

## IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICIES IN UK

Anca Voicu\*

**Abstract.** *The number of immigrants received by the United Kingdom significantly increased during the past several years. Given the set of economic and social difficulties encountered, UK created for the first time a completely original system of Nationality Legislation and started to apply a severe policy of assimilation instead of integration. UK applied the Community Law concerning immigration, asylum and free movement of workers in its national interest, the whole European construction showing the "British specificities". Even today, there are a lot of measures to be taken in order to come to a real integration policy of immigrants.*

**Keywords:** *immigration, integration, Community Law, multiculturalism, discrimination, assimilation, asylum, racism*

### Introduction

Britain, like France, is a former colonial power, whose immigration and citizenship policies reflect in a complex manner the legacy of colonialism. Historically, Britain has been a country of emigration, not immigration, its settlers laying the foundation for the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Within the dismantling of its empire, Britain has had to redefine itself as a nation-state and to create for the first time a national citizenship. The transition has been a difficult one. The absence of a strong identity as a nation-state and of a well-established national citizenship contributed to the confused and bitter politics of immigration and citizenship during the last quarter-century.

*Immigration* is the act of entering a country, other than one's native country, with the intention of living there permanently. *Integration* is the action

or process of *integrating*, bringing into equal membership of a society groups or persons without regard to race or religion, the ending of racial segregation.

The originality of the British System was the lack of a national citizenship until 1981. Thus, Britain lacked a clear criterion for deciding whom to admit to its territory. In the early post-war years, inspired by a heady vision of itself as the centre of a vast multiracial Commonwealth of Nations, it continued the traditional practice of admitting all British subjects – a category also including citizens of the independent Commonwealth countries.

But controls were imposed on this latter group in 1962, after a significant immigration developed from Jamaica, India and Pakistan. This was inevitable, in view of the huge population disparity between the independent Commonwealth countries and Britain itself. The government later drew

---

\* **Anca Voicu** is currently studying for a Master's degree in English Studies, Languages, Culture and Civilisations at Montesquieu Bordeaux 3 University. She graduated the Law School in Bucharest and the European Law School in Bordeaux. E-mail: [ancavoicuro@yahoo.com](mailto:ancavoicuro@yahoo.com)

distinctions in immigration law between persons of UK and colonies; it created a special second-class citizenship status, without the right of immigration for residents of Hong Kong and others.

With all the afflux of persons, Britain had to change the immigration and integration policies, aiming to integrate and assimilate those immigrants who had settled and to begin closing doors to any further immigration, at least from outside Europe.

The concern was not only social, cultural and political, but also economic, as unemployment and other risks had started to emerge as a persistent problem for all the West European economies.

In this paper, we will analyze the strong connection existing between the policies of immigration and integration which cannot exist separately, in an inter-disciplinary approach that mainly includes an institutional-legislative dimension (I), a sociological and an economic-statistical dimension (II) and the specificities of a society which has always been 'isolated' from the rest of Europe, representing a model of the political resistance and obstinacy to all the European legal projects able to affect its sovereignty.

### **I. Precursor factors and following measures for the changing of immigration and integration policies in the UK**

For historical reasons, UK has a very numerous immigrant population. Before the First World War and since the beginning of the 19th century, it counted an important immigrant population from Northern Ireland, especially because of the famine episodes from the middle century, but also from other European countries, because of persecutions (religious and political) against Jewish and Polish people and also, at the end of the century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the East European Countries.

Because of these factors of population growth, UK took a series of legal measures at national level, but also under the influence of the European Community Law, after having become an EC member, with the aim of protecting the British society and the national interests.

#### **A. Immigration – a major cause of population growth**

Especially because of its colonial past, the UK faced new waves of immigrants: in the 1950's, decolonization and the labour force need attracted in this country many inhabitants of the former British colonies and more recently, from the actual Commonwealth countries<sup>1</sup>.

Among the recent immigrants, two big groups are predominant: immigrants from the Indian sub-continent (India,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of 53 independent sovereign states, most of which are former British colonies, or dependencies of these colonies. The relationship among them is one of an international organization through which countries with diverse social, political, and economic backgrounds are regarded as equal in status, and co-operate within a framework of common values and goals. Current members are: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Zambia.

Pakistan and Bangladesh) and those from the West Indies. More than 1 million persons came from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and they settled mainly in London and the big cities from Midlands. The Caribbean and West Indies immigrants rise nowadays about more than 600,000 persons and they settled mainly in big towns, inner cities easily abandoned by middle classes.

