<u>What are the key axes of debate between proponents of Multiculturalism and proponents of integration in Britain today?</u>

The debate between proponents of 'multiculturalism' and 'integration' in Britain has gained greater salience amongst policy makers and the public in recent years. 'They emerged in response to real events such as economic globalisation, the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, the sharp rise in asylum-led immigration starting in the early 1990s, the continuing arguments about the speed and desirability of European integration, devolution within many of the historic nation states of Europe, and most recently the place of Islam in Europe' [1]. I will argue that the debate pivots on the historical cultural dominance of the English ethnic core within the nation-state of England, and whether policy makers should legally recognise Britain, and by extension England, as a *multi*, rather than a *mono*-cultural state. This debate is informed by tensions between multiculturalist demands for pluralism and diversity, and integrationist preferences of liberalism and solidarity. Feeding into this debate are concerns over the role and future viability of 'Englishness', the fusion of immigration and identity issues within the broader framework of national security in the wake of the 7/7 London bombings and whether a welfare state can be sustained in a multi-cultural society. I will conclude by noting that while there is a degree of overlap between both approaches, the Integrationist approach is the most pragmatic policy option in the context of the liberal nation state. It is necessary at this juncture to note the following points; firstly, in order to answer this question, a definition of 'multiculturalist' and 'integrationist' approaches will be outlined; and second, there is a tendency in the literature to swap/submerge the terms 'English' and 'British' and use the latter as a substitute for the former. As a result, I will focus my attention primarily on England and 'Englishness' throughout this study.

Multiculturalism refers to three interrelated but distinct concepts. Firstly, it is a demographic fact; Britain, and the population of England, consists of a diverse range of people with different ethnic, racial and cultural characteristics. Secondly, it 'alludes to an ideal - a society that regards pluralism as both a true reflection of society and an aspect of society worth preserving...one in which the norms of civic behaviour and the modes of social interaction are respectful, even supportive, of ethnocultural and ethnoracial pluralism' [2]. Thirdly, it refers to government policy which recognises ethnic pluralism within a state's legal framework. Multiculturalists in Britain can be split into two further sub categories; Cosmo-multiculturalist and Communal Multiculturalist. The former can be split into two groups with the first espousing a post-ethnic 'melting pot' society where multi-culture is tolerated without the political recognition of groups. For example, Hall argues for a 'laissez-faire, secular multiculturalism that is less receptive to the recognition of groupings in general, and ethno-

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[1] David Goodhart, *Progressive Nationalism: Citizenship and the Left,* Demos (2006), pp10.
[2] Harold Troper and Morton Weinfeld, Canadian Jews and Canadian Multiculturalism. In: Adelman, H. and Simpson, J. (eds.) *Multiculturalism: Jews and Identities in Canada.* Jerusalem and London, Magnes Press (1996), pp13.

religious community identities in particular' [3]. The second are represented by Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood who accept the salience of cultural groupings and argue for a two-way form of integration between minority and majority groups based on the idea of ethnic hybridity. Communal Multiculturalists such as the Muslim Council of Britain are more radical in their approach. They eschew cosmopolitanism and argue that all groups should retain their cultural boundaries and be granted collective rights over their own affairs. The term 'integration' strikes a balance between crude assimilation and extreme multiculturalism. For Kymlicka, it can be broken down into three components; first, integration into the labour market; second, political integration into the electoral process; and third, social integration into informal networks of civil society [4]. The main proponents of Integrationist policies in Britain are the Civic Nationalists who can be split into two sub groups; restrictive and liberal. Both groups adopt a 'soft' approach towards assimilation i.e. minority practices are tolerated and protected under the law but individuals should accept the state's implicit recognition of the majority culture. The differences between them are small but it is necessary to note them nonetheless; the 'restrictives' argue for a two tier approach to citizenship for new arrivals, are conservative in their approach towards immigration and believe that integration is more of a 'one way' process. By contrast the 'liberals' believe in having an open immigration policy and are less overt in championing 'Englishness'.

