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Social cohesion and cultural diversity in Contemporary Britain: making the two ends meet!

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Abstract

The concept of social cohesion, within contemporary multicultural Britain, has been a pressing priority for not only politicians and sociologists but also for the various British ethnic minorities. Race riots like those of 2001 in Northern Britain and the events of 7/7 in London (2005) put into question the allegiances of different British ethnic populations. They equally shed light on the real or perceived lack of social and cultural communication between established British host population and British ethnic and immigrant communities. Hence, social cohesion came to the fore as the new jargon of governance in contemporary Britain.

This article focuses on the concept of social cohesion and its applicability within an officially declared multicultural community like that of Great Britain. The concept will be reviewed, defined and approached from different liberal political perspectives (Robert Dahl's pluralist approach and Arend Lijphart's consociationalism to more recent Will Kymlicka's group- differentiated citizenship) while paying special attention to the British context. Bhikhu Parekh's conception of the different theoretical approaches to the issue of social cohesion that are pertinent to liberal capitalist society in general and the British context in particular are investigated. The aim of this study is to highlight the complexity of normative accounts of the political scientists of the challenges that face multicultural Britain in coming to terms in its endeavour of creating "unity within diversity". The 2002 White Paper and security speech of David Cameron (2011) political discourses will be analyzed to decipher how they understood national identity in relation to cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Keywords: Social cohesion, diversity, British ethnic minorities, race.

1) Introduction

Generally speaking, social cohesion is one of the most fundamental concepts in sociology. In fact, all sociologists dealt with this concept from their diverse and different perspectives. Thus the ultimate task of sociology has been considerably dominated by the idea of how societies cohere, and what factors help construct social and societal harmony and cohesion. For example, Emile Durkheim was concerned with how society coheres through what he called mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. In his landmark book *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) Durkheim distinguished between two types of solidarity which he considered as important concepts in organizing societies and keeping them functional. He argued that there was no such social contract that did not rest on common and generally shared normative value system (Durkheim, 1964: 209-214).

The same is for other sociologists such as Max Weber, Auguste Comte, Talcott Parsons and many others. Within functional sociology, society is perceived as a group of individuals who maintain a degree of social solidarity and mutual expectation. To secure such solidarity and the fulfilment of each other's expectations, society is conceived as composed of multiple communities but those communities are linked together by some shared societal and political values. Even conflict-based theories of social relations such as Marxism, though stressing the inevitability for struggle and conflict, postulate the need for a certain consensus to preserve communitarian ties and cohesion. If Marxists refuse capitalist system, it is simply to replace it with another system (allegedly a socialist one). However, such socialist and communist society has to be cohesive from within in order to succeed as a system. There must be a value consensus that secures plausible degree of harmony and cohesion. In this section, we try to define the concept of social cohesion. The different conceptions of the issue will be churned out. Also, the British theoretical tradition will be prioritized. We argue here that the British experience is, in many respects, unique in its broaching of social cohesion problematic. As will be clarified later, the concept has been an elusive or to use one commenter's phrase a "quasi-concept" (Bernard, 2000: 3). It has been used with many different modifiers which stresses the fact that it meant many things to many people; Is it social cohesion, community cohesion or even national cohesion?

Obviously, different modifiers reflect different ideological assumptions and value orientations. Generally, the British theorists and officials prefer to use the modifier "community" (Worley, 2005). One major question is: what are the terminological differences between the above mentioned modifiers of the head word "cohesion". Another question is whether such terminological differences convey categorical and absolute ideological propensities.

I want to suggest in this article that social cohesion-although it can be easily related to other non-ethnicity related phenomena like generation gap, class system, Globalization….- has often been invoked in relation to ethnicity and race relations: what I propose to name "the ethnicisation or racialisation of social cohesion". Within classical sociological theory, when the issue of social cohesion is invoked, it is usually related to class relations. Individuals are classically and simplistically divided into distinctive social classes depending on their economic positions in society. Classical liberal thought was basically interested in individual natural rights the most important of which was the economic pursuit of happiness. When radical politics of Marxism came to stage, they asked for a redistribution of wealth according to egalitarian and socialist criteria. A class conflict was envisaged as the inevitable outcome of such new utopian vision. The victim of such conflicts would be social cohesion which was theoretically expounded as the need to share compatible and harmonious values and world views. Functionalist conceptions of social system reflected (and maybe constructed) a need to reach a consensus based on the acquiescence and consent of the majority of the population; a kind of social contract that would set up and preserve the rules of game. Such consensus would be the basis of a common value system and a socio-political safety valve against social deviant values.

