

The Crisis of Multiculturalism in the UK: Has it Failed?

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The idea of multiculturalism has been hotly debated across the UK in recent years. This article addresses the question of whether multiculturalism has failed in Great Britain based on an assessment of both sides of the debate. Considerable arguments against multiculturalism have been submitted by both academics and political figures, stating its devastating impact on social cohesion, causing social segregation, and its incompatibility with the principles of liberal democracy. This essay argues the opposite: the primary argument in this essay is that what has failed is not multiculturalism itself, but rather the understanding of it, due to the powerful negative discourse around the term embedded in multicultural policies (MCPs). The article argues that there is an urgent need for the contextual development of multiculturalism, which can lead to a variety of views. It concludes that the arguments against multiculturalism lack empirical evidence, and those arguments have been strongly influenced by the negative discourse around the idea of multiculturalism, rather than its everyday realities.



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The concept of multiculturalism has been one of the most controversial issues in the UK since Prime Minister David Cameron gave a speech on the ‘failure of the doctrine of state multiculturalism’ at the Munich Security Summit 2011, following German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s criticism of multiculturalism. His speech was a turning point in the multiculturalism discourse among both academics and state officials. In particular, the posited link between multiculturalism and the process of radicalization has challenged the effectiveness of multicultural policies, making the issue highly sensitive for both public and private stakeholders in multicultural policies.¹

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Historically, the term multiculturalism has been integrated into state doctrine in order to deal with cultural differences within the wider society, in defense of recognition of cultural norms and values. This was inevitable as the UK became increasingly multiethnic after the Second World War, when the state experienced a massive wave of immigration. This multiethnic nature of British society compelled policy makers to turn to multicultural policies throughout the second half of 20th century.

The culmination of critiques of multicultural policies in both academic and political discourses heralded a new period labeled a ‘crisis of multiculturalism’. Multiculturalism has been an inescapable part of political discourse in the UK since the very beginning of the 21st century.² Several major events, including the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings brought the effectiveness of multicultural policies into question. The wide range of criticism engendered substantial negative discourse, seen as a backlash against multiculturalism. The article addresses the question of whether multiculturalism has been success or a failure, through an overall evaluation of the arguments developed for and against multicultural policies.

The article is comprised of three parts. The first part discusses some of the definitions that have been developed by various authors and experts, providing a historical and contextual analysis of multiculturalism in the UK, including the challenges it has

¹ BBC News (2011, February 5). *State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> (Accessed : 24 November, 2014).

² Bhikhu Parekh (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, London: Profile. p.5

confronted. The second part evaluates the ongoing backlash against multiculturalism. The debate on whether multiculturalism has failed is addressed in the final section.

Conceptual development: What is multiculturalism as a state policy?

Approaches to multicultural policies have consistently produced different views on the consequences those policies brought about, so that ‘for some, it seems, multiculturalism is a battle cry, for others, a consensus position’.³ Multicultural policies are a set of guidelines for the acknowledgement of the cultural values, norms and traditions possessed by ethnic and religious groups within the wider society.⁴ It is particularly important to differentiate between the meanings attached to the term multiculturalism, since it is both ‘state of affairs’ and ‘political programme’.⁵ While the former is a situation in which a diverse society of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups is produced from multiculturalism, the latter usage of the term refers to the policies applied by the government in order to address the needs of a multicultural society. In sum, the understanding of multicultural policies has two facets: on one hand it entails tolerance for different ways of living, and on the other hand it is a ‘demand for legal recognition of the rights of ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural groups’.⁶ Multicultural policies in Great Britain have been implemented in a decentralized manner, by local governments without much intervention from the central authority. It is concluded by policymakers those policies should be incorporated within the state strategy in order to handle cultural differences, rather than making the building of a multicultural society as a goal of the state, since a multicultural construction is an inevitable outcome within the broader society. Put simply, while a multicultural society entails a situation where ethno-religious groups can enjoy their cultural values and norms, multicultural policies are programmed by the government in order to construct a multicultural society.⁷

3 Yack, B. (2002). Multiculturalism and the Political Theorists. *European Journal of Political Theory*, pp.106-119, p.108

