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## Original Article

# Is there really a retreat from multiculturalism policies? New evidence from the multiculturalism policy index

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**Abstract** In much of the Western world, and particularly in Europe, there is a widespread perception of a wholesale 'retreat' from multiculturalism. Governments that once embraced a multicultural approach to diversity are said to be replacing it with a strong emphasis on civic integration. This assumption that new civic integration policies displace older multiculturalism policies (MCPs) has not properly been tested. Existing indices of immigrant integration policies (such as Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) or Civic Integration Policy Index (CIVIX)) have captured the rise of civic integration policies, but are not designed to measure the presence of MCPs. Drawing on an updated version of the Multiculturalism Policy Index introduced earlier, the article presents an index of the strength of multicultural policies for European countries and several traditional countries of immigration at three points in time (1980, 2000 and 2010). The results paint a different picture of contemporary experience in Europe. While a small number of countries, including most notably the Netherlands, have weakened established multicultural policies during the 2000s, such a shift is the exception. Most countries that adopted multicultural approaches in the later part of the twentieth century have maintained their programmes in the first decade of the new century, and a significant number of countries have added new ones. In much of Europe, multicultural policies are not in general retreat. As a result, the turn to civic integration is often being layered on top of existing multicultural programmes, leading to a blended approach to diversity. The article reflects on the compatibility of MCPs and civic integration, arguing that more liberal forms of civic integration can be combined with multiculturalism but that more illiberal or coercive forms are incompatible with a multicultural approach.

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## Introduction

At first glance, we seem to be witnessing a pervasive backlash against multiculturalism in many countries, especially in Europe. The widespread perception is that multiculturalism has failed – ‘utterly failed’ according to Chancellor Merkel – and that it is time for a sharp change in direction. Many commentators worry that multiculturalism has nurtured what Germans call *Parallelgesellschaften* or parallel societies. The British prime minister is one of these, arguing that ‘under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream’ (Cameron, 2011). Trevor Phillips put it more pithily: under the baleful influence of multiculturalism, Britain is ‘sleep walking to segregation’ (Phillips, 2005; also Home Office, 2001). More specifically, multiculturalism is blamed for: the residential ghettoization and social isolation of immigrants; poor economic integration of immigrants; poor educational outcomes for their children; high dependence on welfare; the perpetuation of illiberal practices among immigrant groups, often involving restricting the rights and liberties of girls and women; political radicalism, especially among Muslim youth and so on.

Current debates also suggest that Europe is rejecting multiculturalism in favour of an alternative approach to diversity, commonly referred to as civic integration. This alternative approach is seen as being based on sharply different premises: the active integration of immigrants into the economic, social and political mainstream; a ‘muscular’ defence of liberal democratic principles, to borrow the words of the British prime minister; insistence that newcomers acquire the language of the host country, and learn about its history, norms and institutions; and the introduction of written citizenship tests and loyalty oaths. Implicitly if not explicitly, civic integration is presented as if it is incompatible at some deep level with a multicultural approach.

Not everyone shares this analysis of the fate of multiculturalism. Some commentators dispute that multiculturalism has failed, and suggest to the contrary that countries which embraced multiculturalism have fared better on several indicators of immigrant integration than countries that rejected multiculturalism (for example, Bloemraad, 2006). On this view, the retreat from multiculturalism is premature, regrettable and likely counter-productive. Others go further, and argue that multiculturalism has neither failed nor retreated, but remains fully in place, albeit hidden by changing political rhetoric. On this view, politicians no longer use the word ‘multiculturalism’, preferring terms such as ‘diversity policies’, but the policies adopted under the multicultural heading remain alive and well. In this view, ‘policies and programs once deemed “multicultural” continue everywhere’ (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010, p. 21). This in turn raises further disagreements about how multiculturalism policies (MCPs) relate to civic integration policies. Does the increased adoption of civic integration policies entail a retreat from MCPs (Joppke, 2004, 2007, 2010), or can the two sets of policies be coherently combined (Modood, 2007, 2012)?



In short, we see a series of inter-related disagreements: Have MCPs failed? Has there been a retreat from MCPs? Are civic integration policies incompatible with MCPs?

In order to get a handle on these debates, it is important to be able to measure MCPs. One reason for the persistence and vehemence of these disagreements is that both scholars and politicians are making sweeping generalizations about the rise and fall of multiculturalism, and its success or failure, without systematic cross-national measurement, of which MCPs have in fact been adopted in which countries.

In the hope of generating a more informed and careful debate, we have devised a 'Multiculturalism Policy Index', which tracks the evolution of MCPs across 21 OECD countries. In our previous work, we have used this index in order to test certain alarmist claims about the negative effects of multiculturalism. We have found, for example, contrary to much speculation, that MCPs have not had a negative effect on the strength of the welfare state (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006). Other scholars have used the Index to show that MCPs have not had a negative effect on social capital, social cohesion, educational attainment or civic participation (Berry *et al.*, 2006; Crepaz, 2006; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010; Wright and Bloemraad, 2012).

In this article, however, our focus is not primarily on the effects of MCPs, but on the prior and more basic question: namely, have these policies in fact been in retreat, or is the shift more at the rhetorical than policy level? In particular, has the rise of civic integration policies come at the expense of MCPs, or are the two co-existing?