However, the advent of mass immigration into post-colonial western countries posed new challenges to liberal thought and added new dimensions to the traditional conflict theories. Class thesis seems to have been relegated to a subordinate position vis-à-vis race thesis. The social conflicts have been read as cultural and racial conflicts. There seems to be a racialisation of social boundaries and an ethnicisation of the rhetoric of governance. The class-based social conflict has been largely replaced by a race-related one. The vertical

class struggle is substituted by a horizontal racial one. Contemporary discourses of cohesion in western democracies in general and Britain in particular are replete with images of ethnic minorities as a source of striking value differences and hence a challenge to social cohesion. In Britain, the adoption of the phrase "community cohesion" highlights the myth that Britain is a community that needs cohesion. The choice of the modifier "community" stresses, we believe, the ethnic dimensions of such official discourses.

This section is to be divided into two sections. In the first one, we will review the various approaches to the concept of social cohesion from Robert Dahl's pluralist approach and Arend Lijphart's consociationalism to more recent Will Kymlicka's group differentiated citizenship. In general, all those theories tried to normatively offer diagnoses and solutions to problem of the lack of social cohesion. Each of those theories provided a distinctive, though in many respects controversial, paradigm. The second section will contextualize theoretical approaches to social cohesion within relevant British tradition. However, it is vital to define the concept in question so as to highlight its controversial and multi-dimensional aspects.

2) The definitional problematic of social cohesion:

The concept of social cohesion has been defined differently by different political theorists and sociologists. The definitions of the concept are, to use James Moody and Douglas R. White's phrase "often vague and difficult to operationalize" (2003:103). It is an all-encompassing quasi-concept as Paul Bernard suggested above.

Moody and White believe that the concept lacks scientific rigour. In order to make the concept analytical, they distinguished what they called the ideational and the relational aspects of social cohesion. They spoke about relational togetherness and a sense of togetherness (ideational) which they considered two different components of social cohesion. Such theoretical categorization was also expressed by Mark Mizruchi when he distinguished between the "shared normative sentiments" (ideational) and "objective characteristics of the social structure" (relational) of the concept of social solidarity (Mizruchi, 1992). The conflation between the ideational (subjective) and the relational (objective) aspects of social cohesion "limits our ability to ask questions about how relational

component of solidarity affects or is affected by ideational factors" (Moody and White: 106). Thus such analytical distinction, we believe, would make it easier to deal with social cohesion as a mental concept as well as a social relation. Being a social relation, social cohesion could be empirically measured through various social structures and institutions. Consequently, cohesion becomes more than a subjective attitude and unfolds as a lived experience. The absence of relations between members of the same community is thus a symptom of the lack of cohesiveness.

For the concern of this study, we adopt Jane Jenson's definition which is considered as a synthesis of different sociological traditions namely that of Alexis De Tocqueville and Emile Durkheim as well as contemporary ones (Stanley, 2003). The definition of Jenson has also been borrowed by British authorities in order to theoretically inform their politics of community cohesion. In the table below, Jenson introduced the major theoretical traditions and theorists that broached the issue of social cohesion:

Box 3

Three Theoretical Traditions

Social Cohesion Theories
(examples: Durkheimian and Parsonian social theory, tories)
Social order results from interdependence, shared loyalties and solidarities.
Classical Liberalism
Social order results from private behaviour in private institutions such as markets.
• **Tocquevillian Liberalism**
(examples: Tocquevillian social and political theory, Putnamian social capital)
Social order results from private behaviour in private institutions such as markets, families and social networks.
Democracy Theories
(examples: social democracy, Christian democracy, positive liberalism)
Social order – and change – results from active democratic government guaranteeing a basic measure of economic equality and equity.

Source: Jenson's *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research* (p12)

Jenson identified five dimensions of the concept of social cohesion. They are stated in binary oppositions; she shows what helps social cohesion and what hampers it. The binary oppositions are as follows:

Recognition / rejection,
Belonging / isolation,
Legitimacy / illegitimacy,
Participation / non-involvement,
Inclusion / exclusion (Jenson, 1998: vi)