The theoretical tension between the core assumptions of pluralism and liberalism underpins the debate between multiculturalists and integrationists respectively. 'Pluralism can be broadly defined as a belief in , or commitment to, diversity or multiplicity...as a descriptive term it can assume a variety of forms. Political pluralism denotes the existence of electoral choice and a competitive party system. Moral pluralism refers to a multiplicity of ethical values. Cultural pluralism suggests a diversity of lifestyles and cultural norms'[5]. It should be noted that there are areas of convergence between pluralism and liberalism. For example, liberal democracies tolerate cultural diversity at a social level and recognise all citizens as equal under the law regardless of their ethnic characteristics. However, this relationship can become unbalanced and reach a 'tipping point' if extreme cultural pluralism is pursued *at the expense* of liberalism. This is because the official recognition of cultural plurality requires the state to undergo a process of 'de-nationalisation' which conflicts with the historical development of the liberal nation state. This argument has two dimensions; ideological and practical. From an ideological standpoint, Western liberalism rests on the assumption that the state and the majority culture are indivisible and engaged in a mutually legitimising relationship. By contrast, Multiculturalism 'implies desirability of cultural diversity as inherently enriching. In this basic postulate, it constitutes the antithesis of the tacit liberal

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[3] S. Hall, New Ethnicities in Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, 'The Multicultural State We're In: Muslims, 'Multiculture' and the 'Civic Re-balancing' of British Multiculturalism', *Political Studies,* Vol 57 (2009), pp488.
[4] Will Kymlicka, 'The current state of multiculturalism in Canada and research themes on Canadian multiculturalism', *Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada,* (2008-2010).
[5] Andrew Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics,* Palgrave MacMillan (2000), pp175.

democratic premise that the nation-state is the most desirable political form'[6]. As a result, the Multiculturalist propensity towards de-nationalisation is problematic because it subverts the nationalist origins of the liberal nation state. 'The entire history of Western democracy has been inextricably linked with the triumph of nationalism as the basis of state legitimacy. Democracy supposedly expresses the will of the people, and the people have implicitly been identified with the dominant ethnie in each state' [7]. From a practical standpoint, Integrationists argue that cultural pluralism increases social division due to its emphasis on group rights which is incompatible with liberalisms core assumptions. 'Modern liberal societies cannot be based on the simple assertion of group identity - the very idea of the rule of law, of equal legal treatment for everyone regardless of religion, wealth, gender or ethnicity conflicts with it' [8]. Integrationists argue that liberalism is central to the legal and cultural functions of the state and 'when they conflict it is liberalism that must prevail...a liberal state has the right to outlaw things that challenge its core assumptions - such as the emergence of separate legal-political enclaves that would be implied, for example, in the acceptance of Sharia law for Muslims in areas of high Muslim settlement'[9]. This tension between liberalism and pluralism is central to the debate Integrationists and Multiculturalists and shapes their arguments over issues of national identity and institutional recognition.

The role of Englishness within the overarching identity of 'Britishness' is a significant area of debate between Multiculturalists and Integrationists. This debate is sustained by long term concerns of those who consider themselves to be 'native to the soil', and the broader trend of globalisation which has eroded the traditional relationship between the citizen and the state. Bobbitt argues that the 21st century marked the emergence of a 'market state' where the state's role has shifted from the protection of a particular nation or religious group to one which increases individual opportunity. Integrationists argue the rise of value diversity has led to the break down of the 'everyday reciprocities and conventions that once underpinned membership of the local or national community' [10]. On a domestic level, the group most affected by these global pressures were traditional Labour party voters i.e. predominantly white, working class who, over the course of a generation were competing with 'outsiders' for council housing and low skilled jobs. In response, elements of the British Left (the Civic Nationalists) moved away from values of internationalism and universalism and lurched back towards 'old left' theories of social cohesion and solidarity as a means of 're-rooting' the citizen within its host society. Concerns over the impact of globalisation on national identity were heightened by the events of 11 September and the 7/7 London bombings which resulted in the fusion of identity with national security concerns. For Halliday, the crisis of unleashed by the events of 11 September is one that is global and all encompassing...it is all