Industry had an important social role in helping bring disadvantaged workers into the labour market, but this was undermined by the government's open door immigration policy. Immigrants from South Asia helped the 1950's economic boom. Many of these were recruited to the textiles industries of Britain's Northern towns that were trying to compete on the basis of low wages with textiles companies in Asia. Bangladeshi immigrants were working in the 'sweat-shops' of the East End of London and Australian immigrants were working in the wine-bars and pubs of West London.

The process of immigration of the black people begun in the 1950's and they also settled in London and Midlands, being able to find jobs mostly in the textile sector and the automotive industry, but also in public transports sector and hospitals.

The immigrants' rising number started to alarm British people at the end of the 1950's, with the first racial riots at Notting Hill (London, 1958) and Nottingham. In this context, different labour and conservative governments adopted laws in order to restrict and discourage immigration.

The main thrust of the legislation was to impose tighter controls of the immigration of UK passport-holders from East Africa, because the number of these

immigrants shot up from 6000 in 1965 to 31600 in 1967.

### **B. Measures on the political scale – the national level**

Immigration into the UK is subject to control under successive Immigration Acts, a control extended to all potential entrants, except for those to whom the legislation gives the right to abode in the UK (principally those holding British citizenship) and nationals of other member states of the EU.

The *British Nationality Act 1948* divided British citizenship into two categories – citizenship of independent countries of the Commonwealth and citizenship of the UK and Colonies. Citizens in both categories remained 'British subjects', but were also 'Commonwealth citizens'. The status as British subjects gave right of free entry to the UK.

Starting with the *Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962*, a distinction is made between UK citizens and Commonwealth citizens. The principle that all citizens of Commonwealth countries, including citizens of the British colonies, had free and unrestricted entry is no more applied. Although it did not expressly discriminate on grounds of colour or race, its aim and effect were to limit the admission of coloured immigrants.

The most controversial of all the British Immigration Act was the *Second Immigration Act 1968*. This aimed at extending control and denying right of entry except to those who had substantial connection with the UK by birth or descent.

The *Immigration Act 1971* gave indefinite leave to stay to those not

entitled to the right of abode but who were lawfully settled in UK when it came into force. The automatic right to settle in UK is subject now to the delivery of a work permit.

British *Nationality Act 1981* completely revised the definition of British Nationality, introducing three classes of citizenship with the right to leave in Britain largely restricted to those with a British grandparent: British citizens, having the right to leave, citizens of British Dependent Territories and British Overseas citizens, which did not have this right.

*Immigration Act 1988* limited the entry of families of immigrant workers in UK and the *Immigration and Asylum Act of 1996* limited the number of asylum seekers.

The following acts were in the same line: the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002* and the *Asylum and Immigration Act 2004*.

The result of all these measures is that immigration has been restricted in such a manner that it became almost impossible nowadays.

Concerning the *asylum law*<sup>2</sup>, UK tried to deter the number of those claiming asylum by tightening visa regimes and juxtaposing immigration controls, diminishing the rights of asylum seekers but trying, in the same time, not to

break the European Convention of Human Rights. The Independent Asylum Commission<sup>3</sup> criticised the British asylum system, which provide an inhumane treatment for vulnerable persons and falling below acceptable standards of a civilized society<sup>4</sup>.

*The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993* provided for new rights of appeal for asylum applicants refused asylum; it restricted the appeal rights of persons seeking to enter the country as a visitor or a short-term or prospective student, or seeking to extend their duration of stay beyond the maximum period permitted.

*The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996* introduced an extension of the accelerated appeals procedure to a wider range of refused asylum applications, the designation of selected countries of destination where there is generally no serious risk of persecution.

*The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002* concentrated on restricting the provision of social assistance for asylum seekers during the status determination process and limiting legal challenge to refusals on asylum.

Under the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2003*, immigration officers were allowed to operate in European Economic Area ports, being able to refuse entry to the UK to asylum seekers before they arrive in the UK,

<sup>2</sup> *Asylum* is a refuge granted to an individual whose extradition is sought by a foreign government or who is fleeing (fugitive) persecution in his native state. After the Second World War, shamed by the fact that Jews fleeing Germany had been denied protection and had been sent back to the Nazi regime, the victor nations established a system by which those facing persecution would be able to seek protection in safe countries. This was the basis of our modern asylum system – the 1951 Convention on Refugees. The *refugee* status is granted if a person, ‘... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...’.

<sup>3</sup> Organism in UK having the task to analyze the asylum system.

<sup>4</sup> Border officials did not give enough consideration to factors such as post-traumatic stress in initial interviews.

diminishing the number of asylum claimants<sup>5</sup>.

The *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2006* contains several provisions empowering the Home Secretary to deprive a person of British citizenship (or Right of Abode) if it is considered that such deprivation is “conducive to the public good”.

