and moving from the margins to the centre suggesting a reconciliation with his own history and accepting his hybrid identity; he also explains that first generation immigrants can barely escape their ambiguous past although time and place have changed. More broadly, the novels show that second generation immigrants form their identities differently to the first generation as they are more able to negotiate ways of being British via their heritage and across various boundaries including those of class, gender and culture, and finally taking advantage of the changing circumstances of life in Britain.

Throughout this thesis I have tried to show the different uses of the term 'multiculturalism' and its significance in political theory and state discourses as well. Each chapter has been shaped in a way that describes the different facets of this fascinating field of study which remains certainly open to further research in the future. In so doing, I have come to believe that multiculturalism remains a defining feature of Britain today and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future since it has been definitely useful at each time to organise and manage contradictions and crises. This is the real challenge awaiting Britain while the changing boundaries of culture and identity are more than ever present in an increasingly super-diverse world. Multiculturalism has been presented throughout this work as a political philosophy and a lived experiment as well, but it has ultimately to be thought of as a vision and an

imaginary of the nation in which the ‘multicultural’ is celebrated and cherished. I have, thus, argued that the politics of multiculturalism reveal a realism in state practice and a recognition that the ‘multicultural’ is a lasting defining feature of twenty-first century British society. This consistency or permanency of the ‘multicultural’, I want to make clear, has to be acknowledged independently of the use of the term ‘multiculturalism’ because the recent questioning of the usefulness of multiculturalism as a state practice can by no means affect the multicultural and multi-ethnic character of Britain.

The concept of multiculturalism analysed in this thesis has not been used only to define an abstract political philosophy, it has been above all employed to investigate how the British state responded to the fact of cultural diversity since the post-war era and how the politics of multiculturalism under New Labour have been characterized by an emphasis on race and on building an inclusive notion of Britishness. This is why I have placed stress on the backlash discourse against multiculturalism particularly since the outset of the ‘War on Terror’ to show that the British state’s critique of the concept of multiculturalism has become part of multicultural politics, and has also been part of a rhetoric whose aim was to promote unity through introducing measures to foster British identity as a ‘civic multicultural national identity’ that is open to everyone. This clearly means that multiculturalism has not retreated as a policy and has definitely not failed, but has seemingly advanced as a vision for the nation. Accordingly, I have endorsed the conclusion of multiculturalists like Anthony Giddens and Tariq Modood that multiculturalism is still attractive and that Britain needs more of it rather than less.

I would now like to extend my analysis making observations about the issue of multiculturalism and summarizing in more general terms some of the ideas developed in this thesis. First, an invigorated multiculturalism must be capable of constant adaptation and transformation in response to new challenges regarding the size and complexity of the current ethnic minority population in Britain. Second, the analyses made suggest that integration and accommodation of ethnic minorities have been the overall consequence of the multicultural policies pursued in the past forty years, and

which will need to be pursued into the foreseeable future. Third, if it has been often argued that multiculturalism as a policy has failed, it is mainly due to political timidity and incomplete multiculturalist policies; multiculturalism has definitely not failed as it has not been wholeheartedly attempted. Fourth, basic multicultural issues at present include amongst other things questions of tolerance of ethnic and religious practices and combating prejudice, though multiculturalism as a form of nation building has to deal with social and political realities such as the participation of ethnic minorities in the highest political and social levels and their full inclusion as British citizens. Fifth, the 'War on Terrorism' that has unfolded in Britain has given rise to a security discourse that threaten more than ever the Muslim community in Britain and which led to amplifying the sense of insecurity. I think that building a secure nation necessitates the promotion of Britishness as a plural and inclusive identity capable of sustaining the multicultural and infinitely diverse Britain of today, and which constitutes ultimately a means to foster multiculturalism.

Another important claim I would like to make is that non-Western cultures alongside Western cultures are historically connected on a global scale as suggested by Parekh, and which entails refuting Samuel Huntington's so-called 'clash of civilisations', or the idea that the West was the unique bearer of universal values. Scholars have brought the proof that most Western values were indeed non-Western notions and that developments in the West borrowed from non-Western cultures. However, this sense of superiority felt by the West which was translated into a construction of the uncivilised 'Other' has been thoroughly deconstructed especially in the field of post-colonial studies. In this sense, intercultural dialogue is necessary to understand how much is shared between Western and non-Western cultures, and provide a basis for developing a better understanding of the commonalities as well as differences between both cultures. One has to concede that newer generations of non-Western immigrants are developing new hybrid identities and cultures which contradict the idea of separate Western and non-Western cultures. In this globalized and cosmopolitan world the existence of multiple identities is indeed the sign of the interconnectedness of cultures and histories, and in which a dialogical multiculturalism

would contribute to foster feelings of shared values, and serve to create a sense of commonness.

What I hope to have shown in this thesis is that in a multicultural society, in which there is interplay of different cultures, cultural diversity is more than necessary. It should not privilege any particular cultural perspective, nor should it discard non liberal cultures. Besides, a multicultural society needs to develop a common sense of belonging based on a shared commitment to the political community, what Parekh refers to as ‘political loyalty’. On the other hand, the political community is expected to value its members in their diversity, and reflects this in its structures and policies, to what Charles Taylor refers to as ‘social recognition’ which is central to the individual’s identity.

