

The presentation of immigration situation and integration policies in United Kingdom

LdV Partnership Project “Education Schemes as an Integration Tool – A European Comparison (ESIT)”

Introduction

The United Kingdom has a long history of immigration and integration, although it has not always been, and probably is not even today, a coherent policy. The main flow of immigration in the UK has started after the IIWW, but it has changed completely in the last 15 years because of the extension of EU. The immigration and integration policies have tried to cover various social areas, including education; however, it seems that education has been an additional tool, not a main priority in the integration strategy.

Our report on immigration situation and integration policies in the United Kingdom tries to show the immigration situation, in particular the last 15 years, furthermore a variety of attempts in integration and immigration policies and in the end, a short description of the role of education in these strategies. We have based our report on the research of Shamit Saggarr, Will Sommerville, Alexandra Iwulska and others.

Immigration situation and data

In recent years the UK has been experiencing the highest level of immigration inflows in its history, with Poland, India, and Pakistan being the main sending countries in 2008. The main surge in immigrants came with the new member states joining the EU in 2004. According to HWWI (2007), between May 2004 and September 2007 around 730,000 people migrated to the UK from new member states. The main strength of UK migration is that people come there to work.ⁱ

Immigration to the United Kingdom has changed over the past 15 years: migration has grown in volume and has become more temporary in nature, and its composition has become more diverse. From 1999 to 2009, net migration to the United Kingdom added 2 million people to the total population. This significant net inflow explains the 70 % increase in the foreign-born population over recent years, from 3.8 million in 1993 to 6.5 million in 2010, amounting to 12 % of the UK's population. Furthermore, emigration has risen steeply, dropping only with the advent of economic recession.

The earlier waves of immigration to the United Kingdom were mainly from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, which in part gave rise to the race-relations model of addressing integration and inter-group relationships that has been in place since the 1960s. Migration has become more temporary in nature. Moreover, a major proportion of immigrants are coming for short periods of time: 72 % of migrants come for less than five years. A majority of long-term migrants now state that they intend to stay for one to two years only. London and the South East of England are the main destinations of choice, as they have been since the 19th century. Fully half of all immigrants live in these areas.

Immigrants have lower employment rates than UK-born people overall, though, critically, the rates vary widely according to gender and nationality.

The unauthorized resident population has been estimated at 618,000, or around 10 % of the foreign-born population. This proportion has been judged higher than those in comparable EU countries such as Germany and France.ⁱⁱ

Integration policies in the United Kingdom

UK has not developed a formal integration program or model, despite experiencing large-scale immigrant flows and settlement over the past half century. The political debates around integration that have accompanied these flows have often been fraught and destabilizing, reflecting a deep-seated ambivalence about immigrants and immigration in British society.ⁱⁱⁱ

There is no national policy framework on integration. There are integration policies relating to one category of migrant refugees, and to those applying for settlement and UK citizenship.

There are policies that have included migrants within their remit: on discrimination, for instance, and on community cohesion. There is also an important area of service provision, English language tuition, and services such as health and education where some targeted provision has been made to meet migrants' particular needs. As a result, responsibility for migrants is dispersed across Whitehall. No single department takes a lead role. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) within the Home Office is responsible for refugee integration and for settlement and Citizenship policy. The Department for Communities and Local Government leads on community cohesion while the Government Equality Office leads on discrimination.^{iv}

Due to large inflows of immigrants and possible threats to social cohesion, the government has been shifting its immigration policy in the past couple of years. By introducing a point-based system, the new coalition wants to focus more on the quality of immigrants. In 2008, a new points-based system, modelled on the Australian General Skilled Migration programme, replaced the various immigration routes and categories. The system has five tiers: Tier 1 for highly-skilled workers; Tier 2 for sponsored skilled workers; Tier 3 for low skilled workers; Tier 4 for international students; and Tier 5 for various categories of temporary workers. Applicants for entry clearance through any of the tiers need to accumulate a certain number of points which are allocated according to different criteria within each tier. As of 2009, Tiers 1, 2, 4, and 5 are in operation, but Tier 3 is closed for the foreseeable future as the government argues that all of the UK's low-skilled needs can be met by migration from within the EU, especially the post-2004 member states. One notable innovation under this system is the creation of a Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) which provides twice yearly advice to the government on shortage occupations to inform the allocation of points for Tier 2 applicants.^v

According to MIPEX III (2011), the British immigration policies are not favourable toward integration. Such a result stems partly from the fact that immigrants are excluded from certain social benefits. The strong points of the British migrant policy are education, with a well-tailored living-in-diversity training, and antidiscrimination regulation, while one of the weakest elements is the possibility to obtain permanent residence and nationality.^{vi}