Those five dimensions refer to different types and degrees of involvement. The first two oppositions (recognition / rejection and belonging / isolation) refer to social involvement. The other two (legitimacy / illegitimacy and participation / non-involvement) tackle the issue of political involvement while the last (inclusion / exclusion) designates economic involvement. The value of equality in the distribution of social resources and benefits looms large in creating and maintaining social cohesion. Dick Stanley wrote: "If society fails to distribute its social outcomes equitably, social cohesion deteriorates and social outcomes suffer (2003: 8). Thus social cohesion is rather a "reciprocal function of equality" (8) which enhances values of cooperation and solidarity. For cooperation to succeed there should be willingness and also a capacity to cooperate. Willingness and capacity are two concepts governed by two different processes but complementary. Willingness emanates from a sense of belonging that propels individuals to cooperate. However, capacity is an objective ability based on the politics of empowerment to give free and equal excess to socio-economic opportunities so that individuals become able to cooperate. The two processes have to coexist to fulfill successful cooperation and thus secure social cohesion. Willingness (desire) without capacity (ability) or vice versa will hinder cooperation and undermines social cohesion. Stanley expressed such formula when he stated: "Social cohesion then is the sum over a population of individuals' willingness to cooperate with each other without coercion in the complex set of social relations needed by individuals to complete their life courses". (Stanley, 2003:9). Jenson acknowledge the difficulty to define the concept. She wrote: "…definitional efforts are rare, however. It is much more common to deploy the term rather than to define it, to treat it as if "it goes without saying."" (1998: 5). However, she argued that interdependence and interrelatedness of the five dimensions make up the basic components of the whole social cohesion agenda. She stated: "The literature on the social economy hypothesizes that improving one dimension of social cohesion (inclusion) depends on coupling it with another dimension (participation). The two together will then generate stronger feelings of belonging and citizenship." (30). Jenson warns that the belief that "shared values" is the defining feature of social cohesion has to be taken with caution. She insists that a strong version of shared value cohesion can stifle the idea of social cohesion itself. She urges to differentiate between those values that have to be shared and those

that can be confined to certain minorities or social groups. Jenson commented: "We must know more precisely the consequences of these differences for social cohesion. This means knowing which values must be shared and which can differ without threatening the capacity to engage in "developing a community." (31). In her treatment of social cohesion, Jenson moves on to introduce what she called a "research agenda" that has to be followed by future researchers in order to effectively address social cohesion problematic. The table below charts the different research questions that have to be researched:

Box 8

The Role of Institutions in Recognising Diversity and Developing a Community of Shared Values

A Research Agenda:

1. What are the consequences, if any, of existing differences in values? Which differences matter and which are the inevitable – even desirable – manifestation of Canada's multinational and polyethnic history?
2. Which values must be shared and which can differ without threatening the capacity to engage in "developing a community"?
3. Which kind of institutional practices reinforce each of the dimensions of social cohesion? Which practices, if any, weaken social cohesion?
4. Do public institutions of representation have the capacity to mediate conflicts of value and recognise the contributions of all citizens, no matter their ethnic, cultural or socio-economic circumstances?
5. Does sufficient institutional space exist for participation, or have governments, parties, and others effectively closed down discussion about priorities and collective choices in order to get on with their own projects?

Source: Jenson's *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research* (p32).

Kenneth Bollen and Rick Hoyele suggest the same definition of the concept social cohesion or what they "perceived cohesion"

based on the need of belonging and membership to a certain community. They wrote:
"*Perceived cohesion encompasses an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group and his or her feelings of morale associated with membership in the group"* (italics in the original) (Bollen and Hoyele, 1990: 482).

Within the British context, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC), which was set up in August 2006, had the mission of deepening the understanding o f community cohesion politics and provide the practical approaches and procedures to apply those politics locally. It provided a list of features of the aspects and characteristics of cohesive communities. Below is what is necessary to diagnose any community as cohesive:

> "1. Equality of opportunity, access, treatment and services
> 2. Engagement and participation
> 3. Respect for diversity and social trust
> 4. Meaningful interaction across groups
> 5. Solidarity and collective community action". (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007: 20)

Obviously, British social cohesion-based political discourses resorted to Jane Jenson's model to identify the politics of involvement as the organising concept of post-2001 race riots politics of community cohesion. Jane Jenson suggested in the box above a research agenda on social cohesion, what comes next is a consideration of how the concept has been conceptualized and perceived by various western liberal approaches notable Robert Dahl's pluralism, Arend Lijphart's consociationalism and finally Will Kymlicka's group- differentiated or multicultural citizenship.

2-1) Liberal approaches to social cohesion:

As stated above, this section will identify and review the major approaches of the concept of social cohesion within liberal democracies, from three distinctive perspectives; Robert Dahl's pluralist approach and Arend Lijphart's consociationalism to more recent Will Kymlicka's group- differentiated citizenship.

2-1-1) Liberal pluralism:

We will start with the pluralist tradition best epitomized by the writings of the American political scientist Robert Dahl as well as the writings of other sociologists such as Edward Shils and Michael Mann.

The theory of political pluralism of Robert Dahl has been very influential in explaining the nature post war American liberal society in particular and other western democracies in general. Dahl's monumental books (such as *A Preface to Democratic Theory* in 1956 and *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in An American City* in 1961) were influential in theorizing liberal socio-political pluralism. Dahl's theory of political or interest-group pluralism has been employed by scholars to explain how minorities (national or cultural) co-exist and thrive while respecting each other's differences.