Numbers of asylum seekers in Britain have fallen to around 23,000 a year, down from a peak of nearly 85,000 in 2002, when the high numbers forced the issue to the top of the political agenda. In 2007 figures reveal 23,430 asylum applications, the lowest for 14 years, and a quarter of the record set in 2002.

Concerning the *race relations legislation*, we can remember several acts, like *Race Relations Act 1965*, which set up the Race Relations Board to receive complaints of unlawful discrimination and to investigate them.

*Race Relations Act 1968* enlarged the Race Relations Board and extended its scope. It also set up the Community Relations Commission to establish harmonious race relations.

*Race Relations Act 1976* made discrimination unlawful in employment, training, education and in the provision of goods and services and made it an offence to stir up racial hatred. It extended discrimination to include indirect discrimination<sup>6</sup> and

discrimination by way of victimization<sup>7</sup>. It replaced the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Despite these measures, globalization and the internationalization of markets generated new migration attitudes, an increased fluidity of the regional movements, in which temporary migration phenomena have got a special importance. Migration could no longer be considered an instantaneous, unpredictable phenomenon, as population movements have got multiple historical, behavioural, economic and social aspects.

Britain is a specific model in the EC history because of its constant refusals to take measures in the same time with the other Member States. Concerning the immigration and integration policies, the same rule of obstinacy applied.

### **C. The British model within the European Union framework. The influence of the EU legislation on the UK immigration policy**

Concerning the British attitude, a European Commissioner, Roy Jenkins, recognized ‘*our national habit of never joining a European enterprise until it is too late to influence its shape*’<sup>8</sup>.

The European Union has a very strong foundation as regards its immigration

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Yves CARLIER and Philippe DE BRUYCKER, *Immigration and Asylum Law of the EU: Current Debates*, Bruylant Editions 2005, Bruxelles.

<sup>6</sup> Discrimination is treating a person less favourably than others on grounds unrelated to merit, usually because he or she belongs to a particular group or category.

Indirect discrimination is a form of prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex, race, sexual orientation or belief which occurs through a practice, a criterion, a provision applied to everyone, but with the result to put a group at a particular disadvantage. From December 2006, indirect discrimination on grounds of age is also prohibited.

<sup>7</sup> The situation in which someone experiences less favourable treatment because he has brought a complaint under the legislation or has assisted someone else to do so.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-François DREVET– *L’élargissement de l’Union Européenne, jusqu’où?*, Ed. L’Harmattan, 2001, p. 31.

policy: movement of persons is part of economic integration. For a long period of time, the right to enter and live on the territory of an EU Member State was governed by national laws drawn up by each Member State. One could enter and live on the territory of a state based on an entry visa and a residence visa, which were granted by each state.

The original EEC Treaty included, as one of the four fundamental freedoms, free movement of workers, in order to create an area without internal frontiers where persons, services, goods and capital can move freely.

Britain entered the European Community in 1973 and after the accession, the UK systematically opposed to all the projects that could affect its sovereignty and its national identity. Thus, starting with the Single European Act (1986)<sup>9</sup>, the UK insisted upon a Declaration being appended, claiming that nothing within it affected Member States' rights to invoke the Luxembourg Accords, which is the equivalent of an every Member State veto<sup>10</sup>.

The road to Maastricht (1991) was also largely opposed by Britain. The aim was the finalization of the

internal market, the creation of a social dimension of the Community and the economic and monetary union. The British Government saw these goals as too interventionist and too centralising. Yet the UK was increasingly isolated on the last two objectives and did not accept the commitment of the abolition of its currencies.

The Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights proposed by the Commission in May 1989 was adopted by all the Member States in December 1989, apart from Britain. Further, the Protocol on Social Policy<sup>11</sup> attached to the EC Treaty, was signed by all Member States, apart from the UK. The EU Treaty was ratified by the British Government only after the re-negotiation of this protocol (324 votes to 316).

The establishment of Union Citizenship also raised particular problems for the British, who saw this as a potential replacement and a threat to national citizenship and national identities.

The UK also opposed the eventual bringing of macroeconomic, defence, foreign policy under a single central authority, the EC supranational

---

<sup>9</sup> After the Luxembourg crisis, in 1966 an agreement was reached, stating that wherever one Member State raised 'very important interests' before a vote in the Council was taken, the matter would not be put to a vote. The veto, developed at the behest of France (the disagreement with the Commission concerning the own Community resources), was invoked equally freely by all the Member States. This contributed to a change in political culture which resulted in States being less tolerant of attempts by others to invoke the Luxembourg Accords.

<sup>10</sup> The principal achievements of the Single European Act (SEA) were fivefold: the development of the internal market, the institutional reform (introduction of the cooperative procedure, as a legislative procedure, increasing the powers of the European Parliament), the extension of express Community competence to other fields (health and safety at work, economic and social cohesion, research and development and environmental protection), the foundation of a greater economic and monetary integration, extended beyond the internal market and the cooperation in the Sphere of Foreign Policy.