Drawing on new evidence from the Index, we challenge the standard narrative about the decline of multiculturalism in two ways. First, we argue that the retreat from multiculturalism in Europe is more complete at the level of discourse than policy. Although there has been a retreat from MCPs in a few countries, this is not the dominant pattern. The larger picture in Europe is one of stability and expansion of multicultural policies in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Second, the persistence and even growth of MCPs are not inherently incompatible with civic integration. Multiculturalism programmes are being ripped out to make room for civic integration programmes in the Netherlands. But once again, this is not the norm. In many countries, civic integration programmes are being layered over multicultural initiatives introduced in earlier decades, producing what can be thought of as a multicultural version of civic integration. To be sure, there are limits to the compatibility of MCPs and civic integration. Some countries are embracing more obligatory, even illiberal versions of civic integration (Joppke, 2007, 2010), which are incompatible with a multicultural support for diversity. But more liberal and voluntary approaches to civic integration can clearly be combined with a multicultural approach, and remain a policy option in the European context.

The article develops this argument in four sections. The first section draws on neo-institutionalist theories of change to provide a framework for thinking about the policy trajectory in contemporary Europe. The second section introduces the Multiculturalism Policy Index, and draws on evidence from the Index to assess the strength and evolution of MCPs in Europe. The third section then turns to the relationship



between civic integration and MCPs, exploring the extent to which civic integration is compatible with a multicultural approach to diversity. The final section pulls the threads of the story together.

## Theoretical Framework

As Freeman (2004, pp. 946, 948) reminds us: 'No state possesses a truly coherent incorporation regime ... Rather one finds sub-system frameworks that are weakly, if at all, co-ordinated'; and, he continues, 'immigrants are mostly managed via institutions created for other purposes'. This article focuses on change in two components of the incorporation regime, which are normally developed with immigrants in mind: diversity policies and integration policies. These programmes represent only part of the larger regime, and a complete analysis would have to include immigration policy, labour market policies and the structures of the welfare state (Banting, 2010; Koopmans, 2010). The view presented here is therefore a partial one. Nevertheless, the debate over these two components has been intense and, as we shall see, the patterns are revealing of the complexity of change in Europe.

How can we make sense of the evolution of these two components of integration regimes? The new institutionalism literature offers considerable potential here. Early contributions to this literature highlighted the importance of path dependency and the resilience of policy structures (Pierson, 1994, 1996), but this approach has increasingly been supplemented with interpretations of the ways in which institutions and policies change over time. In this context, two broad theories of institutional change have emerged. One interpretation sees a process of 'punctuated equilibrium', in which a pattern of long continuity suddenly gives way to a sharp burst of radical change, which in turn locks in a new trajectory that persists for a long time. In Pempel's (1998, p. 3) words, 'path-dependent equilibrium is periodically ruptured by radical change, making for sudden bends in the path of history' (also Tuohy, 1999). Many interpretations of the shift in Europe from multiculturalism to civic integration have this flavour. After a period of growing multiculturalism, Europe is undergoing a radical transition to a new and different trajectory.

A second interpretation of institutional change anticipates more evolutionary processes. This approach assumes that policies and institutions are the subject of ongoing political contestation, and evolve through steady incremental adaptation (Thelen, 2004). Within this tradition, Hacker (2004) argues that much change takes place, even in the context of stability in formal programmes, through processes of drift, conversion and layering. Drift occurs when policymakers choose not to alter programmes in response to changing external circumstances, allowing them to fade into marginality or take on new and unanticipated roles. Conversion occurs when existing policies and institutions are actively redirected to new purposes through often obscure administrative adjustments by officials on the ground. Finally, layering



occurs when new governments simply work around existing programmes, which are supported by vested interests, laying new policies on top of old policies, adding new institutions to old ones (Schickler, 2001). This conception of change assumes that each new generation does not start with a blank slate. They adapt and build on an existing base. Understanding the evolution of immigrant integration, according to this perspective, requires the mindset of an archaeologist.

What then are the patterns of change in MCPs and integration policies in Europe? Are we witnessing a sudden bend in the path of European history? Or is change occurring primarily through an evolutionary process marked by drift, conversion and, above all, layering?

## The Multiculturalism Policy Index and Multiculturalism in Europe

The Multiculturalism Policy Index is designed to monitor the evolution of MCPs across 21 Western democracies and to provide this information in a standardized format that enables comparative research and contributes to the understanding of state–minority relations. The project actually involves three distinct indices, each of which is designed for a distinct type of minority: one index relating to immigrant groups, one relating to historic national minorities and one relating to indigenous peoples. To capture change over time, the Index provides all three indices at three points in time: 1980, 2000 and 2010.<sup>1</sup>

The Multiculturalism Policy Index is based on a specific understanding of the phenomenon under study. There is no universally accepted definition of ‘MCP’, and no hard and fast line that would sharply distinguish MCPs from closely related policy fields, such as anti-discrimination policies, citizenship policies and integration policies. As a result, there is some overlap between our MCP Index and other recent efforts to develop indices in the field, such as the Howard (2006), Janoski (2010) and Koning (2011) indices of access to citizenship, the Koopmans *et al* (2012) index of citizenship rights, or the CIVIX (Goodman, 2010) and MIPEx (Migration Policy Group, 2011) indices of integration policies. We return to these areas of overlap below.

However, we believe that there is a distinctive set of ideas and practices relating to multiculturalism that is not adequately captured in existing indices of citizenship and integration policies, and that separating out the distinctly ‘multicultural’ dimensions of public policy can help to clarify some of the emerging trends and patterns in this field.