Dahl wanted to show that pluralist America was governed neither by a socio-political oligarchy nor by the rule of the majority. For him, along with other pluralists, American society was to be governed by delicate and ever-changing balances of powers and interests. Dahl believed that constitutional rights could not be an effective guarantee to minorities. He wanted to protect those minorities from what Alexis De Tocqueville termed "the tyranny of the majority". He wrote "(I)n the absence of certain social prerequisites, no constitutional arrangements can produce a non-tyrannical republic" (Dahl, 1956 neither: 83). Thus social pluralism in which each group is engaged into a dynamic process of negotiation with other groups, along with the freedom of association for individuals, would result into a common framework that allows groups as well as individuals to advance their agendas and get their rights recognized. Consequently, no group is dominant in all or most domains. Decision-taking is a continual process of negotiation and compromise. There should be social coalitions, or what Antonio Gramsci would call "historic block", in which the rights and duties of the all are protected, recognized and advanced in the public realm. A system of checks and balances would be the outcome of such pluralism. The mosaic nature of each majority would hinder it from being tyrant. The internal diversity of interests within such majority would propel and secure a culture of negotiation, compromise; and dialogue would be the norm to solve any conflict of interests.

Expounding the nature of liberal democracies, Dahl argued: "if there is anything to be said for the process that actually distinguished democracy…from dictatorship, it is not discoverable in the clear-cut distinction between government by a majority and a government by a minority. The distinction comes much closer to being one between government by a minority and government by *minorities* (italics in the original) (Dahl, 1956: 133).

The government in a pluralist society is neutral and theoretically unbiased to any group at the expense of other groups. There was a shift from simple majoritarian representative governments "towards a unanimity-rule basis (in which only proposals with which everyone agrees can be implemented)" (Dunleavy, 1981: 202). Thus no concentration of power is permitted and pluralist government has to make special arrangements to prevent the translation of economic power into political power such as recruiting specialist personnel with no overlap with business. Also, powerful business interests can be checked and thus balanced by equally powerful trade unionism. The society that emerges out of classical or conventional pluralism is one "in which there are multiple (plural) centres of power, and one in which the ordinary citizen can intervene relatively easily and effectively" (Dunleavy, 1981: 202).

However, the question is how social cohesion is achieved on the liberal pluralist approach. This could be attained in different ways. First, social groups are perceived as dynamic and overlapping, their interests intersect and intermingle. This simply means that the structure of such groups is ever-changing according to the specific agendas advanced by the individuals who make up such groups. Individuals can move to and fro and vacillate between different coalitions according to their interests and strategies. The efficacy and even the survival of coalitions are governed by the extent of their success in advancing certain interests. Individuals who fail in certain fronts are likely to succeed in others. This multiple and fluid nature of membership is a safeguard against persistent and chronic failure or marginalization.

Theoretically, no group is excluded from public governance and marginalized. Such pluralist politics would make all groups and individuals belong to the wider community and enjoy a degree of

inclusion and participation. Back to Jenson, those concepts constitute the bulk and core the concept of social cohesion itself. Being included in the system and given a constant opportunity to participate in public decision-making propels social actors to be loyal and committed to the system, and thus consensus and social cohesion are kept intact. Moreover, according to Dahl, social cohesion is secured by citizens' adherence to a democratic creed or what Edward Shils calls "central value system". There must be a general consensus over what means to be a part of the system or rather compliance to the general "rules of the democratic game". A common value system is to be upheld by all members of the community. No inclusion in the American community is allowed without a sincere adherence to general democratic values such as "freedom of speech", "freedom of religion" and "democracy". To reject such values is thus equal to rejecting being a member of such liberal pluralist community. Without broaching the variants in the liberal pluralist tradition, social cohesion is secured by the specific and dynamic nature of the liberal pluralist society as imagined by liberal pluralists; a publicly plural and dynamic society in which (at least theoretically) all groups and individuals can advance, to differentiated degrees, their interest-based agendas. The dynamic and coalitional nature of such society secures and is secured by considerable degree of "checks and balances". Also, the mobility and openness of the system render all members capable to seek for new social and political alliances to avoid being consistently, constantly and systematically marginalized. One can be excluded from one opportunity but included in another. Importantly, no cohesion is tenable without being a member of the community whose values one has to agree on. Such pluralist and organic nature of liberal pluralism is the core of consensus theory and social cohesion within liberal western democracies in general and America in particular. Plurality, belonging, mobility and commitment have been paramount concepts in liberal democracies and also guarantees of social consent and cohesion. Dahl's promotion of shared and common values as an indispensable trigger of social cohesion is also reflected in Shils' "central value system". Shils believed that every society has a centre which imparts dominant values. Such abstract system of values is social and political need for social actors. He argued that "The existence of a central value system rests, in a fundamental way, on the need which human beings have for incorporation into something which transcends and transfigure their concrete individual existence"