<sup>11</sup> Social policy embraces socio-economic rights such as the free movement of persons, human rights, citizenship rights, general principles such as the principle of non-discrimination in relation to nationality, rights to education, vocational training, public health, consumer protection as well as general programmes relating to poverty, social exclusion and racism.

framework. Concerning the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)<sup>12</sup> on issues as combating international crime, terrorism and third country national immigration, Britain, Ireland and Denmark considered that in this area the national veto should be maintained.

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) announced the establishment of an area of Freedom, Security and Justice. A Title on visas, immigration and other policies related to free movement of persons was included in the first pillar. A Protocol was attached to the EC Treaty on Asylum for Nationals of Member States of the European Union. Again, the UK (and Ireland<sup>13</sup>) refused to relinquish its border control. Two Protocols to the EC Treaty were therefore signed: the Protocol on the Application of Certain Aspects of Article 14 EC Treaty<sup>14</sup> to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland<sup>15</sup> (stating that, notwithstanding other EC Treaty provisions, the UK can retain its rights to verify those entering its territory and to determine whether or not to grant permission for them to enter and, as a corollary, the other Member States are permitted to retain border controls vis-

à-vis persons entering from the UK or Ireland). The second was the Protocol on the Position of the UK and Ireland, allowing them not to participate in the adoption of measures taken under this EC Title, nor to be bound by them.

The provisions establishing the area of freedom, security and justice must be read alongside the Protocol Integrating the *Schengen Acquis* into the framework of the European Union. The Schengen Acquis consists of two agreements, one signed in 1985, the other in 1990, and a number of implementing decisions taken under these agreements with the purpose to provide for gradual abolition of checks at common frontiers<sup>16</sup>. All Member States except Ireland<sup>17</sup> and the UK are now party to the *acquis*.

Thus, it was difficult for the EU to make a European migration policy, because the institutional framework didn't include communitarization yet. Immigration is still a matter that touches the very heart of state sovereignty and therefore it remains a Member State prerogative.

Concerning *temporary protection*<sup>18</sup>, the UK has not transposed the EU

<sup>12</sup> The third pillar of the EU.

<sup>13</sup> The abandonment of Irish border controls on movement from other Member States, whilst remaining part of the common travel area with the UK would have enabled British border controls to be evaded simply through the expedient of entry via Ireland. <sup>16</sup> Article III-210 (1), projet de Traité constitutionnel de l'UE

<sup>14</sup> Free movement of persons, goods, services and capital.

<sup>15</sup> The UK made it very clear that it was unwilling to give up its border controls: Article 1 of the Protocol stated that 'The United Kingdom shall be entitled, notwithstanding Article 14 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (...) to exercise at its frontiers with other Member States such controls on persons seeking to enter the UK as it may consider necessary for the purpose of verifying the right to enter the UK of citizens of States parties to the European Economic Area Agreement or citizens of other States (...) and of determining whether or not to grant other persons permission to enter the UK (...)'.  
<sup>16</sup> This involved improving cooperation and coordination between the police and the judicial authorities in order to safeguard internal security and in particular to tackle organized crime effectively.

<sup>17</sup> The British and Danish 'Opt-Outs'; the Protocols gave to a number of States a wide margin of discretion as to WHEN and IF they will opt-in or opt-out of integration of Schengen Acquis in the future.

<sup>18</sup> Directive 2001/22/EC. Temporary protection is an exceptional measure to provide displaced persons coming from third countries with immediate and temporary protection where there might be a risk that the standard asylum system will be unable to process this influx without severely damaging it.

directive yet. After the entry, the rights and conditions of individuals, as provided by the directive, are complex: entitlement to healthcare, social assistance, housing and the right to work depend on immigration status. Education is an exception, being compulsory for all children. The conclusion is that the UK has the power to make such provision exist and be exercised, but only if necessary. Until the transposition of the directive, the Home Office and the Home Secretary have discretionary power to admit and to permit individuals to remain.

UK also opted out from the EU *immigration and asylum law*<sup>19</sup> (measures on family reunion, long-term residents, migration for employment or self-employment, entry and residence of students and volunteers). UK opted in to all measures specifically related to irregular migration (mutual recognition of expulsion decisions, of carrier sanctions, transmission of passenger data, establishment of a common format for residence permits).

With the gradual enlargement of the Community, the Southern Europe countries gave their nationals the right of migration, especially for economic reasons. Freedom of movement of workers is accompanied by the principle of equal treatment between workers of the Member States in the fields of employment, remuneration and other conditions of work (Article 39 EC). Discrimination based on nationality (**direct discrimination**) or requirements which – as a rule – non-nationals have more trouble in meeting than

nationals do (**indirect discrimination**) are not permitted under Community law. This freedom also implies mutual recognition of degrees and professional qualifications.