Policies aimed at improving immigrant outcomes have tended to be anchored in empirical pragmatism and have been influenced by the civil-rights movement in the United States. However, the most effective routes to long-term integration — opening up the labour market to immigrants and enacting major mainstream public service programs — have not been adequately emphasized in the integration policy framework. The emphasis instead has been on a

system based on group rights that is designed to protect ethnic minorities rather than immigrants from poor treatment in public services and private markets.^{vii}

Few public policies have specifically sought to advance immigrant integration, and those that have existed have lacked sustained funding. Small, stand-alone programs have been launched, but few have survived, and fewer still have delivered outcomes that can be attributed to such programming. Instead, integration has depended on the design and implementation of broad social policies that affect schooling, neighbourhoods, housing, employment, health care, and so on. Britain has consequently adapted and targeted mainstream policies to reach the needs of immigrants and minorities. While not a failure, this has not been done systematically, and there has been little coordination among programs. At a local level, policies have contributed to successful communities, especially through area-based funding programs.^{viii}

The country's previous experience of large-scale New Commonwealth immigration now appears a dated chapter from a different era. The integration challenges created by the earlier wave gave rise to a specific policy framework that focused on race/ethnicity and skin colour to the exclusion of other factors that have either advanced or held back long-term integration. The more recent experience involving large-scale white migration from Eastern European sources has created a substantially different framing context for integration.

The government's approach to integration has changed substantially since the mid-1990s, with the emphasis shifting toward increasing the obligations on new, first-generation immigrants to integrate (for example, a language examination and citizenship test were introduced in 2004). Beginning with the 1997-2010 Labour administration, followed by the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition (in power since May 2010), there has been a clear reaction to the doctrine of multiculturalism (defined as state support and funding for minority groups to preserve their culture and blamed for leading to segregation and a concomitant backlash). However, there was never a clear doctrine or programming on multiculturalism in UK.

Nevertheless, significant changes can be inferred from new integration programs for refugees; new citizenship classes, testing, and ceremonies; pre-departure language testing; and efforts to promote community cohesion. They can also be seen in the introduction of a points-based system to assess immigrants' potential utility for the UK economy and that favours specific labour-market needs.^{ix}

Up until around the turn of the century, a "race-relations" model was the standard shorthand description of UK policy. Integration policy was built around anti-discrimination law, inspired by the US civil-rights movement. The most potent legal measures came in the form of antidiscrimination law; initiated in 1965. The legal framework was reinforced by institutions led nationally by the Commission for Racial Equality and by local governments. Significant government-appointed commissions led to changes in institutional practices, particularly in policing methods and educational curricula.^x Critically, it is ethnic diversity, and not immigration, that has driven the UK integration agenda. Statistics have traditionally been collected on ethnic minorities and minorities have been the targets of social and economic policies. The adoption of such a race-centered approach was critiqued as a poor match to the immigrant integration context of Britain in the mid-20th century.

In 2001 three events shook public and government confidence in a race-relations model: riots involving minority communities in the northern towns of Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham; the Sangatte refugee crisis; and the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. These events fuelled the sense that existing immigration and immigrant integration policy was unsuccessful and in need of change. The July 7, 2005, terrorist attacks on London provoked further concerns about white and minority ethnic and religious groups (especially Muslims) leading segregated lives and mutually suspicious of one another. Further, throughout this period there was rising support in a limited number of areas of UK for far-right political parties, particularly the BNP.

The focus of immigrant integration policies consequently shifted away from a race-relations model. There are at least six strands of policy to consider when characterizing this shift: refugee integration policy, community cohesion from 2001 to 2010, a strong and broad emphasis on equality, counterterrorism (CT) policy, mainstream policies and citizenship policy.

Regarding the **Immigrant Integration Policy**^{xi}, a formal immigrant integration policy has been applied in UK to only one subcategory of migrants: recognized refugees. In its third term, from 2005 to 2010, the Labour government briefly touched a broader strategy of immigrant integration. This involved a mapping of strategies and projects and some funding for local projects in places with significant numbers of new arrivals (called the Migration Impacts Fund, this was short-lived). Whitehall politics, where responsibility for integration (except refugee integration) moved in 2007 to the Department of Communities and Local Government from the Home Office, could have proved decisive but ultimately led to stasis. Any decision on the nascent national immigrant integration strategy was delayed by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. The commission's remit was not the integration of newcomers, but a response to the 7/7 London attacks. It sought to balance the interests of immigrant identities on the one hand with wider concerns about the long-term failure to integrate some, but not all settled immigrant communities.