(Shils, 1981: 244). From his macro-social perspective, Shils postulated the existence of a central value system which is clearly hegemonic. However, he argued that the gap between central values and the periphery is not such a wide one. Central values are vulnerable and subject to opposition and at least to negotiation from various social agents. The consensus that emerges from such central value system is not a perfect one and is permeable to different sets of oppositional values and interests. Even such value system is "neither unitary or homogenous" (248) yet consensus and social cohesion are proffered by its "ideological potentiality" (243). The centre' ideological potentiality bestows the dominant values with a sense of "sacredness" and defines the norms and the roles for the rest of society.

Michael Mann was interested mainly in the extent to which different classes-and by analogy different ethnic groups- in liberal societies internalize norms, values and beliefs which legitimate social order. He extensively reviewed the value consensus-related sociological literature and concluded that even in well-integrated and cohesive liberal societies, like the United States and Britain, an absolute "value-consensus" did not exist. He identified two types of consensus: dominant consensus and deviant consensus. The relationship between these two binary value systems is dialectical. However, it remains vital to explain why the dominant value system succeeded in holding together the conflictual elements in a generally accepted consensus. Mann opted for Marxist perspective to account for social cohesion and liberal consensus. He explained the role played by manipulative socializing agencies such as education and mass media in disseminating dominant values across various social groups. Confining his arguments within the class thesis, Mann argued that working classes develop a pragmatic role acceptance since they envision no appropriate and reliable alternative to dominant liberal value system. Also the lack of internal cohesion within lower classes keeps them subordinate to more coherent and cohesive capitalist oligarchy. He wrote: "A significant measure of consensus and normative harmony may be necessary among ruling groups, but it is the absence of consensus among lower classes which keeps them compliant" (Mann, 1981: 265). Thus, in a sense, elements of conflict within lower classes can be powerful sources of consensus and social cohesion.

Dahl, Shils and Mann, though differed in their perspectives, attempted to investigate and answer one major sociological question: How could liberal societies manage social and cultural differences (even conflicts) and secure a necessary degree of consensus which is indispensable for social cohesion? All of them stressed the importance of having a shared common values and norms which would facilitate social cooperation and demote socio-cultural fragmentation. However, no values can be common without being relevant and responsive, at least theoretically, to the needs and interests of all community members. Issues of participation, belonging and power sharing are so vital in maintaining and creating social cohesion because "only those actually sharing in societal power need develop consistent societal values" (Mann, 1981: 263).

2-1-2) Consociationalism:

Consociationalism is a political normative theory that tries to deal with the issue of social cohesion within deeply culturally and ethnically divided societies. The theory was developed by the political scientist Arend Lijphart in his seminal article "Cultural Diversity and Political Integration," (1971). Terminologically, the term Consociationalism is derived from the root word "consociation" which is composed of two items: the prefix "con-"and the word "sociation". Lexically, the concept "consociation" means the co-existence of different societies each of which is separate from the others but exist side by side and have specific relations.

Consociational democracy is, according to Lijphart, a combination of "autonomy" and "power sharing" within deeply fragmented and segmented societies. He wrote that there was an agreement "that the successful establishment of democratic government in divided societies requires two key elements: power sharing and group autonomy. Power sharing denotes the participation of representatives of all significant communal groups in political decision making, especially at the executive level; group autonomy means that these groups have authority to run their own internal affairs, especially in the areas of education and culture." (Lijphart, 2004: 96).

The lack of certain socio-cultural homogeneity is deemed as a grave problem for the process of democratization. However, what antagonistic social groups need to share in a consociational democracy is a respect to the rules of the democratic game. Each group "interacts" with other groups through representatives who are supposed to be competent and professional members of those segmented communities. Within British context, what is generally referred to as "ethnic community leaders" can be considered as an example of consociational arrangements. The local authorities in Britain tend to negotiate with those leaders whenever an ethnicity-related issue is under consideration. For instance, the 'race riots' of 2001 in some northern British cities were an opportunity which local authorities and police used to negotiate with Muslim community leaders certain arrangements for violence appeasement and curtailment. Such practice validates Lijphart claim that what he and other consociational theorists did was simply to academically study what politicians had already invented many decades before the official appearance of the theory power-sharing democracy or consociationalism.