Concerning enlargement, British fears were similar to those of other member-states. UK worried about the impact on the EU's budget and about migration of CEE workers. The UK maintained visa controls on Bulgaria and Romania for several years after the rest of the EU removed them. However, the policy regarding workers began to change at the end of negotiations. In December 2002 (after the accession negotiations with ten countries) UK announced that it would not apply the transitional period on free movement of labour that the EU had negotiated with the CEE candidates (that means that the CEE citizens were able to work in Britain immediately after accession – 1 May 2004)<sup>20</sup>.

The international experience in migration administration and monitoring demonstrates **the close relationship between the legislative-institutional dimension and the social-cultural one**. The elaboration and adoption of laws, the creation of institutions, the development of corresponding strategies and policies represent major components of this process, but their success cannot be separated from the manner in which the involved actors—governmental institutions, nongovernmental organizations, mass-media, communities, individuals – respond to the so-called 'behavioural challenges', related to participation, communication, mentalities and attitudes.

<sup>19</sup> Article 63 EC regulates the admission of asylum seekers and refugees and family members

<sup>20</sup> Jacques RUPNIK, *Les Européens face à l'élargissement. Perceptions, acteurs, enjeux*, Presses de Sciences Po Editions, 2004.



## II. Does immigration imply integration?

As we have talked about immigration, we have seen that England, and Britain in general, have long been a home to several ethnic and religious communities, each with rich cultural traditions overlaid on a long history. Hence, the term of *Integration* cannot be neglected since it appears to be a natural suite to this mass immigration we have dealt with previously in our article.

According to the *Oxford dictionary*, "Integration" is defined as "the process of bringing to equal membership of a common society those groups or persons previously discriminated against on racial or cultural grounds". Thus, integration tends to explain an end of racial segregation and a process of becoming an accepted member of a community.

However, since 1945, *immigration*, *integration* and *race* have been recurrent features of a social change and political debates in Britain.

Therefore we will try to see if it is so, to what extent England is a "multicultural" society, and also we will highlight the way in which these migration flows are perceived among the English society and how this integration is carried out, especially on a political scale.

### A - England: the Multicultural<sup>21</sup> nature of British society

#### 1. The migrants' profile

Different terms have been used to denote these groups for which integration

has not been always an easy task leading to different perceptions of these groups' "place" within the society. In Britain, like in England, the terms usually used are "ethnic minorities"- in Germany is the "foreigners" or "aliens", and in France it is common referred to "immigrants" or "population of a foreign country".

This mass immigration has divided the country into two "zones": in the countryside, life carries on as usual, but in the cities, multiculturalism is rapidly taking over.

At a conference in 2005, London<sup>22</sup> was presented as the most cosmopolitan city of the world: 300 languages, 50 distinguished communities with populations of 10.000 or more, with quasi every "race", nation and culture. Almost a third (30%) of the city's inhabitants were born outside the UK with thousands or more who are a second or third generation immigrants. However ethnic minorities are not restricted to London.

Considering migration as a social phenomenon that directly affects a great part of the population and involves complex implications on the entire society, it is relevant to know and note the migrant's profile such as "refugee", "asylum seeker", "immigrants for labour", "study or business purposes".

Nevertheless the common element of all these countries that had received a large numbers of immigrants as a result of past recruitment policies, is the concern with communities which are both economically disadvantaged and which display a distinct "ethnicity" based on a culture, race, religion, language or

<sup>21</sup> "Multicultural society" is a society with a cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. A society or a person subject to the influences of more than one culture. An advocate of cultural diversity; a society which promotes equal tolerance of all cultures within a society.

<sup>22</sup> A Guardian-sponsored conference in 2005 showed the cultural diversities among England.

national identity with roots elsewhere.

Concerning the ethnicity, although the need to take into account the various groups of migrants and their particular needs and issues, the word used in England for immigrants is “Toleration”, meaning that no regular and explicit policy was developed to support or encourage cultural difference at national level.

## **2. Aspects regarding the integration within the “host” society**

In general terms, for an immigrant, integration consists in the knowledge of the language spoken in the “host” country that is to say reading and writing skills, the access to the educational system and to the labour market of the country, the chance of improving professional mobility by attending to a higher level of education or professional qualifications and impartiality in front of the law.

At the same time, the host country has to show tolerance and openness. The consent of welcoming the immigrants, the understanding of the advantages and challenges of a multicultural society, providing, with no restrictions, the access to information related to the “pros” of integration and tolerance but also the advantages of a intercultural communication that would help in respecting their rights and understanding the traditions and cultures of the different communities of immigrants.