The coalition government has been supportive of refugees and has made efforts to improve the asylum system. However, there have also been significant cuts to advice services, core support, and training programs directly benefiting refugees. More predictably, the Migration Impacts Fund has been terminated.

In UK academic and policy debates the term integration is not universally accepted. It still carries connotations of assimilation: in particular, a concern that the key focus of interest is whether migrants will become culturally similar to the rest of the population and the normative judgement that they ought to do so. The Home Office consultation that preceded its Refugee Integration Strategy, for instance, insisted 'Inclusion in our society does not mean that a refugee is required to assimilate'; and the strategy subsequently defined integration as 'the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute to the community, and to become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents'.^{xii}

Community cohesion policies^{xiii} are closely associated with a response to the 2001 riots in the northern mill towns of Oldham, Burnley, and Bradford. A series of reports suggested that a major cause of the riots was the segregation of Asian and white communities and recommended a new set of community cohesion policies, aimed at bringing communities together. Community cohesion policies followed, including initiatives such as summer youth programs, school-twinning projects, and ethnically mixed housing policies — all largely promulgated at a local level.

Questions still remain as to whether the promotion of cohesion through programs that increase intergroup interaction is an appropriate way to accommodate social and cultural differences in the United Kingdom. The current coalition government appears sceptical of this approach, and funding in this area has been severely cut.

It is noteworthy that the communities targeted by community cohesion policies are not home to many new immigrants; instead, they belong overwhelmingly to the children of immigrants. This confirms that integration is rarely about new immigrants only.

Regarding **Equality and Human Rights Policy and Legislation**^{xiv}, major equality measures have reinforced and extended the anti-discrimination framework. There was incremental but very substantial change in the equalities framework between 1999 and 2010. Following the Macpherson report in 1999, which identified institutional failings in the police and other parts of the public sector that affected ethnic minorities, the *2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act* aimed to eradicate institutionalized racism by obligating certain public authorities, including the

police and immigration services, to take action to correct ethnic inequalities and latent biases in recruitment, employment, and service delivery.

The *1998 Human Rights Act*, which enshrined the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, has further reinforced the anti-discrimination framework. The majority of jurisprudence that has reinforced or developed the rights of refugees and migrants comes from the passage of the 1998 Act.

There has also been some institutional infrastructure that has supported the implementation of rights. For example, a single public body — the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) — was created in 2007 to further equal rights across ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith, and disability. However, EHRC and its predecessor commissions have always had limited purview over immigration issues and have not taken the lead on immigrant integration.

Regarding the **Counterterrorism Policy**^{xv}, prior to the July 2005 London attacks, government CT policy focused surveillance and intelligence on likely threats from foreign sources and also from domestic ones. The “home-grown” dimension of the 2005 London bombings changed that framework irrevocably. The policies pursued since contain two core elements. First, measures have been adopted to strengthen the resilience of potential targets of violence such as transport infrastructure and revolving targets such as media outlets in response to particular controversies. Second, government policy has sought to tackle potential support for violent extremism from within Muslim communities. This strand has acknowledged the dangerous effects of tacit backing within British Muslim communities for confrontation and violence.

One criticism has been that very little is known about the effectiveness of these local programs. A criticism from a completely different perspective has been that CT measures have themselves contributed to a hardening of attitudes and grievances among peaceful Muslims.

Citizenship and naturalization^{xvi} has been changed with policymakers deliberately encouraging a more proactive regime to those seeking to acquire citizenship or long-term residency rights. The promotion of citizenship began in earnest under Home Secretary David Blunkett (2001-04) involved “activating” the naturalization process. This included the introduction of citizenship tests (which came into force in October 2005), language tests (also mandatory for long-term residence), and, citizenship ceremonies (first piloted in 2004). This was further elaborated by the 2008 Goldsmith Commission on Citizenship that endorsed an oath of allegiance, tax rebates for volunteering, and a national British public holiday (none of which have been enacted).