Consociationalism, unlike other comparative political theories, does not require social or cultural homogeneity. Difference is respected but it is confined to specific pillars. That is no cultural or social group is to impose its world view and ways of life on others. There is nothing called the influence of dominant culture in the political sharing of power. The theory is meant to deal with a society in which no or few memberships cut across socio-cultural and ethnic cleavages. In consociational society power is shared cooperatively between the different segments of the society in question. For the theory to work effectively, Lijphart suggested that consociational democracies are characterized by four major features: Grand coalition, Segmental autonomy, Proportionality and Mutual veto (Lijphart, 1977). Without delving into the details of those features, it sufficient to show how they are related, and above all how they contribute to ethno-cultural conflict management. And thus, they result into social cohesion. Being divided into different socio-cultural segments, consociational society respects such segments and allows for cooperation between their representatives: the elites. Each segment or pillar is proportionally represented in the governing oligarchy which prevents a situation of majoritarian dominance and tyranny. Moreover,

mutual veto creates a balance of interests and guarantees each pillar's security. Consociational democracy is thus built upon cooperation and collaboration rather than competition. Answering our question on the difference between majoritarian democracy (pluralist one like that advocated by Robert Dahl) and consociational democracy, Lijphart affirmed that " [t]he difference between majoritarian and consociational systems is not that one is elitist and the other is not, but that majoritarian systems have competitive elites and consociational systems have cooperative elites" (Lijphart, 2007)

Social cohesion is thus the outcome of cooperation and collaboration between the different representative elites. It is also achieved by discouraging mass interaction and permitting minorities to make their own decisions for their communities. It seems that consociatioanlism breeds a sense of segmental self-determination and propels a strategy of avoidance between ethnically and culturally divergent communities. However, it is necessary to emphasize that consociatioanlism, like other theories of democracy, is a solution to a specific problem. It is an option taken within severely fragmented societies to manage conflict and secure satisfactory level of social cohesion.

2-1-3) Multicultural Citizenship:

"How far is the theory of differentiated citizenship successful in
providing an appropriate political framework for liberal democratic states like Britain to sustain an acceptable degree of community cohesion?"

Such question has been the concern of sociologists of race in many western countries which have sizable ethnic minorities. One of the most distinguished political sociologists that tackled such issue was the Canadian sociologist Will Kymlicka. A basic concern for Kymlicka has been how to attain a balance between the particular needs of minorities and the universal need of social cohesion. The aim was to reconcile the liberal norms of equality and justice with multicultural character of modern multicultural societies. Kymlicka believes that classical liberalism with its stress of state neutrality in liberal society is not tenable. Such neutrality is ultimately in favour of the dominant majority. The values and symbols of the majority tend to

be popularized and represented as the values and symbols of the whole society. The result is marginalizing the cultural values of national and ethnic minorities. Liberal citizenship, being rested on such cultural definition of membership, is likely to cast minorities as second class citizens or even "denizens". Sticking to the rule of democratic game, the state will inevitably uphold the values of the dominant culture as the norm and any different value systems will be delineated as deviant. Citizens will, consequently, obtain unequal differentiated positions vis-à-vis the concept of citizenship. Kymlicka tried to rework the relationship between the theory of liberalism and group rights. In *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989), he represented the liberal view of community and showed how the values of the community and those of the individual can be compatible. However**,** *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, which he wrote in 1995 was a landmark in political sociology. Kymlicka dealt in his book with the issues of multiculturalism and theorized how it is possible to incorporate the diverse values of different communities within the framework of liberal thought. He introduced the idea of differentiated citizenship in order to recognize the specific needs of minorities. His multicultural citizenship includes specific measures that include the values and cultures of minorities into mainstream culture. However, Kymlicka divides minorities into two different categories with different measures of integration: poly-ethnic minorities and national minorities. Poly-ethnic minorities, to integrate, require rights like civic education, training in official language, anti-discrimination laws and cultural recognition. National minorities require another set of rights such as language rights, special representation and in some cases self-determination. Those specific rights, it is thought, would promote minorities' integration and membership to mainstream society which would aid and encourage social cohesion. Thus as Avigail Eisenberg wrote: "the values and identity of group differentiated citizenship are not meant to conflict with the particular ethnic or national identities of minority groups, but rather to encompass or include them" (Eisenberg, 2002). Social cohesion is thus achieved within this paradigm by having minorities' values and cultural identities recognized and accommodated. Also, such recognition is to be sustained by relevant socio-economic and political arrangements to integrate minorities into the mainstream. If given such rights and measures, minorities are expected to share with

the mainstream majority an identity that values diversity while accepting the need social cohesion.