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[6] Pierre Van Den Berghe, 'Multicultural Democracy: Can it work', *Nationalism* 8(4), ASEN (2002), pp441-42.
[7] Van Den Berghe, 'Multicultural Democracy', pp442.
[8] David Goodhart, 'Too Diverse?' in *Prospect*, Prospect (2005), pp3.
[9] Goodhart, Nationalism, pp30.
[10] Goodhart, Nationalism, pp18.

encompassing in that, more than any other crisis yet seen, it affects a multiplicity of life's levels, political, economic, cultural and psychological'[11]. In response to these pressures, there was consensus between Integrationists and Multiculturalists over the need to re-invigorate 'British values' and forge an identity which 'emphasises the role of citizenship in fostering commonality across differences' [12]. At a Prospect roundtable discussion Gordon Brown argued that 'a genuinely British approach to representative and participatory democracy should explore new ways of involving people in decisions. In various places in Britain and around the world local, regional and even national governments have been experimenting with new ways of involving the public in decision making' [13]. Brown's views were echoed by Communal Multiculturalists such as Bhikhu Parekh who noted that 'Societies are not held together by common interest and justice alone...they need emotional bonding...that in turn springs from a common sense of belonging, from the recognition of each other as members of a single community' [14].

Despite these areas of consensus, there is significant disagreement over the role of Englishness within this overarching civic identity. Integrationists argue from the perspective of cultural homogeneity i.e. that the implicit recognition of 'Englishness' as the state's 'core culture' should be preserved. For Goodhart, the construction of a national identity based on shared civic values at a political and ideological level, would aid minority integration into majority practices at the socio-cultural level. Central to this argument is that multi-ethnicity can be accommodated *within* the *existing* identity of Englishness. 'Contrary to the blood and soil caricature of the left, Englishness has been a rather open ethnicity. And, increasingly its symbols are being embraced by ethnic minority citizens too'[15]. Blunkett warns against the dangers posed by ethnic nationalists such as the BNP if English national identity is pushed into the political fringes. Implicit in his arguments is that the indigenous culture cannot be treated simply as one amongst a number of cultures. He contends that the success of an overarching political identity based on 'British values' is dependent on a grassroots re-invigoration of English culture. 'Extreme cosmopolitans, and their close cousins, extreme multiculturalists are wrong...it is not just that national feeling can become dangerous if it is not allowed to express itself. A sense of identity, patriotism or whatever we choose to call it, can in fact be a progressive and generous force' [16]. By contrast, Cosmo-multiculturalists argue from the perspective of cultural homogeneity where 'the nation' assumes a multi-ethnic dimension and rejects its *mono*-cultural traditions. For Modood, this requires a new form of Britishness which embraces the idea of ethnic hybridity tied together by a set of shared political values. Ascherson argues that the Integrationist approach is confused and veers suspiciously close to the cultural

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[11] Fred Halliday, *Two Hours that Shook the World: September 11th and its Consequences,* London:Saqi (2002), pp31.
[12] Meer and Modood, The Multicultural State, pp489.
[13] Gordon Brown MP, *The Future of Britishness (part two),* Fabian Society speech (2006).
[14] Bhikhu Parekh, 'British Commitments', *Prospect,* (2005).
[15] Goodhart, Nationalism, pp30.
[16] David Blunkett MP, *A New England: An English Identity within Britain*, Institute for Public Policy Research (2005), pp4.