Across Europe there has been a trend towards greater compulsion in integration policies, requiring migrants to attend language and orientation classes for instance and to demonstrate a level of language proficiency before arrival. The UK has to an extent followed this trend in requiring evidence of some language ability and knowledge of ‘Life in the UK’ before acquiring settlement or Citizenship, and most recently in requiring some family migrants to have a level of spoken English before coming to the UK.^{xvii}

About the future policy considerations, there are at least six strands that make up immigrant integration policy, or have been conflated or associated with immigrant integration policy. Only changes to settlement and citizenship actually constitute a targeted area of policy directed at immigrants. The others are either tangential or aimed at other targets entirely.^{xviii}

An important dynamic that has not been discussed thus far is **the role of the European Union**, which has assumed greater power over immigration policymaking on an incremental basis, particularly since the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). There has been a significant pooling of sovereignty on asylum and illegal immigration issues. There have also been significant efforts toward immigrant integration. These include the Common Basic Principles, agreed in 2004, and a range of research, network building, and dissemination to spread best practices on immigrant integration.

Three observations are relevant to the European dimension. First, the Lisbon Treaty made clear that immigrant integration was subject to the subsidiary principle and is therefore unlikely to see any major policy influence coming from the European Union in the foreseeable future. However, the European Union will continue to have a gentle effect through sharing of best practice and, in particular, through dedicated resource allocation. Looking back at the last decade, it is clear that co-financing from the European Refugee Fund and later the European Integration Fund has been significant. Finally, intergovernmental networks and exposure at a European level have led to at least some policy transfer.

The government's policymaking direction became clearer in spring 2012, as the Department of Communities and Local Government released its broad integration strategy, *Creating the Conditions for Integration*. It is a document that contains no program of action or coordination, but rather a list of government initiatives from a range of departments of varying degrees of relevance. It is also the first statement in nearly three years of a government position on integration and clearly notes that the state's role should be that of facilitator and, as matter of a principle, an actor only of last resort — noting clearly, for example, that the "government will only act exceptionally." The direction of integration policy — as indicated by the new strategy — is likely to stay on a similar path for the short term.

The role of the education in the integration policies

Hidden inside most British mainstream government programs and social policies are deliberate correctives that favour integration, especially of disadvantaged populations.^{xix} When applied to immigrants, the most obvious example is in relation to education policy. Early childhood education programs have outreach components dedicated to minorities, which favour immigrants. In schools, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) released upwards of £250 million for language learning alone in 2009-2010(it was also used for other purposes). More generally, area-based grants and additional premiums to schools based on their number of low-income pupils will likely disproportionately favour immigrant youth and second-generation immigrants. For adults, there was a major increase in the budget for English language instruction, especially in the early 2000s. Put differently, while bespoke measures are small the major weight of social welfare programs favours integration.

The coalition government is broadly in favour of continuing a focus on the disadvantaged within policy areas such as education, but has moved away from increased tailoring. This suggests that advances in immigrant integration through more tailored policy measures are unlikely, at least in the near future.

The Government's 'Pupil Premium' scheme which was introduced in April 2011 does offer some hope that this situation may eventually be rectified. The scheme offers extra funding to schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students, with the aim of addressing 'current underlying inequalities' in the schools system.

Conclusions

The biggest factor of the United Kingdom's attractiveness does not come from migration policy. The country managed to receive a high percentage of highly skilled newcomers, willing to work, due to a range of reasons: cultural diversity, metropolitan centers such as London, presence of multinational companies, and low language barriers. With the number of minorities already in

the country, an immigrant may easily find his or hers ethnic group, work in the native language, and/or live close to native culture.^{xx}

Immigration to the United Kingdom is likely to continue at relatively high rates. A substantial new generation will emerge from current and future influxes. Already, more than half of London's school-age pupils are the children of immigrants.^{xxi}

The report tried to show a general picture of the United Kingdom's integration and immigration policies. As it seemed, they are rather contrasting and unified policy and responsible authority is still missing. Furthermore, the education sector is secondary in the whole integration programme.

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Endnotes:

ⁱ Iwulska, Alexandra. (2012). “*Immigration policies: Sweden and the United Kingdom*” in A.Iwulska (ed.) World Bank report “*Golden Growth: Restoring the lustre of the European economic model*”, pp. 112.

ⁱⁱ Saggar, Shamit; Sommerville, Will. (2012). “*Building a British Model of Integration in an Era of Immigration: Policy Lessons for Government*”, Washington DC, Migration Policy Institute, pp.3-4.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, p.1.

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- iv Spencer, Sarah. (2011). *“Policy Primer: Integration”*. The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, p.2.
- v Hampshire, James. (2009). *“Immigration policy in the United Kingdom”*. Sussex Centre for Migration.
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- viii Ibid, p.2.
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- x Ibid. p.11.
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- xiv Ibid, p.13.
- xv Ibid, p.15.
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