3) British ethnicity related politics:

"Secure border-safe haven", that was the official understanding of how to broach the increasingly multicultural nature of early 21th century British society. The issue became the wisdom of the day since the events of race riots in some northern British cities alarmed the national government to the possible dangers that national identity and social unity might be facing. With the increasing number of immigrants and their offspring along with their demands of socio-cultural and economic rights, multiculturalism has become the new ideology of governance at the end of the 20th century and beyond. The race riots of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley of 2001 were symptomatic of an urgent need to contain and respond to new multicultural demands in order to avoid socio-cultural conflicts and hence the eradication of social cohesion.

Suffering from various types of disadvantages, British ethnic minorities, and notably, the second and third generations, demanded for citizenship rights with specific multicultural sensitivities. Ethnic minorities have been suffering from what is generally perceived as "institutional racism" which was spectacularly detected in the notorious case of police investigation and conduct in response to the murder of the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence.

Based on the behavior of Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), William Macpherson defined the concept of institutional racism as:

> The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999, p. 28)

The Macpherson Report was produced in 1999 and affirmed the ethnic fears of a biased and institutionally racist government. Such incidence had a cumulative effect on the behavior of ethnic minorities' teenagers who went violent.

Successive British governments, whether Labour or Conservative, have been aware of such inherent and underlying ethnic wrath. They employed different discourses that attacked multiculturalism and opted for the alternative politics of cultural diversity. Two outstanding speeches politically and ideologically framed the early race related discourses in contemporary Britain. Those political discourses are the white paper of British Home Secretary David Blunkett (2002) and the speech of the Prime Minister David Cameron (2011). I do not argue here that these two discursive discourses are exclusive in their relevance and importance, yet, it is suggested that they were, in many respects, foundational of a new and direct rejection of multiculturalism as a political ideology while they opt for an alternative cultural diversity agenda. Such agenda encourages multiculturalism as a lived (everyday) experience that champions cultural diversity and plurality without sacrificing national cohesion and unity. The same agenda, arguably, delineates the cultural contours that would sustain a "consensual" national identity considerably compatible with the hegemonic constructions of the British "imagined community" to use Benedict Anderson expression.

3-1) The Blunkett Whie Paper and the new British "pure" identity:

Few months after the national events of Bradford and other British cities (Zriba, 2005) and the international attacks of September 2001, a new White Paper was produced in February 2002 as a response to the real or perceived dangers ushered by them. The Paper attempted to prove that social cohesion can be sustained by the consolidation of a national identity that embraces certain dominant common values. Even before the production of the 2002 White Paper, David Blunkett expressed his conviction that no social cohesion is possible without core values and considerable degree of "cultural conformity". In an interview with the *Sunday*, he declared that: "If we are going to have social cohesion we have got to develop a sense of identity and a sense of belonging" (Brown, 2001). What the Home Secretary suggests is that the lack of national identity and sense of belonging within ethnic minorities is the ultimate trigger of social and cultural divisions. The cure is then a higher dose of culture; this time mono-culture not "multi-culture".

In the same vein, the White Paper, as its very title suggests, asked for the need to control immigration in order to facilitate integration and make cultural diversity fruitful rather than destructive. The document is replete with reference to immigrants' numbers and statistics.

One major goal of the Paper is to propel cohesion-oriented political and social agenda. It states that the "Government sets out our key objectives for the development of citizenship and nationality policy. To ensure social integration and cohesion in the UK" (Secure Borders, Safe Haven, p 10). To reach this target immigration has o be controlled since it was deemed as the cause of increasing social disharmony. The same message is voiced all over the document. In page 20, it states that: "… (the government) will develop … (its) citizenship and nationality policy to create a supportive, safe and cohesive community" .and again, this could be possible only if immigrants and the borders are controlled in the best possible ways. The conclusions already reached by the Cantle Report (2001) are confirmed by Blunkett. He even builds his arguments on them. The Cantle Report indentified residential segregation and lack of ethnic communication as the most crucial cause of the race riots. The same is implied in Blunkett's White Paper, yet importantly a direct link is constructed by Blunkett between the need for core national identity and social cohesion and the immigration-related policies. While the Cantle Report focuses on ethnic minorities within, the White Paper concentrates of the potential ones without. An equilibrium is sought by Blunkett between the need to avoid ethnocentrism and the must of sustaining, if not, creating social cohesion. Nira Yuval-Davis wrote that: "Blunkett is trying hard not to be ethnocentric and to embrace the cultural and ethnic diversity of British citizens, although he constructs this diversity as a result of immigration of outsiders and a basic unavoidable problematic that resulted from this" (2004:226). That was the challenge that the White Paper and, in fact, all the British government had to cope with: making the two ends meet; diversity and cohesion.