In Britain, the policy has sometimes been described as “multicultural”

because of the opportunities allowed to minorities, given them a certain cultural autonomy but also because a number of local authorities have adopted a more multicultural line than has central Government- particularly in the field of Education –e.g.: the “1988 Education Reform Act” which requires a “mainly or broadly Christian content in religious education and school worship”. However, Britain has never adopted an explicitly multicultural policy, tending to favour a more “hands- off” approach to cultural matters.

Although all levels of Government should do more to welcome and integrate new migrants and to enable settled and new residents to mingle or, adjust one another, the term “Integration” has, for the last two generations, been basically a taboo term. It has to be said that these immigrants once on the British grounds were not required any knowledge of the English culture and they would have a simple linguistic test supervised by the local police.

The development of multiculturalism as a policy was to some extent a failure caused by the policies of the 1950’s and 60’s with the aim, said to be “integration”, was actually “assimilation”. The risk of integration process has been to avoid falling into an assimilation policy, as integration is not “about assimilation”<sup>23</sup> or absorbing but only to bring together and “harmonise”<sup>24</sup>.

Nonetheless this multiculturalism within some ethnic minorities has become discredited and if the integration

<sup>23</sup> “Assimilation” is the absorption of minority migrant communities into the majority community with no noticeable effect on the culture and way of life of the majority while expecting that the culture and way of minorities brought with them would disappear (definition given by the CRE: Commission for Racial Equality).

<sup>24</sup> *Review of Migrant Integration Policy in the UK* (2008; Department for Communities and Local Government: London.)

process did not turn into an assimilation one, it is seen as a way of systematically dividing, separating and “marginalising” ethnic minorities by excluding them from places where it really matters.

## **B - The “Multiracial” Society Instabilities**

### **1. Political weakness: a lack of anti-discriminatory act policies**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is a fact and that is why we can say that Britain is a multicultural society.

Nevertheless, when Great Britain decided to set immigration policies, it was not followed by any well-defined integration policies. Everything had to be done in terms of Education, of specific formation or in lodging immigrants.

However in 1965 and 1968, Race Relations Acts were passed proscribing discrimination, but this act only protected those facing a direct discrimination therefore English Government decided in 1976 to establish “the Commission for Racial Equality<sup>25</sup>”. This Commission will deal with all types of discrimination (direct or indirect- at work, in lodging distribution or in public services). The indirect discrimination from then on would be considered as a crime to be

declared to the authorities if it has to happen and would be judged in a special court that will defend the victims.

When this mass migration started, the British Government did not think, as they did for the immigration, of any measures to frame or organise the process of integration. And to explain this weakness on a political scale we must, first, point out the fact that some migrants, when they first arrived faced a series of barriers to integration including: lack of practical knowledge about living in the UK; their rights and responsibilities; lack of language or employment skills; difficulties accessing ESOL<sup>26</sup>; lack of opportunity to meet local people and some hostility and ignorance.

In the 1980’s, the European Commission’s report on integration stressed “the need for greater security of stay for migrants and their offspring, the need for action in the areas of employment and business, education and housing.”<sup>27</sup>

In Britain, the majority of migrants that came after the war entered the country as British subjects with full citizenship rights. In contrast to France, it was “race” rather than “culture” which emerged as the most fundamental problem, and this led to a series of Race Relations Acts -listed previously- which put in place a framework of legislation to protect ethnic minorities from direct and indirect

<sup>25</sup> “Commission for Racial Equality” is “the statutory body charged with tackling racial discrimination” Our aim has been to foster a wide debate, and, partly because the CRE has raised these questions, they are now discussed daily in the mainstream media. The debate has sometimes been heated, and at least some of the heat may have arisen from misunderstandings and misrepresentations. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2008/11/17/1226700658961.html>

<sup>26</sup> ESOL : Cambridge ESOL is the leading provider of English language qualifications in the UK, and has developed the new assessments to meet the needs of employers, and to support migrant and settled workers who are in work or intending to work in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

<sup>27</sup> Sarah COLLINSON – *Beyond Borders: West European Migration Policy towards the 21st Century*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993.

discrimination in all areas of the public life. These racial tensions among the English society have been created also by a policy of “segregation” that started since the 1950’s.

When these citizens started to settle in the UK, they landed in a society mostly peopled by a white population which made them gather in working-class areas where they would find cheap accommodations and unskilled-man jobs. And this is when the social gap between the different social categories in the UK has really started to widen.

## **2. Why does integration present complexities in its achievement?**

### **• Cultural clashes caused by ethnic diversity**

By the end of the 1960’s, when the control over the migration fluctuations came out to be a disaster, a racism craze sprung and was being openly expressed especially when limitation of immigration laws was adopted.