To understand the distinctive nature of MCPs, it is useful to step back and think more broadly about how states deal with ethnocultural diversity. Historically, nation-states have been distrustful of minority ethnic political mobilization, which they stigmatized as disloyal, backward and balkanizing. The history of state–minority relations throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is one of constant pressure for assimilation, combined with animosity towards, if not prohibition of,



minority political mobilization. Starting in the 1960s, however, we see a shift towards a more multicultural approach to state–minority relations. The public expression and political mobilization of minority ethnic identities is less likely to be seen as an inherent threat to the state, but is accepted as a normal and legitimate part of a democratic society. In many cases, these mobilizations were not just tolerated, but were politically effective. Across the Western democracies, we see a trend towards the increasing recognition of minority rights, whether in the form of land claims and treaty rights for indigenous peoples; strengthened language rights and regional autonomy for substate national minorities; and accommodation rights for immigrant-origin ethnic groups. We call all of these ‘MCPs’.

This term covers a wide range of policies, but what they have in common is that they go beyond the protection of the basic civil and political rights guaranteed to all individuals in a liberal democratic state, to also extend some level of public recognition and support for minorities to express their distinct identities and practices. The rise of MCPs therefore goes beyond the broader politics of civil rights and non-discrimination. Until the 1950s and 1960s, many Western states explicitly discriminated against certain racial or religious groups, denying them the right to immigrate or to become citizens, or subjecting them to discrimination or segregation in access to public education, housing or employment. This sort of explicit state-sanctioned discrimination has been repudiated, and most countries have also adopted measures to tackle discrimination by non-state actors such as private employers or landlords. The adoption of such anti-discrimination measures is often discussed as a form of multiculturalism or minority rights, as minorities are the beneficiaries.

As we are using the term, however, multiculturalism is not just about ensuring the non-discriminatory application of laws, but about changing the laws and regulations themselves to better reflect the distinctive needs and aspirations of minorities. For example, the logic of anti-discrimination required extending the vote to Aboriginal individuals in Canada in 1960, but it was a different logic that extended rights of self-government to Aboriginal communities in the 1980s, through the devolution of power to Aboriginal councils. Similarly, the logic of anti-discrimination requires that Sikhs be hired based on merit in the police force, but changing police dress codes so that Sikhs can wear a turban is a positive accommodation. Self-government rights for Aboriginals and accommodation rights for Sikhs are paradigm examples of multiculturalism, as the relevant policies are being deliberately redefined to fit the aspirations of members of minority groups. While the adoption of positive MCPs has been more controversial than anti-discrimination, we see a clear trend across the Western democracies towards the strengthening of both anti-discrimination and MCPs since the 1960s.

It is this ‘multiculturalist turn’ – this commitment to multicultural accommodations – that we seek to capture in our MCP Index. It is therefore distinct from other indices that have emerged in the field of citizenship studies in recent years. One difference, noted earlier, is that we not only have an index for immigrant groups, but



also have separate indices for indigenous peoples and historic national minorities. However, for the rest of this article, we will focus solely on our immigrant MCP index. As noted earlier, several indices seek to measure policies for the integration of newcomers into the mainstream of their new country. The MIPEx provides a broad measurement of state policies that affect the social, political, educational and economic integration of immigrants, including the strength of anti-discrimination policies. Other indices focus more narrowly on political integration in the form of naturalization requirements (Howard, 2006; Janoski, 2010; Koning, 2011), or on the various 'civic integration' tests and courses that immigrants must take (Goodman, 2010). But none of these directly test whether a country has a distinctly multiculturalist conception of the integration of immigrants. They measure various steps or obstacles on the route to integration, but do not directly ask whether integration is understood to entail a commitment to the multicultural accommodation of newcomers.<sup>2</sup> The Multiculturalism Policy Index is distinctive in focusing exclusively on MCPs designed to recognize, accommodate and support the cultural differences of minority groups in a large number (21) of Western democracies.

Of course, attitudes towards multiculturalism are not independent of these other issues. All else being equal, one would expect that states with restrictive naturalization policies would be unlikely to adopt MCPs, whereas states with liberal naturalization policies would be more comfortable with multiculturalism. But as we will see below, these relations are contested, and one valuable contribution of the MCP Index is precisely that it enables us to test how multiculturalist commitments are or are not related to broader commitments in the field of anti-discrimination, naturalization and immigrant integration.

Our MCP Index is based on a range of public policies that are seen, by both critics and defenders, as emblematic of multiculturalist turn. Each of our policy indicators is intended to capture a policy dimension where liberal democratic states faced a choice about whether or not to take a multicultural turn, and to go beyond anti-discrimination to offer some degree of positive recognition, accommodation and support of minorities. The eight indicators used to build the MCP Index for immigrant minorities are:

- (i) constitutional, legislative or parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism, at the central and/or regional and municipal levels;
- (ii) the adoption of multiculturalism in school curriculum;
- (iii) the inclusion of ethnic representation/sensitivity in the mandate of public media or media licensing;
- (iv) exemptions from dress codes, either by statute or by court cases;
- (v) allowing of dual citizenship;
- (vi) the funding of ethnic group organizations to support cultural activities;
- (vii) the funding of bilingual education or mother-tongue instruction;
- (viii) affirmative action for disadvantaged immigrant groups.