4 Demireva, A., & Heath, N. (2013). Has multiculturalism failed in Britain? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp.161-180, p. 161

5 Barry, B. (2001) *Culture and Equality*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.22

6 Fukuyama, F. (2006) Identity, Immigration, and Liberal Democracy, *Journal of Democracy*, 17(2), pp. 5-20, p.16

7 Rozanov , A. (2012) ‘The Crisis of Multiculturalism’, in Rozanov , A. *3G: Globalistics, Global*

Despite some arguments to the contrary, multiculturalism cannot be understood as an entirely demographic issue, since it has deep political consequences due to the political participation of minorities living in a multicultural society. Despite some arguments to the contrary, multiculturalism cannot be understood as an entirely demographic issue, since it has deep political consequences due to the political participation of minorities living in a multicultural society. In addition, the debate has promoted ‘a soft tolerant’ version of multiculturalism, in contrast to ‘radical’ multiculturalism. The former seeks to prevent the emergence of radical groups and social segregation.⁸ Feminist critiques argue that multicultural policies permit some cultural norms that may violate women’s rights in a multicultural society. Substantial critiques of multiculturalism, particularly, of those feminist scholars, have been labeled as ‘post-multiculturalism’ within the frame of the prevailing discourse.⁹ Liberal critiques of multicultural policies have in particular had a strong impact on the further implementation of those policies.

Multicultural policies have been consistently attacked by mainstream liberals in the UK. Multicultural policies have been consistently attacked by mainstream liberals in the UK. The foundational beliefs and assumptions behind multicultural policies have been strongly contested due to its perceived incompatibility with the principles of a liberal state particularly after the turn of the 21st century in response to several claims arguing that ‘multiculturalists have won the day’.¹⁰ This trend brought about a strong criticism of multicultural policies due its posited destruction of liberal societies.¹¹ In this view, pluralism within a liberal democracy is undermined by multicultural policies due to the denial of voluntary group memberships, multiple affiliations in the context of cross-cutting cleavages, which are pre-conditions for the construction of a plural society. The liberal criticism of multiculturalism holds the view that multicultural policies result in the exploitation of group rights, particularly of women, within a multicultural society. However, empirical scrutiny of multicultural policies indicates that many cultural rules, norms and traditions are neutral in nature: that is, they are not in

Studies, Globalization Studies: Scientific Digest. Moscow, MAKS Press, pp.33-37, p.33

8 Touraine, A. (2001) Many cultures, one citizenship, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 37(4), pp. 393-421, p. 393

9 Vertovec, S. (2010) “Towards post-multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity” in *International Social Science Journal*, pp. 83-95.

10 Kymlicka, W. (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.113

11 Barry, B. (2001) *Culture and Equality*, Cambridge: Polity Press

conflict with principles of the liberal state such as freedom of religion and ‘creedal neutrality’¹² in Great Britain.¹³ Furthermore, it is also claimed that multicultural policies establish conditions whereby the values of the commanding clan or other cultural norms prevail and ultimately limit the freedoms and/or educational rights of the ‘second class’ groups.¹⁴ Thus, multicultural policies produce an ‘existence within the same society of a diversity of different cultures and communities’ that has been harshly criticized by the liberal critics due to their perceived failures of promoting equality and justice.¹⁵ The liberal criticism of multicultural policies in the UK led to substantial attacks from the public, and strongly influenced the approaches of the ruling parties to those policies. Consequently, the Labour government looked for the policies ‘beyond multiculturalism’ because of the perceived failure of multicultural policies. Finally, the critique of multicultural policies culminated during the Conservative government with David Cameron’s speech arguing that those policies have failed.