An MP at the time, named E. Powell, wanted to close definitely the frontiers and send back some immigrants that had already settled in England or in the UK. His propositions were not really supported by the public and his speech implying racist connotations led him to the end of his political carrier as he got fired from the British Government. This event shows that racist behaviour or attitude would not be tolerated among the Government, but among the police, some readjustment needed to be done.

The reasons of these racial clashes are numerous but not really obsolete. Some

minorities have been on a daily basis experiencing very bad living conditions, for some of them living in slums; they are cut from the rest of the population and they had been given places that white people did not consider decent enough anymore and there is not much of minorities living in the countryside (3%).

Segregation never helped in integrating a new class of citizens and this geographical segregation is the major factor that has caused, because of a lack of intercultural exchanges and the difficulties to integrate, a bad knowledge of the language. Children of minorities appear for many of them, not to speak English either hardly or at all. This is a major aspect that slows down their integration, despite the consideration of the difference between Asian immigrants that are successful in many respects and Caribbeans and Bangladeshis being at the opposite end.

### **• Racial riots and a discriminatory attitude from the police**

The aftermaths of the 1960’s unsuccessful immigration policies pulled in a decade later. The National traditions, the cultural diversity, xenophobia, minorities’ demands not always heard are all, sources generating this problem of ethnics’ diversity.

In the 1970’s the so-called “Paki-bashing” phenomenon took place, with groups of skin heads, and Pakistanis clashed. It was largely sparked by racist attacks against the Pakistani community, “Paki” in “paki-bashing” implying expressively a racist connotation.

In 1981, and later in 1985- extremely violent racial riots<sup>28</sup> broke out in Brixton, seen as the “spiritual home of Britain’s afro-Caribbean community” situated in South of London. These riots were generated by a police operation called “Operation Swamp 81”<sup>29</sup> resulted in a significant number of black youths being stopped and searched. This intensified the resentment of a group who had already often protested against police actions on the street. Other riots broke out in England, such as in Liverpool, Leeds and the North East and West of England went through this.

The Police facing these racial segregations had not been always impartial to minorities. The only reasons that led to these discriminatory judgements from the police and which fed the racial riots, are the fact that the ethnic minorities live in *ghettos*<sup>30</sup> being the first targets of unemployment and poverty and often those accused of anti social behaviour or crimes.

As a result to this the Royal Commission pointed out in a report called the “Scarman report” the main causes that were and still are, from one hand, poverty, feeling been put on the edges of the society and on the other hand, the discriminatory behaviour of the police and their lack of impartiality. This report advised British Government to have a follow – up of the police

behaviour towards minorities and to launch social actions measures.

However, these reforms were seen inadequate and insufficient, with these ethnic minorities suffering of bad living conditions that did not improve anyhow, riots in 1985 broke out again.

### **C - Governmental actions and local authorities and agencies facing the issues of minorities**

- Does the government have an integration policy for migrants today?

The minorities are not often offered a large pane of jobs opportunities since their lack of qualifications and weakness in terms of language and so are centred in unskilled-manual jobs; very few work in “white collar jobs”. Therefore they are the first to be hit by unemployment, especially within the black community were youngsters are highly affected. Only Indians and Pakistanis present an exception as they often are their own employer.

Despite this negative side of the integration on a professional scale, they are number of relevant policies, functions and provisions in place across government, particularly in relation to refugees and those applying for settlement/citizenship. The relevant policy includes, among many other

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.met.police.uk/history/brixton\\_riots.htm](http://www.met.police.uk/history/brixton_riots.htm): “299 policemen were injured and at least 65 civilians. 61 police cars were damaged or destroyed. 28 premises were burned and another 117 damaged and looted. 82 arrests were made. Molotov cocktails were thrown for the first time on mainland Britain. There had been no such event in England in living memory.

<sup>29</sup> The “Operation Swamp 81” consisted in stopping and searching black youngsters suspected of being involved in the serious increase in street robbery.

<sup>30</sup> OED definition of « ghetto » transf. and fig. A quarter in a city, esp. a thickly populated slum area, inhabited by a minority group or groups, usu. as a result of economic or social pressures; an area, etc., occupied by an isolated group; an isolated or segregated group, community, or area.

plans:

-> Development of the Refugee Integration and Employment Services (REIS) for all those granted refugee status.

-> £ 50m Community Cohesion investment over three years

-> Investment in affordable housing, and rough sleeping support

And a number of reviews are currently underway across government which will look at how these might be improved:

-> Private rented sector review

-> Review of access to healthcare by foreign citizens

-> Review of access to benefits for EEA migrants

- **The remaining gaps and how to fill them**

There is a problem of communication between the ethnic minorities and the Government. Minorities claim for more recognition; they want to be seen as “communities”, they want to see their cultural and religious diversities respected more and their status of citizen allowing them to be supported by politics for their demands through a fair representation of minorities in the higher authorities.