On each indicator, countries are scored as 0 (no such policy), 0.5 (partial) or 1.0 (clear policy). The component scores are then aggregated, with equal weighting for each indicator, producing a country score ranging from 0 to 8.<sup>3</sup>

One could imagine adding or subtracting elements from this list, or subdividing them into more refined categories.<sup>4</sup> It is certainly not an exhaustive listing of every possible form or manifestation of multiculturalist policies. However, we believe that it does capture the main ways in which states express multiculturalist commitments, which we earlier described as ‘recognition’ (Indicators 1–3), ‘accommodation’ (Indicators 4–5) and ‘support’ (Indicators 6–8). We would argue that any attempt to measure MCPs would need to include indicators that cover these three forms of expressing multiculturalist commitments, and that any index constructed in this way is likely to converge with our findings.

One point deserves note. Not all group-based policies are MCPs. Only policies designed to legitimate and support ethnic minorities count. Group-based policies designed to exclude or marginalize minorities do not. Interestingly, some old programmes of exclusion have been converted over time into instruments of recognition and inclusion. As Karen Schönwälder notes in the case of Germany, mother-tongue education, where it does occur, was not introduced ‘as a minority right but in order to enable guest worker children to reintegrate in their countries of origin. The fact that it continues to exist after this policy has been abandoned demonstrates the persistence of once-established structures as well as the continuing demand for such classes, but it is probably also due to the support of “multiculturalist” officials and teachers’ (Schönwälder 2010, p. 160). This is a classic case of conversion of an old programme to new purposes by local officials highlighted by Hacker.

The Multiculturalism Policy Index exhibits strong coherence, and this coherence has strengthened over time. This is confirmed by the high  $\alpha$ s for each of the three dates, especially the latter two: 1980 (0.7651); 2000 (0.8438) and 2010 (0.8490).<sup>5</sup> The overall level of coherence suggests that the component indicators are driven by a common factor, and that there is a ‘logic’ of multiculturalism that is either adopted or resisted by states. The Multiculturalism Policy Index is also consistent with the most similar other index. The Pearson correlation between the MCP Index and the cultural difference dimension of the Index of Immigrant Citizenship Rights is 0.81 (Koopmans *et al.*, 2012; Table 2).

The results for all countries captured by the Multiculturalism Policy Index are provided in the Appendix. Given the focus on European debates here, Table 1 focuses on the results of European countries alone. The evidence is clear. A large number of European countries adopted some level of MCPs over the last three decades, and there has not been a general retreat since 2000. There has been a significant reduction in the Netherlands, one country for which the concept of punctuated equilibrium and Pempel’s image of a sudden change in the path of history seem appropriate. There have also been modest reductions (from a low base) in Denmark and Italy. But the



**Table 1:** Change in MCPs for immigrant minorities in Europe: 1980, 2000, 2010

	1980	2000	2010
<i>Stronger MCPs</i>			
Austria	0	1	1.5
Belgium	1	3	5.5
Finland	0	1.5	6
Germany	0	2	2.5
Greece	0.5	0.5	2.5
Ireland	1	1.5	3
Norway	0	0	3.5
Portugal	1	2	3.5
Spain	0	1	3.5
Sweden	3	5	7
<i>Stable MCPs</i>			
France	1	2	2
Switzerland	0	1	1
The United Kingdom	2.5	5.5	5.5
<i>Weaker MCPs</i>			
Denmark	0	0.5	0
Italy	0	1.5	1
The Netherlands	2.5	5.5	2
Average	0.7	2.1	3.1
Standard deviation	1.03	1.76	2.00

Source: Multiculturalism Policy Index, [www.queensu.ca/mcp](http://www.queensu.ca/mcp).

last decade has also seen a strengthening of MCPs in a number of countries, including Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. In other countries, the scores have increased marginally or remained stable. Overall, the record of multicultural policy in Europe is one of modest strengthening; as Table 1 indicates, the average score for European countries rose from 0.7 in 1980 to 2.1 in 2000 and 3.1 in 2010.

Underlying these averages, however, is considerable variation. In contrast to arguments that Europe is moving beyond national models and towards a transnational approach to diversity management (Joppke, 2007), variation in MCPs has grown over time. As the standard deviations presented in Table 1 indicate, divergence in multiculturalism scores increased from 1980 to 2000 to 2010.<sup>6</sup> In this field, Europe was far more homogenous in 1980, before the advent of contemporary multiculturalism, than it is today. National policy traditions and domestic politics clearly remain resilient.

This growing divergence would be even greater if our Index included what we might call 'anti-MCPs'. As it stands, the Index only measures positive MCPs, where



states adjust their laws and practices in order to provide forms of recognition, accommodation and support above and beyond the requirements of anti-discrimination. One could imagine a refinement of the Index that also seeks to measure the opposite case, where states adjust their laws and policies in order to remove an opportunity for minorities to express their cultural difference that laws had previously permitted. Consider recent bans in France on the hijab and burqa, or the Swiss ban on minarets, or the Danish ban on bringing in overseas spouses under the age of 24. In all of these cases, critics argue that states have not simply failed to provide positive MCPs, but have in fact denied minorities the non-discriminatory application of fundamental individual civil rights.

If our index was amended to include such anti-MCPs, the spread among European countries would be even greater.<sup>7</sup> Consider Denmark. As our Index only measures positive accommodations, its score remained unchanged between 2000 and 2010, although its Nordic neighbours have all significantly increased their MCP score. But this understates the divergence, as Denmark's rejection of multiculturalism has now extended to the adoption of anti-MCPs. In 1980, Denmark's score of 0 arguably was more a reflection of lack of engagement on the issues, rather than a conscious policy choice or ideological commitment (as was true of Finland and Norway at the time as well). However, by 2010, Denmark's 0 reflected an explicit – indeed strident – rejection of multiculturalism, manifested not only in the absence of MCPs, but also in the adoption of anti-MCPs.