A multicultural society has to face constantly the challenge of reconciling unity and diversity, achieving political unity without cultural uniformity. This remains a difficult task for any multicultural society, and particularly the British society which has managed, to a certain degree, to meet this challenge though too much has to be done in the future; and public intellectuals have to play a major role in promoting multiculturalism. Members of the majority culture have too a role to play in respecting multicultural policies; minorities too have to adapt to values of the majority. The media has to play a major role, thanks to its capacity, to influence and inform public opinion while governments are expected to take the appropriate multicultural measures to foster equality and promote diversity.

To end, it is essential to consider that a more practical multiculturalism is needed. The widespread rejection of multiculturalism has given rise to a number of initiatives at local level whose aim was to bring people together in religiously and ethnically diverse communities in order to foster social interaction and social action. Britain is certainly more in need of such actions and programmes that celebrate diversity and unite communities. Uniting around a common national identity would be less difficult if people learn first what it means to belong to a neighbourhood, then to a city. An increased multicultural engagement on the part of the state would definitely

contribute to building a much stable multicultural society. Besides, the notion of citizenship must extend to include more active forms of participation in civil society allowing people from different backgrounds to meet and learn from each other. This I would describe as everyday democracy as it aims at forging powerful and deeper relationships across difference, overcoming tensions that may arise, and ultimately building a strong and united multicultural society in which citizens have a shared life and share a common horizon of experience. A cohesive society is not in the end an abstract goal but rather a relational process of working together in spite of differences. All in all, the future of multiculturalism should be based on better practice rather than new ideas.

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Résumé

Le multiculturalisme a toujours été une question très controversée. La fin du siècle dernier a été marquée par le développement du multiculturalisme en tant que philosophie politique, ainsi que par la popularité croissante des politiques multiculturelles dans plusieurs pays démocratiques. Toutefois, le multiculturalisme fait, depuis l'avènement du nouveau millénaire, l'objet d'intenses débats politiques en Europe de l'Ouest et particulièrement en Grande-Bretagne.

Cette thèse explore les principales questions liées au multiculturalisme, à savoir les questions de race, du racisme et la question identitaire ; par ailleurs, la question du multiculturalisme est évaluée du point de vue de la philosophie politique et de la pratique politique. Ainsi, les idées d'éminents défenseurs et détracteurs du multiculturalisme sont contrebalancées ; et les débats autour du multiculturalisme et celles relatives à l'immigration, aux droits culturels et à la question de l'identité britannique sont aussi abordées.

Cette thèse offre une analyse du discours à l'encontre du multiculturalisme dans le but de répondre aux questions suivantes : est-ce que le multiculturalisme en Grande-Bretagne est devenu une force qui divise la société britannique ? Pourquoi le multiculturalisme est-il présenté comme une menace aux valeurs britanniques ? Et son éventuel remplacement pourrait-il garantir l'unité tout en consacrant la diversité ? Enfin, la question fondamentale est comment la 'nouvelle Grande-Bretagne' du 21^{ème} siècle est ré-imaginée comme multiculturelle dans un contexte de transformations majeures.

Cette thèse soutient que le multiculturalisme demeure une réponse convaincante à la diversité culturelle en Grande-Bretagne en dépit de toutes les critiques, et ce grâce à sa capacité à s'adapter aux changements et aux défis futurs. L'argument avancé est que la version britannique du multiculturalisme qui promeut une identité britannique forte et inclusive fait de la Grande-Bretagne un modèle de tolérance en Europe de l'Ouest.

ملخص

ما زالت التعددية الثقافية مسألة مثيرة للجدل و بالفعل فقد تميزت نهاية القرن الماضي بتطور التعددية الثقافية باعتبارها فلسفة سياسية و كذا بالشعبية المتزايدة للسياسات المرتبطة بها في عدة دول ديمقراطية. و لكن مع حلول الألفية الجديدة أصبحت التعددية الثقافية موضوع نقاشات سياسية حادة في أوروبا الغربية و بالخصوص في بريطانيا العظمى.

تتناول هذه الرسالة ببحث المسائل الرئيسية المرتبطة بالتعددية الثقافية ألا و هي مسائل العرق و العنصرية و الهوية و تهتم من جهة أخرى بتقييم التعددية الثقافية من وجهة نظر الفلسفة السياسية و العمل السياسي مما أدى إلى تنافر أفكار المدافعين و المنتقدين. كما تطرقت إلى البحث في النقاشات التي تدور حول التعددية الثقافية و مسائل أخرى مرتبطة بالهجرة و الحقوق الثقافية و مسألة الهوية البريطانية.

إن الرسالة هذه تسمح بتحليل الخطاب الموجه ضد التعددية الثقافية قصد الإجابة على جملة من التساؤلات: هل أصبحت التعددية الثقافية في بريطانيا قوة تفرقة للمجتمع البريطاني؟ لماذا يتم تقديم التعددية الثقافية كخطر يهدد القيم البريطانية؟ و هل إذا ما تم استبدالها ضمنا هذه الوحدة و أمان التعددية؟ و لعل السؤال الأساسي هو كيف يمكن تصور بريطانيا القرن الواحد و العشرين الجديدة المتعددة الثقافات في ظل تغييرات عميقة.

إن هذه الرسالة تؤكد أن التعددية الثقافية تبقى جوابا مقنعا للتعدد الثقافي في بريطانيا بالرغم من الانتقادات و ذلك بفضل قابليتها على التأقلم مع التغييرات و التحديات المستقبلية. و إن الحجة المتمسك بها هي أن النسخة البريطانية للتعددية الثقافية التي تقوم على تعزيز هوية بريطانية قوية و إدماجية تجعل من بريطانيا المثل الأعلى في التسامح في أوروبا الغربية.