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Multiculturalism as a policy, therefore, it contributes to the development of a state ‘at ease with the rich tapestry of human life and the desire amongst people to express their own identity in the manner they see fit’.¹⁶ On the other hand, it is defined as a framework, that is, ‘a formula for manufacturing conflict’ where core principles of liberal democracy are challenged. In that vein, multiculturalism is seen as privileging ‘what divides people at the expense of what unites them’.¹⁷ In sum, the understanding of multiculturalism as both a philosophical idea and policy is twofold: a tool for recognition of cultural values and norms and a method of engendering social segregation and separate communities.¹⁸

In line with this, historically, Great Britain has always been a

12 Joppke, C. (2004) The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 55(2), pp. 237-257, p.240

13 Shachar, A. (2001) *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

14 Howe, K. (1992) Liberal Democracy, Equal Educational Opportunity, and the Challenge of Multiculturalism, *American Educational Research Journal*, 29(3), pp. 455-470, p. 455

15 Turner, B. (2006) Citizenship and the Crisis of Multiculturalism, *Citizenship Studies*, 10(5), pp. 607-618, p.611

16 Bloor, K. (2010). *The Definitive Guide to Political Ideologies*. Author House. p. 272

17 Barry, B. (2001). *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.3

18 Ibid. Howarth, C. and E. Andreouli (n.d.) p. 4.

multi-ethnic country, long before the immigration of Asian groups. It is commonly accepted that the evolution of multi-ethnic societies in Great Britain occurred through three stages commencing at the end of 19th century, when the ethnic and cultural diversity was handled through the annulment of all cultural, religious and ethnic diversities through assimilating those groups in line with ‘homogenous national norms’.¹⁹The norms and rules that are accepted unilaterally by the government within the national level in order to assimilate the different groups are called homogenous national norms. At the end of the Second World War, a wave of immigration made the Old Empire ethnically very diverse country, requiring the government to pursue some policies to address the ethnic diversity of the state.²⁰ Particularly, multiculturalism was adopted to counter the colonial model that had been established by Western powers in the exploitation of Third World states.²¹

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The second stage started with the development of a multilateral society, producing “integration plus” through the middle of the 20th century, when national norms were comprehended as heterogeneous rather homogenous. It was believed that a multicultural construction was possible, where immigrants could practice their cultural values and traditions and keep their identities. This change was due to an understanding that the groups’ assimilation to a common national identity was impossible.²² Subsequently, the incorporation of multicultural policies into local governance came to existence in the 1970s and 1980s and was finally accepted at the national level by the New Labour government in 1997.²³ During this time, multiculturalism was not without its opponents; the political right questioned its perceived successes.

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19 Grillo, R. (2007). An excess of alterity? Debating difference in a multicultural society. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), pp.979-998. p. 980

20 Panayi, P. (2004). The Evolution of Multiculturalism in Britain and Germany: An Historical Survey *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 25(5-6), pp.466-480. p.468

21 Alain Touraine, Many cultures, one citizenship, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 37(4), pp. 393–2011, p. 393

22 Ibid. Grillo: p.981

23 Hadjetian, S. (2008). *Multiculturalism and Magic Realism? Between Fiction and Reality*. Regensburg : GRIN Verlag GmbH, p. 31

The third stage brought a new chapter in multiculturalism's history: the beginning of the 21st century strongly influenced by the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks, which led to the 'crisis of multiculturalism' labeled as a *backlash*.²⁴ The initial roots of the current debate on multiculturalism began to penetrate every aspect of life as people became increasingly sensitized to the issues. One of the central worries regarding the practical functionality of multicultural policies is associated with the 'governability' of a multicultural body in which cultural diversity prevails.²⁵ Essentially, multicultural policies were blamed for destroying community cohesion in the British society.²⁶ Thus, this third period represents the developments that led to the increasing critiques.

One of the central worries regarding the practical functionality of multicultural policies is associated with the 'governability' of a multicultural body in which cultural diversity prevails. Essentially, multicultural policies were blamed for destroying community cohesion in the British society.

In a nutshell, the multiculturalism experience of the UK has evolved through *three stages*, entering a period of crisis in the beginning of the 21st century, when it was proclaimed as the primary reason for the emergence of 'parallel societies' and 'intolerable subjects', despite insufficient empirical evidence for its failure.²⁷ It was during this time that a report on effects of multiculturalism claimed that different ways of living and exercising diverse values and traditions leads to the destruction of common goods that a society possess, such as 'cohesion', 'common values', 'common aims and objectives', 'common moral principles and codes of behavior'.²⁸

Backlash against multiculturalism

The racial tensions in England's north started a new chapter in the critiques of multicultural policies as part of a state doctrine, shifting the state's political discourse toward social cohesion from multicultural policies, since it was believed that poor social cohesion was the primary reason for racial unrest.²⁹ A new wave of criticism brought about a backlash against multiculturalism, which deeply penetrated both academic and political discourse.