It is a limitation of our Index that we do not capture these anti-MCPs, not least because they have had such a high profile in the debate. But it is important to note that adding them would not change the basic storyline. As one would expect, anti-MCPs have generally been adopted by countries that were not sympathetic to multiculturalism in the first place, and so adding them would simply push down the already-low scores of a few countries. The overall trend would still be one in which most European countries have either sustained or even increased their MCPs.

## **The Relationship between MCPs and Civic Integration**

As we have seen, there had been a modest strengthening of MCPs across Europe between 2000 and 2010. Yet something clearly has changed at the policy level, most noticeably a proliferation of 'civic integration' policies, which in most countries have been layered over pre-existing MCPs. The persistence of MCPs alongside new civic integration policies implies that the two can somehow co-exist. But what precisely is the relationship between MCPs and the shift to civic integration?

Civic integration – as defined by the Council of the European Union (2004) and summarized by Joppke (2007) – emphasizes the importance of immigrants integrating more fully into the mainstream of society, and advances a number of core



principles. First, employment is a key part of integration. Second, integration requires respect for basic liberal democratic values, such as the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and equalities such as gender equality, and the rule of law. Third, basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration. Fourth, anti-discrimination laws and policies are also essential to better integration.

A wide range of European countries – more in northern Europe than in southern Europe – have started to demand evidence of integration at different stages of the immigration process – initial entry, renewed residency and naturalization – and have implemented the approach through a range of tests, courses and contracts. Goodman (2010) has developed a statistical index of such civic integration policies across Europe (CIVIX), which shows a dramatic change from 1997, when such policies were largely absent, to 2009, when such policies were much more prevalent.

Thus, we see an interesting trend: a modest strengthening of MCPs and a significant increase in civic integration requirements. The question thus becomes whether these two policy strategies are compatible or whether they live in deep tension with each other, such that any attempt to combine them would be inherently unstable. To answer this question, it is helpful to start by looking beyond Europe to countries such as Canada and Australia. Both countries have adopted MCPs, as confirmed by the data in the Appendix, and both have long had strongly integrationist strategies for immigrants.

The Canadian model is best described as 'multicultural integration'. This policy regime is the historical legacy of considerable drift, conversion and layering over at least a century. MCPs were added to the regime in the early 1970s and have been adapted through incremental adjustments over the years (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002; Kymlicka, 2007). But the Canadian regime has also long emphasized integration, and includes the primary components of the European model of civic integration. This integrationist intent animates the multiculturalism programme itself: the original goals of the programme, as promulgated in 1971, included not only support for cultural diversity, but also assistance for minorities to overcome barriers to wider engagement, promotion of intercultural exchange and support for immigrants to acquire one of Canada's official languages 'in order to become full participants in Canadian society' (Trudeau, 1971, p. 8546). The integrationist impulse is powerfully reinforced by the settlement services offered to newcomers and the naturalization programme. The federal and provincial governments provide substantial adjustment assistance, as well as language training both at the basic level and at more advanced levels for immigrants having trouble acquiring occupational-specific language skills (Seidle, 2010; Table 1). In addition, Canada has a long-standing tradition of encouraging newcomers to learn about the history, traditions and political institutions of the country. Applicants for citizenship must pass a written test of their ability to speak English or French and their knowledge of Canadian history, geography, political institutions and traditions.<sup>8</sup>



The Canadian model also provides a ‘muscular’ defence of liberal democratic principles. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is entrenched in the constitution and trumps ordinary legislation, including the Multiculturalism Act. The Charter, together with federal and provincial human rights commissions, has protected newcomers from discrimination at the hands of majorities. For example, the Charter’s guarantee of freedom of religion has helped members of minority religions in several landmark cases concerning religious dress. But the individual rights and equality rights embedded in the Charter also stand as a barrier to the danger that multiculturalism might run amok. The Charter represents a legal frame that circumscribes the range of cultural practices deemed legitimate, helping to ensure that accommodation of difference does not slide into a justification for discrimination or the denial of basic equalities, such as the equality of men and women (Eliadis, 2007; also Smith, 2009).

The Canadian regime thus combines multiculturalism and integration. However, two elements of the package are critical to this compatibility. First, the instruments of integration are voluntary. Language training and integration programmes are provided by governments free of charge; and there is no linkage between participation in them and continued residency or access to social benefits. As we have seen, the only formal leverage is associated with naturalization. Second, the national identity that newcomers are invited to join celebrates diversity. The adoption of bilingualism and multiculturalism in the 1960s and 1970s represented a state-led redefinition of national identity, an effort to deemphasize the historic conception of the country as a British society and to build an identity more reflective of Canada’s cultural complexity. The adoption of a new flag, one without British or French symbols, was a reflection of this wider transition. As a result, there are fewer cultural barriers to a sense of belonging.