assimilation of the past. 'He (Goodhart) is describing a one-way process in which the minority is persuaded by carrot and stick to adopt the culture of the majority in order to qualify for the rights of citizenship'[17]. He argues that the stage after multiculturalism is ethnic hybridity which involves a two-way process of cultural change between minority and majority groups. Ascherson's emphasis on cultural eclecticism where individuals pick and choose their ethnic identification, dovetails into the individualism, openness and diversity of Bobbitt's 'market state'. In this instance, the state assumes the role of an 'enabler' of individual opportunity rather than a 'protector' of the state culture. Implicit in this argument is that the attempts by Civic Nationalists to re-kindle a traditional, monocultural sense of national identity 'is a romantic attempt to recall the irrevocable, to unscramble to omelette'[18].

A fundamental area of debate between Multiculturalists and Integrationists is the extent to which institutions recognise ethnic difference. In this instance, it is useful to view the debate between both approaches as a sliding scale between 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' acceptance of multiculturalism. Multiculturalists argue from a maximalist perspective that cultural/lifestyle differences should be formally recognised within state institutions. For example, black-only policy meetings in trade unions. Multiculturalists contend that group recognition would aid integration by reducing racial discrimination, encouraging harmony between ethnic groups and, for Communitarians, to politically re-enforce cultural boundaries. 'The cultural identity of some groups should not be confined to the private sphere while the language, culture and religion of others (the majority) enjoy a public monopoly and are treated as the norm' [19]. The Commission for Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) offers a number of practical policy recommendations to achieve these aims including the formation of a government advisory commission on diversity issues, a British Equality Act leading to the formation of a single equality commission and, most importantly, that the UK government should formally declare itself as a multi-ethnic state. Modood and Meer agree with the CMEB's recommendations and argue that these proposals are pushing at an already open door. They contend that the Race Relations Acts (1965, 1968 and 1976) and the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) acted as the starting point for British multiculturalism and the formal recognition of minority cultural groups. For Modood, 'the concept of integration is not one way but interactive. It is about fitting together so that there is give and take, mutual change and the creation of something new'[20]. Integrationists approach this argument from a minimalist perspective where cultural diversity is tolerated at a social level but not explicitly recognised by the state. Civic Nationalists eschew the jurisprudential approach of Multiculturalists and argue that the formal recognition of 'difference' increases discrimination by institutionalising ethnic differences and opening up the opportunity for politicians to make ethnic based appeals. At the heart of this

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[17] Neal Ascherson, in 'Nationalism', pp63.
[18] ibid.
[19] Al Maktabi, 'A letter to Trevor Phillips, Chair of the CRE', Salaam (2005), pp2.
[20] Tariq Modood, *After Identity,* Soundings (2005) pp67.

argument lies the tension between pluralism and liberalism. Integrationists argue that policies encouraging ethnic segregation conflicts with the liberal ideology of the state. For Goodhart, integration should be more of a 'one way affair' where minorities are expected to accept British institutional norms as a 'pay off' for citizenship and legal protection. 'In the longer run as different ethnic groups grow in size and importance they will, willy nilly, change the host society...but in the nature of things most of the adaption will, initially be on the side of the newcomers who have chosen to live in an already existing society with established norms and traditions' [21]. For example, immigrants should be required to take a 'citizenship test' where they undertake a language test and swear an oath of loyalty to the state.

