

INTEGRATED BRITAIN?

Britain is more culturally diverse than ever before. 8 million people, 14% of the population of England and Wales, belong to an ethnic minority group, up from 9% in 2001. London is home to 270 nationalities speaking 300 languages. Should we be doing more to support integration and avoid segregation and isolation?

What is 'social cohesion'?

There is no commonly accepted definition of social cohesion. It is often identified as 'solidarity' and 'togetherness'.

One definition of a cohesive community is one where "there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace in schools and within neighbourhoods."

Cantle, T. Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

Narborough Road, Leicester, identified by LSE's Super Diverse Streets project as the most diverse street in the UK. The owners of its 222 shop units come from 23 different countries.

LSE Cities: <https://lsecities.net/objects/research-projects/super-diverse-streets>

Social Attitudes

95% of the respondents to the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey reported that being able to speak English is the most important factor in being 'British', up from 85% in 2003. Having British Citizenship and respecting Britain's political institutions and laws were the next most significant factors (both at 85%).

54% of Londoners responding to the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey report that immigration has been beneficial for the UK economy, compared to 28% elsewhere in Britain.

British Social Attitudes Survey 31 (2014), National Centre for Social Research

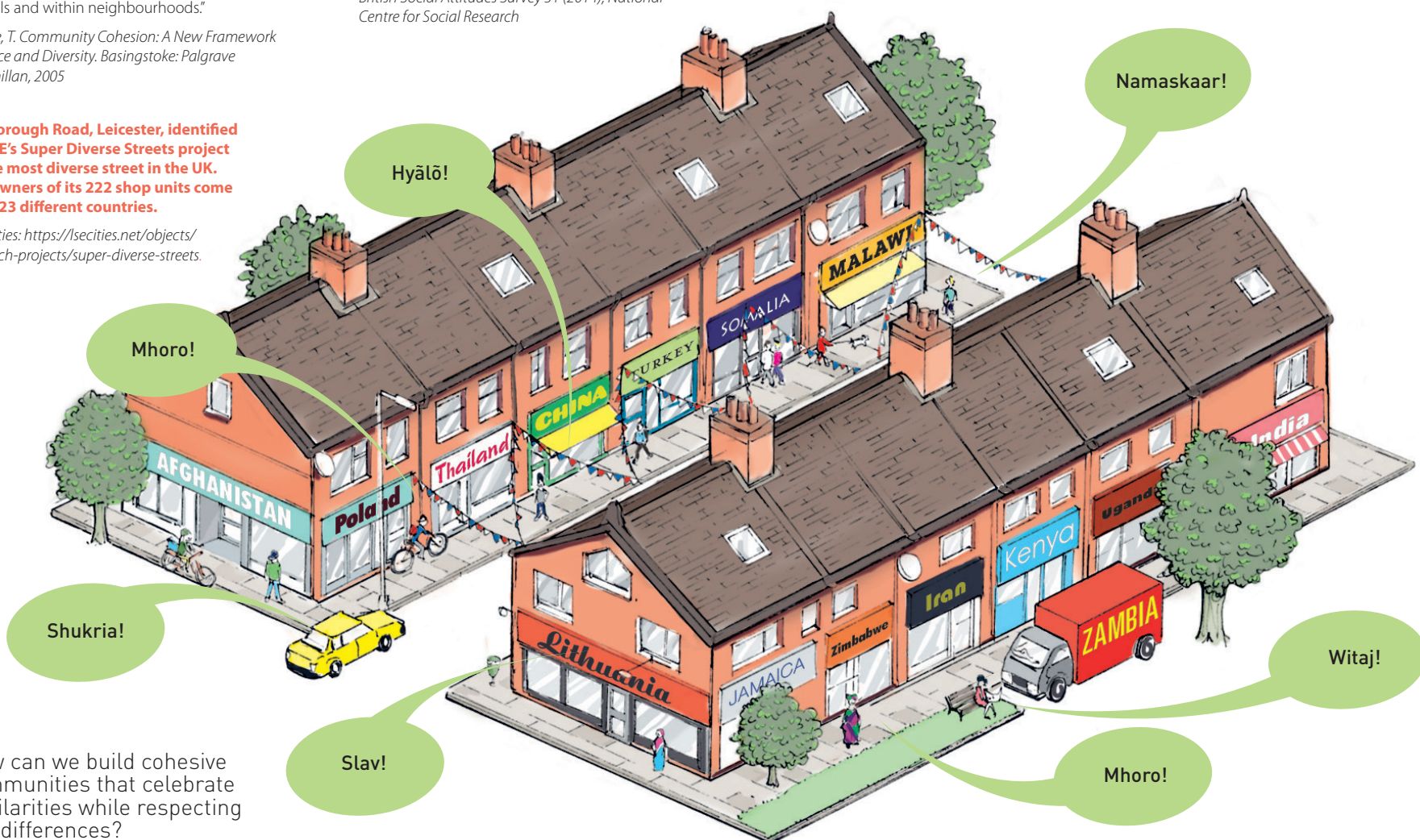
Census Data: ONS, Census 2011

8 million people, or 14% of the population of England and Wales, belong to an ethnic minority. Over the past decade the UK's white population has remained roughly the same size, whilst the minority population has almost doubled. People of mixed ethnicity now represent the second largest (non-distinct) minority population and are the fastest growing.

A Portrait of Modern Britain, Policy Exchange, 2014.

"Social integration is about closing the gaps that exist between people and communities"

UK Government 'Casey Review', December 2016



How can we build cohesive communities that celebrate similarities while respecting our differences?

1. Establish common values to unite people from different backgrounds

Understanding British history, laws and values to build tolerance, citizenship and respect.

2. Empower people

Empowering people through training, education and skills can help people to feel more able to take a positive role in society. The Casey Review (2016) has recommended increasing women's participation in the labour market and promoting IT literacy, for example.

3. Manage change

The demographics of the UK have changed over generations. Giving people accurate information and the space and time to understand and contribute views is important to allow people to make informed decisions.

7. Support citizenship

Communities are built by everyone, both hosts and newcomers. As individuals, government, civil society and businesses, we all need to be part of building the society we want and being active citizens.

4. Open up conversation

More conversation about integration is needed so that people feel comfortable talking about their hopes and fears of multiculturalism and so that they challenge misconceptions.

8. Question stereotypes

The media can portray a one dimensional view of different cultures. Being aware of the media's influence on public perceptions can help understand and challenge stereotypes.

5. Support communication

Language lessons and translation services can help people who speak different languages to communicate with one another. The Casey Review (2016) states that a shared language is fundamental to integrated societies. The Review calls for Government to support community-based English language classes.

9. Plan integrated communities

Housing and regeneration policies can foster integration by planning spaces to allow people to meet and interact. Building mixed social housing, community spaces and improving transport links to improve people's mobility, can all contribute.

6. Celebrate culture

Bringing people together through food, sport, music, festivals and art can be a great way to meet people of different cultures. Initiatives include Football Beyond Borders, the Ramadan Tent Project and the Human Library.