The Australian case also demonstrates the compatibility of MCPs and civic integration. Indeed, Australian multiculturalism ‘functioned from the outset as an institutional component of immigrant settlement policy aimed at assisting immigrant integration’ (Tavan, 2012, p. 550). The blending of multiculturalism and settlement policies permanently altered the country’s historic assimilationist approach to integration, but the aim was still an integrationist one. Learning English as the national language and respecting liberal values have always been core parts of their multiculturalism. Jupp (1996, p. 40) – who played a pivotal role in defining Australia’s multiculturalism policy – has argued that multiculturalism in Australia ‘is essentially a liberal ideology which operates within liberal institutions with the universal approval of liberal attitudes. It accepts that all humans should be treated as equals and that different cultures can co-exist if they accept liberal values’.

Thus, the two countries that were the earliest and most long-standing adopters of MCPs have always had strong integration policies, focusing on employment, learning the national language and shared liberal values. Any argument that such MCPs are by definition incompatible with integration is simply at odds with history,



as reflected in the original Canadian and Australian cases. Moreover, the model of multicultural integration seems politically stable in both countries. Conservative governments have occasionally expressed unease about the approach, but have not challenged fundamentals. In Canada, the current Conservative government is attempting to redefine Canadian identity by emphasizing more traditional symbols such as the monarchy and the military. However, it has not sought to eliminate multiculturalism, and has operated through incremental adjustments. In the words of one analyst, 'the policy's continued existence speaks to its tenacity in the Canadian context' (Abu-Laban, forthcoming). Similarly, in Australia, the multicultural approach was questioned by the Liberal Government of John Howard. But the programme withstood radical change, and is now celebrated by the current Labour Government. In effect, 'Australian multiculturalism conforms to the model of an institutionally embedded, path dependent process' (Tavan, 2012, p. 549).

What is the pattern in Europe? Is the new emphasis on civic integration there also compatible with multicultural approach to diversity? Here the answer is more complex, as there is no simple 'convergence' on a common model of civic integration. Joppke (2007) has argued not only that there has been a wholesale retreat from multiculturalism, but also that distinct national models of dealing with immigrants are giving way to convergent policies of civic integration and anti-discrimination. The evidence discussed here suggests a different picture. As in the case of MCPs noted earlier, Goodman's Civic Integration Index indicates that divergence in civic integration scores increased from 1997 to 2009 (Goodman, 2010; also Mouritsen, 2011).

Amid the diverse approaches, however, it is possible to discern different models of civic integration, some of which are much more easily combined with a multicultural approach than others. We would argue that compatibility depends on the two factors identified in the Canadian case: the level of pressure brought to bear on immigrants; and the openness of the national identity of the country to diversity.

In European discourse, the level of coercion is normally discussed in terms of the balance between rights and duties (Borevi, 2010). Some countries have developed voluntary approaches, which emphasize immigrants' right to integrate and provide supportive programmes. But other countries have made integration a duty, establishing mandatory programmes and denying immigrants access to social rights or residency renewals if they fail to pass certain thresholds of integration. Combining this more illiberal version of civic integration with a strong multicultural strategy would seem very difficult, particularly if it is only or primarily immigrants whose rights are subject to tests of fulfilling duties.

The second factor concerns the definition of the national culture that immigrants are integrated into (coercively or voluntarily), and how open it is to the visible maintenance and expression of difference. Some countries are uneasy with the idea of their citizens holding multiple identities. In Germany and France, for example, naturalization requirements have stated that excessive attachment to the immigrants'



home country or to his/her religion is grounds for refusing naturalization.<sup>9</sup> In these cases, national identity is implicitly presented as having a zero-sum relationship with immigrants' prior identity. Immigrants are not invited to add a new identity to their old one. Rather, they must to relinquish their old identity. This implicit assumption that prior identities should be relinquished, or at least subordinated and hidden for public purposes, is reflected, for example, in dress codes, the prohibition on dual citizenship or the stringency of naturalization tests. Whereas most countries have some form of language test as a requirement of citizenship, some countries set this bar much higher than others. Some countries require immigrants to acquire close to native-born proficiency in language and cultural knowledge. Such policies are arguably aiming at full assimilation, while preventing incompletely integrated immigrants from gaining citizenship. By contrast, some countries set the bar much lower, requiring only a good-faith effort on the part of the immigrant, and far less than native-born proficiency, with the result that immigrants become citizens (and hence start to change society) before they are assimilated.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, citizenship tests are not inherently incompatible with multiculturalist commitments. On the contrary, citizenship tests are simply one more domain in which countries exhibit their commitment (or lack of commitment) to multiculturalism.

Note that these two issues – coercive versus voluntary programmes; closed versus open identities – are conceptually independent of each other. France may not have mandatory civic integration classes, but it has an assimilationist conception of national identity. Conversely, one could imagine a country that has coercive integration classes, but which has a more open conception of national identity. (Some British proposals to add new tests for residency permits might be an example: adding more coercion to the integration process, but retaining a relatively open conception of national identity.) This second issue concerns the *content* of civic integration classes or of citizenship tests, rather than whether they are voluntary or mandatory.

The compatibility of MCPs and civic integration thus varies immensely from one country to another. Some countries (such as Denmark, Germany and Austria) have adopted forms of integration that are highly compulsory and assimilationist. But as these are countries that never embraced multiculturalism in the first place, their new policies can hardly be considered as a retreat from multiculturalism (Kraus and Schönwälder, 2006). By contrast, some countries with long-standing MCPs – like Sweden and Britain – have adopted forms of civic integration policies that are more voluntary and pluralistic. Other countries, such as Finland, also seem to be moving in this direction. We lose sight of these differences, and lose sight of important policy options, if we assume prematurely that civic integration entails a retreat from multiculturalism.