3-2) David Cameron and the failure of State Multiculturalism:

Multiculturalism is thought to be the cause of cultural stagnation and lack of intercultural communication. Different researchers and politicians declared even the death of multiculturalism

and they affirmed that social cohesion and genuine cultural diversity were victimized by the officially adapted and adopted multiculturalism.

In February 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron gave a speech at the Munich Security Conference in Germany. He outlined what he deemed as the failures of 'state multiculturalism' in British society.

Cameron believed that the old official policies of multiculturalism sowed the seeds of segregation and interethnic enmity. There was a genuine lack of communication between British mainstream society and its ethnic minorities, notably Muslim ones. This attitude confirmed the findings of the 2001 Cantle Report which identified residential and cultural segregation as the major cause of the 2001 race riots in Britain. So, segregation and "being a part while being apart" of the mainstream British community were the trigger of extremism and violence. And social cohesion is the victim. Cameron stated:

> "But these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because 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 failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. (2011)

As early as 2002, the British political writer Arun Kundnani declared the death of multiculturalism and argued that multiculturalism as a political ideology failed to respond to the needs of both host British society and ethnic minorities as well. What the ideology of multiculturalism did was at best to keep the status quo and at worse to worsen it. Kundnani wrote that "Multiculturalism became an ideology of conservatism, of preserving the status quo intact, in the face of a real desire to move forward" (2002). Equally, Cameron declared the failure of what he called "the doctrine of state multiculturalism". State multiculturalism, thus, encouraged separatism in all walks of life. It stifled the common sense of belonging to a

national shared identity. Consequently, it created patches of "ethnic niches" that were mutually exclusive. Here, I would refer to the increasing power of what came to be called "community leaders" who enjoyed considerable influence on their respective communities. Yet, arguably, those leaders were representative of the British state in their communities. Thus, there seemed to be no direct contact between various ethnic minorities and the mainstream society. Crucially, there was no real contact between ethnic minorities themselves. They seemed to lead "parallel lives" within their "comfort zones" (Zriba, 2014). Britain turned out to be a patch of different separate ethnic communities (white ethnicity is included as well) with no real sense of belonging or clear identity attachments. Seemingly, Britain was nearer to the consociationalist approach of social cohesion than the pluralist or multicultural citizenship one. However, as stated above, consociationalism is an option available to multinational states; state with different national communities not ethnic communities. Maybe, it is theoretically immature or irrelevant to the British case to speak about "ethnic consociationalism" where different ethnic communities resort to communities leaders to reach consensus on tricky problematic issues so that to create and sustain social cohesion. But, real instances of cultural and social bargaining have been noticed between communities' leaders and British authorities which may bestow certain credibility to the claim the Britain leads a specific race-related model of "ethnic consociationalism" .

Cameron refused such "ethnic consociational" arrangements and suggested that British ethnic population, notably the young, needed to belong to the mainstream culture and adopt the values of British national community. He stressed the failure of state multiculturalism to broach some illiberal cultural practices of ethnic communities such as the South Asian tradition of "arranged marriages". Accordingly, ethnic cultures represented "states within the state" and endangered not only national identity but the possibility of social cohesion itself. The inability of second and third generations of ethnic population to identify with both their homelands cultural traditions and be fully accepted by the British mainstream "imagined community" alienated and marginalized them. "And this all" Cameron argued "leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless. And the search for something to belong to and something to believe in can lead them to this extremist ideology" (Ibid). To avoid this alienation and as a sustained strategy to

fight against first socio-cultural disintegration, and second against increasing terrorism, Cameron states that "it is time to turn the page on the failed policies of the past". He adds "second, instead of encouraging people to live apart, we need a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone" (Ibid). It is obvious that the commonness and sharedness of national identity is the clue to British ethno-racial and security-related issues. In fact, this renewed belief in and reinvigoration of the discourses of the nation and the myth of common national origin have always been present in British rhetoric of governance with different pitches and paces in accordance with and response to the zeitgeist of the day.

4) Conclusion:

Community cohesion or social cohesion has been the political jargon that has dominated British politics at the onset of the twenty first century. It is the direct outcome of real or perceived threats to the "homogeneity" of British national culture given the increasing national and global challenges that the nation-state has been facing. Obviously, the worry about social cohesion is not novel in British society, yet, I argue that with the intersection of different anti-statist factors such as multiculturalism, devolution and globalization, it has become a pressing need to respect and maintain what Nira Yuval-Davis called "holy trinity": state, territory and people. Social cohesionist agenda is thus concerned with how to make sure that British citizens-whatever their ethnicity was- would keep their allegiances to British state. Both Blunkett and Cameron voiced such concern and thought that social cohesion and unity can be achieved only when Britsihness-in its very basic definition as British national identity- is sustained and fostered.

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