24 Lentin, A., & Titley, G. (2012). The crisis of 'multiculturalism' in Europe: Mediated minarets, intolerable subjects. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(2), pp.123-138, p. 123

25 Ibid. Grillo: pp.980-981

26 Goodhart, D. (2006). Union Jacked. *Foreign Policy*, 158(2), p.88

27 Ibid. Lentin, A., & Titley, G: 123

28 Cante, T. (2001). *Community Cohesion*. London: Home Office, p.13

29 Ibid. Cante, T. p.10

The negative political discourse on multiculturalism culminated with Prime Minister David Cameron's speech, who stated: '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'.

This period of crisis was described as the 'retreat of multiculturalism'³⁰ and the 'death of multiculturalism'³¹ in academic discourse. The negative political discourse on multiculturalism culminated with Prime Minister David Cameron's speech, who stated: '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'.³² The backlash trend has been demonstrated by intensified controls on immigration, the new citizenship tests, and policies drawn up by right-wing nationalist parties.

Four main arguments have been developed within this backlash against multiculturalism. The first challenge multiculturalism brought about is the groups' inability to *identify* with the broader society. It was argued that multicultural policies undermine identity construction in line with the mainstream society, as they lock groups in local identities through practice of cultural norms and values contrary to those of the mainstream society. Parallel lives bring about the identification challenge as the groups in separate communities fail to identify with the broader society leading to the emergence of radicalization. Furthermore, social inequality risks being ignored due to the collective approach of multicultural policies to group identities and rights, abandoning individual autonomy, and failing to address issues of social equality among communities.

The second set of arguments against multiculturalism centers around the devastating impact on *social cohesion and the rise of segregation*. The opportunity cost of according greater recognition to the different groups within a nation entails reduced emphasis on national solidarity.³³ Multicultural policies are

30 Joppke, C. (2004) The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 55(2), pp. 237-257

31 Allen, C. (2007) Down with Multiculturalism, Book-burning and Fatwas, The discourse of the 'death' of multiculturalism, *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 8(2), pp. 125-138

32 Ibid. BBC News.

33 Wolfe, A., & Jytte, K. (1997). Identity Politics and the Welfare State. *Social Philosophy and Policy*,

projected to cement separate communities where they will bond social capital instead of bridging it, whereby cultural standards and norms contrary to the values of broader society will be conserved, fostering segregation within the whole society. Opponents of multiculturalism attacked faith schools, accusing them of causing segregation by teaching different religious beliefs to children, who grew up with different ideas and perceptions, which in turn, puts the future of the state at risk. Multiculturalism has also been portrayed as a ‘mosaic’ because of its religious aspects which segregate the wider society.³⁴ Therefore, it is asserted that multicultural policies indirectly promote antagonism and mistrust within the overall society, since those policies foster “parallel lives” by differentiating those groups from the broader society through preservation of distinct cultural norms and values (for instance, early marriage). Furthermore, there are fears about the generational persistence of ethnic values and norms within the separate communities consolidating segregation through future generations.³⁵

Therefore, it is asserted that multicultural policies indirectly promote antagonism and mistrust within the overall society, since those policies foster “parallel lives” by differentiating those groups from the broader society through preservation of distinct cultural norms and values

As segregation deepens, it produces the third challenge, that is, the emergence of *extremism and radicalization*, which emerge when groups fail to tolerate different religious, ethnic and cultural values and traditions. This situation emerged vis-a-vis the communities with majority Muslims populations in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings.³⁶ One of the challenges associated with multicultural policies is their encouragement of ‘exclusion rather than inclusion’³⁷. This exclusion from the wider society leads to preservation of cultural values and standards promoting the emergence of extremist identities, blocking change and integration within the broader society.