This analysis is confirmed by comparing countries' rankings on the CIVIX index and the MCP index, and examining the two ends of the CIVIX spectrum. At one end of the CIVIX spectrum, we have countries that adopt what Goodman describes as



‘prohibitive’ citizenship strategies, based on coercive and assimilative civic integration policies.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, the countries that she categorizes in this way (for example, Germany, Austria, Denmark) are also countries that score very low on our MCP Index. At the other end, we have countries that adopt what Goodman describes as ‘enabling’ citizenship strategies, based on voluntary and open civic integration. Not surprisingly, these are also countries that have increased their MCP score since 2000 (for example, Belgium, Sweden, Finland). The same point can be made statistically by measuring the relationship between scores on the CIVIX and MCP Index for the full set of countries scored by both. Because Goodman’s index measures the onerousness of integration requirements, with a high score connoting very tough requirements, one would expect that the two indices would be inversely related. That proves to be the case. For the 14 countries for which both CIVIX and MCP scores are available, the two series are strongly and negatively related, with a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of  $-0.461$  ( $P = 0.097$ ). Table 2 presents another view, by simply dividing the 14 countries into two groups and comparing average scores on both dimensions.

In short, the image of a pervasive retreat from multiculturalism and a pivot towards a common model of civic integration obscures the complexity of contemporary developments in Europe. It also obscures the fact that a form of multicultural integration remains a live option for Western democracies, both in the New World and in Europe.

**Table 2:** Comparison of civic integration and multiculturalism policy scores

	<i>CIVIX 2009</i>	<i>MCP 2010</i>
Sweden	0.0	7.0
Belgium	0.5	5.5
Ireland	0.5	3.0
Italy	0.5	1.0
Finland	1.0	6.0
Portugal	1.0	3.5
Spain	1.0	3.5
<i>Average</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>4.2</i>
Greece	3.75	2.5
France	4.0	2.0
Austria	4.25	1.5
The United Kingdom	4.25	5.5
The Netherlands	4.75	2.0
Denmark	5.5	0.0
Germany	6.0	2.5
<i>Average</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>2.3</i>

Sources: Updated CIVIX scoring from Goodman (2012); MCP scores from [www.queensu.ca/mcp](http://www.queensu.ca/mcp).



We stress this option, not simply for the sake of analytical completeness, but because we believe it is an option that warrants serious consideration, on both normative and empirical grounds. From a normative point of view, we have elsewhere argued that the combination of enabling civic integration and multicultural accommodation is the option most in line with fundamental liberal values of freedom and fairness. There are valid justifications for the state to promote civic integration, including promoting a common language and national identity. However, these policies risk being oppressive and unfair to minorities if they are not supplemented by MCPs. Conversely, there are valid justifications for minorities to claim multicultural accommodations, but these policies may become unreasonable and destabilizing if they are not supplemented by civic integration policies. The combination of civic integration and multiculturalism is mutually, normatively reinforcing: each helps to both justify and constrain the other.<sup>12</sup>

To say that multicultural citizenship remains a salient option is not to say that we must or should use the word *multiculturalism* in policy debates. As noted earlier, the ‘*m* word’ is now virtually taboo in some countries and may be irretrievable. This does not mean, however, that the underlying principles and policies of a liberal democratic multicultural citizenship are no longer viable. These principles and policies could still be alive and well, although now under the heading of ‘diversity policies’ or ‘intercultural dialogue’ or ‘community cohesion’ or even ‘civic integration’. As noted earlier, this indeed is the conclusion reached in recent cross-national surveys of multiculturalism in Europe (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010; see also Kivisto, 2012; Lenard, 2012).

On the other hand, the discursive retreat from the word ‘multiculturalism’ is surely significant, even if MCPs remain largely unchanged. Many commentators have argued that the demonizing of multiculturalism reflects and perpetuates stereotypes of immigrants as alien and threatening, and feeds the rise of xenophobic far-right populist parties. This rising xenophobia may not have gutted the MCPs measured by our Index, but it has certainly had other effects, including the adoption of more restrictive refugee and family reunification policies, and the adoption of more restrictive rules regarding the access of immigrants to welfare benefits. In the long term, it is also possible that anti-multiculturalism discourse may influence the impact of MCPs that do persist, even ones framed publicly in the language of interculturalism or diversity policies. If MCPs exist within a larger social and cultural context that is increasingly unreceptive to the claims of immigrant groups, they may be less likely to have the beneficial effects that their advocates intended. Viewed in this way, the delegitimation of the word multiculturalism is not just a change in discourse, but jeopardizes the very conditions under which multicultural policies can actually work.<sup>13</sup> In this interpretation, the absence of a supportive societal discourse of multiculturalism weakens the vibrancy of MCPs – they are not so much layered by new civic integration policies – as buried.