The tension between solidarity and diversity shapes the attitudes of Multiculturalists and Integrationists towards wealth, redistribution and education policy. Restrictive Civic Nationalists argue that social solidarity is a necessary precondition for a viable welfare state. They contend that the increase in lifestyle and value diversity since the 1960s has added an 'ethnic' element to modern day British politics which threatens the ties of mutual obligation underpinning the welfare state, and impacts negatively on social security spending. 'If values become more diverse, if lifestyles become more differentiated, then it becomes more difficult to sustain the legitimacy of a universal risk-pooling welfare state' [22]. For example, Civic Nationalists argue that social security spending remains high in Denmark due to a combination of cultural homogeneity and the adoption of two tier citizenship, which rewards 'insiders' and encourages minorities to 'earn' full access to the welfare state. From the Integrationist perspective, education policy plays an important role in re-establishing a sense of social cohesion and community ties. For example, the current coalition has stressed that British History will be central to the new national curriculum, and at a recent House of Lord's debate there was discussion over the importance of citizenship studies for young people. While the coalition's policies are unlikely to be motivated by concerns over the welfare state, they are continuing the previous government's attempts to re-invigorate 'civic duty' as a means of reinforcing social solidarity. However, Multiculturalists are critical of claims that diversity weakens redistributive social policies. Banting argues that in Canada 'there is no evidence of majorities turning away from redistribution because some of the beneficiaries are strangers' [23] while noting that there is little factual basis in support of claims that multiculturalism erodes the forces necessary to sustain a welfare state. Multiculturalists contend that Integrationist arguments regarding the welfare state are based on perception rather than reality. For example, ethnic nationalists such as the BNP play on fears that 'outsiders' are 'milking' housing and welfare to the detriment of the 'indigenous English'. However, there is little empirical data to support this claim. Furthermore, the approach of restrictive Civic Nationalists towards welfare may actually *decrease*

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[21] Goodhart, Nationalism, pp32.
[22] Goodhart, Diverse, pp2.
[23] Keith Banting, *Canada as Counter Narrative: Multiculturalism, Recognition and Redistribution*, Queens University (2005), pp19.

rather than increase integration. I argue that two-tier citizenship stigmatises new arrivals and leads to the perception of certain ethnic groups as 'second class citizens'. Rather than acting as an incentive to integration, it may lead to the reinforcement of cultural barriers as groups develop a counter identity around their second class status. In addition, the concept of two-tier citizenship conflicts with the universalist principles of the welfare state and liberal attitudes towards legal equality. In terms of education policy, the Multiculturalist approach focusses on whether integration into the majority culture harms levels of attainment. Modood argues that 'the refusal of Pakistanis to assimilate into local white working-class cultures...has produced a cohort of higher education entrants on a scale that is beyond the hopes that the government has for white working classes' [24].

In conclusion, the debate between Multiculturalists and Integrationists pivots on the issue of majority dominance and whether Britain, and by extension England, should reject the core culture reconstruct a multicultural national identity. While the debate has gained greater salience since September 11th and the 7/7 attacks in London, fundamentally it's an 'old', classically 'nationalist' debate which flows from the insecurities of those that consider themselves as 'native to the soil'. For Brubaker, a more complex form of assimilation has returned across Europe. 'Over the longer term, as a third generation of immigrant origin emerges, it is likely that a concern with at least some dimensions of assimilation will become increasingly salient' [25]. The arguments of Multiculturalists in response to these concerns are compelling but they fail to satisfy a number of key criticisms; firstly, they have a tendency to submerge Englishness into the broader political concept of Britishness and, as a result, fail to consider its role in a Multicultural society; second, they don't consider the impact of Multiculturalism on a nation state which derives its legitimacy from the majority ethnic group; and finally, some of their arguments conflict. For example, ethnic hybridity lends itself to a *mono* rather than *multi*cultural national identity. The Multiculturalist approach also assumes that cultural pluralism is the preferred option for minorities. However, minorities are often willing to forgo elements of their 'home culture' and are willing to develop strong ties to the host nation. I argue that the approach of the Civic Nationalists is the most pragmatic option because it acknowledges the nationalist foundations of the state and the centrality of the majority culture, while ensuring that cultural diversity is protected and tolerated in line with liberal principles. While this approach is akin to walking a tight rope, it most accurately reflects British socio-political reality.

3,318 Words (including footnotes)

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[24] Modood, Identity, pp70.
[25] Rogers Brubaker, 'The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and its sequels in France, Germany and the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol.24, No.4,* Taylor and Francis - Routledge Group (2001), pp535.

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