Finally, multiculturalism is criticized for its *inconsistency with some of liberal principles*. The central claim is that multicultur-

14(2) pp. 231-255, p.29

34 Benhabib, S. (2002). *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.8

35 Demireva, A., & Heath, N. (2013). Has multiculturalism failed in Britain? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp.161-180, p. 163

36 Demireva, A., & Heath, N. (2013). Has multiculturalism failed in Britain? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp.161-180, p.162

37 Sniderman, P. M., & Hagendoorn, L. (2007). *When ways of life collide : multiculturalism and its discontents in the Netherlands* /. Princeton, N.J. ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, p.5

alism is incompatible with liberal democracy, since it is asserted that some diverse groups preserve values and traditions such as forced marriage, which violates the fundamental principles of liberal democracy.³⁸ Moreover, multiculturalism is criticized for its resistance to ‘cultural homogeneity’ through the maintenance of its bonds and communication with ‘a subordinate culture’. It is argued that ‘multiculturalists [indeed] occupy a set of positions between the two poles of border-guarding and border-crossing. All rely to some extent on both, but each emphasizes one pole more than the other’³⁹. The perceived concerns regarding the devastating impact of multicultural policies upon liberal values are also addressed in Christopher Caldwell’s work. He claims that the implementation of multicultural policies ‘requires the sacrifice of liberties that natives once thought of as rights’.⁴⁰ Ironically, multiculturalism was also blamed for the links between UK residents and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and for exporting radical ideas back to the country⁴¹. Commenting on the multicultural policies, Jacob Levy argues that multicultural policies result in the preservation of peace instead of preservation of a cultural diversity, which might be disappointing and a waste of time, but at the same time, provides an effective approach in a sense that those policies ease tensions originating from cultural diversity.⁴²

Essentially, cultural integration and assimilation are seen in the UK as the primary means to handle the societal threats that have originated from multicultural policies.

The backlash against multiculturalism has also produced mechanisms for alternatives to multicultural policies. Essentially, cultural integration and assimilation are seen in the UK as the primary means to handle the societal threats that have originated from multicultural policies. In this sense, multiculturalism is described as a ‘profoundly disturbing social experiment’⁴³. Though integration sounds like a reasonable idea, one should be careful in implementing measures for the integration, making sure

38 Gilroy, P. (2000). *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. London: Penguin, p.242

39 Ibid. Yack, B, p.109

40 Caldwell, C. (2009). *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*. London: Penguin, p.11

41 The Telegraph (2014, August 24). *Multiculturalism has brought us honour killings and Sharia law, says Archbishop*. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11053646/Multiculturalism-has-brought-us-honour-killings-and-Sharia-law-says-Archbishop.html>(Accessed : 24 November, 2014).

42 Ibid. Yack, B, p.115

43 The Daily and Sunday Express (2007, August 9). *How the Government has declared war on white English people*. Available at: <http://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/leo-mckinstry/15991/How-the-Government-has-declared-war-on-white-English-people>(Accessed : 24 November, 2014).

that the efforts to that end are conducted with the free will of the groups who wish to be integrated with the British identity. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government to create appropriate conditions for those wishing to maintain their own cultural traditions, as well as for those aspiring to share in a new culture by ensuring their free will within the framework of domestic laws and rules. The crucial point here is the clear and definite definition of integration, since assimilation might occur under name of integration. Integration is totally different from assimilation, since it is 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, coupled with cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.⁴⁴ Thus, integration 'certainly doesn't mean that one culture predominates over another, and other cultures therefore have to fit into that culture.⁴⁵

In particular, the integration of the diverse groups to the fundamental values derived from the Enlightenment period connected with 'secularism, individualism, gender equality, and freedom of expression' has been put forth.⁴⁶ It is believed that the more the Muslim groups of the British society integrate to these fundamental values, the more they will be 'civilized' and successfully integrate to the wider society. The idea sounds good in theory at least, but empirical tests indicate that the outcome of such an approach is not a society based on liberal values, as so-called 'integrationist' discourse expects. It is rather an 'anti-Muslim racism' that attempts to 'civilize' the Muslim groups in line with the liberal values inherited from Enlightenment.⁴⁷

Has multiculturalism failed?