Determining the impact of multiculturalist rhetoric on the effectiveness of multiculturalist policies would require a different research agenda, focusing on the actual outcomes of MCPs. Our focus here has been to address the prior question of whether or not MCPs are still present. Having shown that these policies have endured, and indeed in many cases expanded, we hope to thereby encourage additional research on their outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusions

The mindset of an archaeologist is clearly helpful in analysing changes in the incorporation regimes of Western democracies. Countries seldom eliminate the old when they establish the new. The more common pattern is for each generation to layer new programmes, reflecting new concerns, over an existing programme base. This interpretation of change helps to illuminate the contemporary field of diversity policies in Europe. The image of a pervasive backlash against multiculturalism obscures a more complex evolutionary reality in many countries. Although there has been a retreat from MCPs in a few countries, this is not the dominant pattern. The larger picture in Europe is one of stability and expansion of multicultural policies in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

In many European countries, efforts to strengthen civic integration are being layered over older programmes recognizing and supporting diversity, generating a multicultural version of civic integration. In this context, a natural question is whether the two components of this accumulated package can be effectively integrated. Freeman's reminder that incorporation regimes are never fully integrated is a salutary caution here; in part, democratic governments simply accept minor frictions between policies as one means of accommodating the conflicting pressures they face every day. Nevertheless, at some point contradictions matter. As we have seen, there is nothing inherently incompatible between multiculturalism and civic integration. More liberal and voluntary approaches to civic integration can be combined with a multicultural approach to form a potentially stable policy equilibrium. But there are limits to this compatibility. More coercive or illiberal versions of civic integration are incompatible with any meaningful conception of multicultural support for diversity. The balance between different conceptions of civic integration that is emerging will clearly be critical to the future of cultural diversity in Europe.

Our aim in this article is not to defend the model of multicultural integration, but simply to insist that it must not be rendered invisible by the categories and indicators we use. Nor is our intention to deny the importance of the rhetorical backlash against 'multiculturalism' in many of the countries of Europe. Although the backlash has seldom led to the rooting out of established MCPs, it has been associated in some countries with draconian changes in such critical elements as admission policies and



access to social benefits. Rather, our primary aim is to argue that we need sharp instruments to accurately identify and evaluate the full range of policy options available to policymakers. We hope that the MCP Index can contribute in this way to clarifying the policy choices we confront.

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## Notes

- 1 The full Multiculturalism Policy Index for 21 countries, together with an explanation of the index, scores for each component of the index and the documentation on which the scoring is based, can be accessed at [www.queensu.ca/mcp](http://www.queensu.ca/mcp). The first version of the index (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006) provided one set of scores, which represented an overall assessment of the state of multiculturalism policies in each country during the period 1980–2000. In the updated index, the scores for 1980 represent the state of multiculturalism policies in that year.
- 2 A partial exception is the citizenship rights index developed by Koopmans *et al* (2012). This index includes both an individual equality dimension and a cultural difference dimension. The latter comes closest to the MCP Index, but is only available for 10 countries.
- 3 In addition to the composite scores, separate scores for each of these eight indicators are available for all 21 countries at three points in time (1980, 2000, 2010) at [www.queensu.ca/mcp](http://www.queensu.ca/mcp). Researchers can therefore vary the weighting assigned to each indicator if they wish.
- 4 For example, whereas we have a single indicator for exemptions, Koopmans *et al* (2012) subdivide this into two indicators, one for exemptions by public authorities, another for exemptions by private sector institutions. Their data shows, however, that the two go hand in hand.
- 5 The indicator that fits least well is dual citizenship, which may reflect the fact that dual citizenship in some countries was adopted not primarily to recognize and accommodate the desire of immigrants to maintain ties to their country of origin, but rather to enable emigrants to maintain ties and perhaps to return home.
- 6 This result is confirmed by Koopmans' index of Indicators of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants, which also shows a growing standard deviation along the multiculturalism dimension from 0.20 in 1980 to 0.31 in 2008 (Koopmans *et al*, 2012).



- 7 For one effort to expand our MCP Index to include anti-MCPs in the American context, see Hero and Preuhs (2006).
- 8 Knowledge of either English or French as a requirement for naturalization dates back to the Naturalization Act of 1914 (Pal, 1993, p. 79).
- 9 The Code Civil in France states that 'nobody may be naturalised unless he proves his assimilation into the French community' (quoted in Peucker, 2008, p. 243). Former German Interior Ministry guidelines on naturalization required that immigrants 'renounce exaggerated national-religious behaviour' (quoted in Schmidt, 1999, p. 103).
- 10 Adamo (2008) has highlighted this difference in comparing citizenship tests in Denmark and Canada. See also Paquet's (2012) account of the diverging goals of citizenship tests in Canada and the United Kingdom, and Peucker's (2008) comparison of the diverging functions of citizenship tests in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.
- 11 For a debate on the CIVIX index, see Goodman (2012) and Michalowski and van Oers (2012).
- 12 For a fuller defense of the idea that liberal democratic principles support robust national integration policies supplemented and constrained by robust MCPs, see Kymlicka (2001).
- 13 For a range of views on this question, see Meer and Modood (2012), and the responses to it in the same issue.
- 14 For a review of the evidence to date, see Kymlicka (2010).

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## Appendix

**Table A1:** Multiculturalism Policy Index for 21 OECD Countries, 1980, 2000, 2010

	<i>1980</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>
Australia	5	8	8
Austria	0	1	1.5
Belgium	1	3	5.5
Canada	5	7.5	7.5
Denmark	0	0.5	0
Finland	0	1.5	6
France	1	2	2
Germany	0	2	2.5
Greece	0.5	0.5	2.5
Ireland	1	1.5	3
Italy	0	1.5	1
Japan	0	0	0
The Netherlands	2.5	5.5	2
New Zealand	2.5	5	5.5
Norway	0	0	3.5
Portugal	1	2	3.5
Spain	0	1	3.5
Sweden	3	5	7
Switzerland	0	1	1
The United Kingdom	2.5	5.5	5.5
The United States	3	3	3