

Building an Integrated Society – Reflections from the UK

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Building an Integrated Society – Reflections from the UK

- Diversity Debates in Britain: from ‘assimilation’ to ‘integration’ from ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘community cohesion’
- The Community Cohesion Framework
- Critical Evaluations
- The Legacy of the Community Cohesion Policy
- Reflections: the role of ‘faith’ as a new language of diversity

Diversity debates in Britain: from 'assimilation' to 'integration', from 'multiculturalism' to 'community cohesion'.



John Blanke, Trumpeter for Henry VII

Empire Windrush 1948

Community Cohesion

- Emerges from Cattle Report (2001) after urban disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham
- ‘Community Cohesion offers, like any policy framework, a particular diagnosis and interpretation of UK society. This is a reading, we saw, which finds civic alienation, decreasing social interaction and a disintegrating ‘social glue’ and suggests as a solution the rebuilding of solidarity, the revitalising of communities and measures to break down separateness’ (Wetherell et al. 2007,5)

Community Cohesion

- **Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:**
- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly
- **And three key ways of living together:**
- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

(DCLG, Response to CIC Report, February 2008)

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Critical Evaluations

- Insufficient focus on economic and social class divisions
- Depoliticised focus on unity and avoidance of conflict
- Onus on citizens but not on government
- Poor understanding of processes of ethnic segregation
- Failure to theorise 'Community' as multi-scalar
- Limitations of 'contact theory'

Reflections on Community Cohesion Discourse and Policy: the role of faith

- Influences of *Prevent Violent Extremism* Policy
- Public debates about role of faith in civic life
- Alliances between established church and newer faith groups
- Faith as 'new language' for discussing ethnic diversity