Despite the considerable progress being made, many migrants coming to the UK could be making an even greater contribution to the economy. Better information about living in the UK could ensure that migrants make more appropriate use of services (such as healthcare), and do not inadvertently break the law (for example, driving offences and antisocial behaviour). Greater transparency around service

provision, and more sensible media handling would also help to reduce tensions between communities and therefore reduce the probability of community conflict.

The Government and local authorities could set up a better identification, recognition and use of skill set that migrants hold, and potentially, training to members of new migrant groups to become interpreters and mediators and also showing consideration of the need for a single, coherent, cross-government “Strategy for Integration” of migrants.

### **Conclusion: The Outcomes of the Immigration and Integration Policies in the UK**

The very high rates of immigration in recent years are creating areas in which children with two UK born parents are in a minority. This poses serious difficulties for effective integration as there will increasingly be no core culture with which to integrate.

In some communities, particularly of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, this situation is exacerbated by the very high incidence of arranged marriages with partners overseas. A much slower rate of foreign immigration and tighter rules to discourage intercontinental marriages are essential if there is to be a reasonable prospect of achieving the degree of integration needed to maintain social harmony in Britain.

These communities are constantly being refreshed by new arrivals from the Sub-Continent, so most Pakistani and Bangladeshi children will have a mother born abroad. This is leading to the rapid expansion of ghettos<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> For example, the Bangladeshi population of Tower Hamlets increased by 77% between 1991 and 2001

Furthermore, the process of integration for these communities is constantly being shifted back by a generation; this is much less the case for communities of Indian and other origins.

Migrants are now expected to demonstrate English language ability and knowledge of life in the UK before being granted settlement. This can be done either by completing an ESOL course and demonstrating progression from one level to the next, or taking the 'Life in the UK' test, aimed at ESOL 3 and above. The current 'Life in the UK' publication for citizenship tests includes a wide range of information around everyday needs, employment, law and signposting for sources of further help and information. It is expected that the vast majority of workers to speak English, and there is also a proposal for pre-entry English requirement for spouses.

However, positive points need to be highlighted. In the last decades more black people are seen on TV broadcast and radio, as presenters, various programs for the minorities are launched on TV and radio also, more and more black people

are hired in the police who facilitate the dialogue between the police force and the black teenage communities.

On a religious scale, there are specific worship centres for Muslim, Sheikh and Hindu but still, we witness that the minorities are not fairly represented among the Government: there are only around 10 MPs representing ethnic minorities in Parliament.

Fifty years after the start of mass immigration to the UK, questions are still being asked about whether or not the UK can become a multi-ethnic society with itself or whether there is still a long road to be travelled.

In a 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is a welcome social fact: it is undeniably true that Britain is a multicultural society. While there remain big differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan Britain, and differences of opinion over the question of immigration, the fact of diversity is now accepted as a positive state of affairs by the overwhelming majority of people living in Britain.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Brubaker, W R– *Immigration and the Policies of Citizenship in Europe and Western America*, Univ. Press of America, Washington, 1989
- Butler David, Butler Gareth - *British Political Facts 1900 – 1994*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London 1994
- Carlier Jean-Yves, De Bruycker Philippe - *Immigration and Asylum Law of the EU : Current Debates*, Bruylant Editions 2005, Bruxelles
- Chalmers Damian, Szyszczak Erika– *European Union Law*, volumes 1 and 2, Dartmouth Editions, 1998, England
- Collinson Sarah– *Beyond Borders: West European Migration Policy towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993

- Drevet Jean-François– *L'élargissement de l'Union Européenne, jusqu'où?*, Ed. L'Harmattan, 2001
- Marett Valerie– *Immigrants Settling in the City*, Leicester University Press, 1989
- Martin Elizabeth A., Law Jonathan - *Oxford Dictionary of Law*, Oxford University Press Ed., 2006
- Rupnik Jacques - *Les Européens face à l'élargissement. Perceptions, acteurs, enjeux*, Presses de Sciences Po Editions, 2004

### Reviews

- *Review of Migrant Integration Policy in the UK*, June 2008, Department for Communities and Local Government, London
- *Home Office Statistical Bulletin*, August 2008

### Websites

- [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)
- [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro)
- [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)
- [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- [www.ait.gov.uk](http://www.ait.gov.uk)
- [www.europa.eu.int/comm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm)
- [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)
- [www.theguardian.co.uk](http://www.theguardian.co.uk)