The ongoing debate over multiculturalism's effectiveness in the British political life and media would make one believe that multiculturalism has failed, but in fact, research indicates that the arguments for this failure of multiculturalism are not based on empirical evidence. The debate on multiculturalism tells a new story of 'blind men and an elephant'; in which several blind men (or men in a dark room) make physical contact with an elephant

44 R. Jenkins, *Essays and Speeches* (London: Collins, 1967), p. 267

45 Grillo, R. (2007). An excess of alterity? Debating difference in a multicultural society. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), pp.979-998, p.982

46 Kundnani, A. (2012). Multiculturalism and its discontents: Left, Right and liberal. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(2), pp.155-166, p.155

47 Ibid. Kundnani, A, p.155

to find out its physical shape formulating their own ‘truths’ about the elephant that leaves them in totally contrasted views. Different meanings have been attached to multiculturalism: it is ‘a demographic condition, a set of institutional arrangements, objectives of a political movement or a set of state principles’.⁴⁸ A close examination of the backlash against multiculturalism indicates that the arguments put forth by both its proponents and its detractors are strongly influenced by the negative political discourse. Particularly, the debate on multiculturalism is strongly affected by the flashpoint issues of terrorism, radicalization or extremism, which significantly undermine the success stories of multicultural policies.⁴⁹

A major piece of research on the weakening of liberal democracy’s primary principles as a result of multiculturalism comes from Bernard Yach, who focused on finding an answer to the question, ‘does multiculturalism pose a serious threat to the ideals and institutions that liberal egalitarians cherish?’⁵⁰ He found that the claim that multicultural policies damage liberal ideas and institutions was groundless and lacking in empirical evidence; the argument is empirically void. Thus, he comes to the conclusion that the various challenges have been overstated; he claims that ‘multiculturalists policies more often test our tact and patience than our fundamental principles’.⁵¹

Thus, the central reason for the lack of integration to British society is not multicultural policies, but perceived individual and group discriminations.

Thus, what has led the groups to live parallel lives, segregated wider society, and demolished social cohesion is the perceptions and policies that have stemmed from discriminatory treatment by society at large. One study finds that although bonding social capital is considerably high among some groups (particularly, intermarriage among Pakistani and Bangladeshi), it does not necessarily bring about separate communities due to the shared working places and dwellings within the wider society.⁵² Thus, the central reason for the lack of integration into the British society is not multicultural policies, but perceived individual and group

48 Ibid. Howarth, C. and E. Andreouli (n.d.), p.8

49 Hasan, M. (2011, February 5). Why David Cameron is wrong about radicalisation and multiculturalism, *New Statesman*. Available at : <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/mehdi-hasan/2011/02/cameron-speech-british>(Accessed : 24 November, 2014).

50 Ibid. Yach, B, p.107

51 Ibid. Yach, B, p.107

52 Ibid. Demireva, A., & Heath, N., p.177

discriminations. These huge criticisms partially originate from presentations of multicultural policies as the primary reasons for radicalization, particularly of Muslim communities. Cameron's speech was a strong blow to public optimism for the future of multicultural policies.

This paper does not reject the view that the emergence of segregation, parallel lives or separate communities within the broader society do not exist in the UK, but instead posits that multiculturalism is not the primary reason for the appearance of those challenges through the overall evolution of the debate around multicultural policies.

Conclusion

Indeed, much of the debate on the failure of multiculturalism stems from the lack of a common understanding of the concept. The findings indicated that what has failed is not multiculturalism itself, but its perception within the wider society, since it has been represented in the contexts of terrorism, extremism and radicalization. Part of the challenge also originates from the various understandings of multiculturalism. The lack of a common comprehension of the concept led to the dominance of philosophical debate within media and political discussions. It is the understanding of multiculturalism that has failed, rather than its application. Thus, it is concluded that instead of philosophical debate on the concept, a substantial research is needed to investigate multiculturalism's everyday application through empirical evidence.

To conclude, the claim that multiculturalism causes the existence of parallel lives, disrupts social cohesion, and leads to social segregation of religious-ethnic groups and finally to radicalization, undermining the creation of a shared British identity, lacks empirical proof. The evidence tells a different story: the academic and political discourse on failure of multiculturalism engenders different perceptions on group and individual discrimination, discouraging different groups from integrating within the society as a whole. A shift from a philosophical debate to a broader understanding is needed in order to explore multicultural practices experienced in the everyday lives of groups within multicultural communities.