

TOO DIVERSE?

Replies to David Goodhart's essay, which posed the notion that values of diversity and solidarity can conflict

CANADA, NOT AMERICA

by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka

THE IDEA THAT there is a trade-off between diversity and solidarity rests on two simple and seductive ideas. First, since the past 20 to 30 years have witnessed both declining solidarity and increasing ethnic diversity in many western democracies, the latter must be the cause of the former. Second, if ethnic diversity erodes solidarity, then public policies of "multiculturalism" that recognise and celebrate diversity exacerbate the problem.

Both of these assumptions inform David Goodhart's analysis. However, it is important to remember that the social contract underlying the welfare state has been under stress in all western democracies, whether they have had sizeable postwar immigration or not, and whether they affirm or repudiate multiculturalism policies. Our study in *Dissent* magazine, cited by Goodhart, suggests that pro-multiculturalism countries have handled these stresses as well as anti-multiculturalism countries.

Why do so many people blame ethnic diversity and multiculturalism policies for trends that are clearly present in low-immigration and anti-multiculturalism countries as well? Part of the answer is an excessive fascination with the American model. The US haunts this debate, as if its experience confirms some natural law that diversity erodes solidarity. There is no question that the politics of race has played a long and sad role in US social policy. But the reality is one of very mixed national experiences. Other countries have managed to combine high levels of immigration and multiculturalism on one hand and serious commitments to redistribution on the other. Canada and Sweden are two examples. There is no reason to assume that their experience is in some sense unnatural, while the US represents the true tendency. There is no natural law at work here, no natural tipping point somewhere between Europe and America.

The only possible conclusion is that the relationship between diversity and redistribution is highly contingent on other factors. The true intellectual challenge is to sort out the conditions that tend to tip the relationship in one direction or another.

Here the US does offer cautionary tales, but ones that challenge two proposals advanced by Goodhart. He argues that in order to mitigate the impact of immigrant diversity on solidarity, welfare policy should shift from universal, rights-based programmes to



conditionality, such that "people who consistently break the rules of civilised behaviour should not receive unconditional benefits." But much depends on the form of this new conditionality. And if there is one powerful lesson from the US, it is that the most incendiary possible programme structure is the conditional, targeted programme in which poor members of racial minorities come to be over-represented among beneficiaries. AFDC and related means-tested programmes fuelled precisely the anti-welfare state reaction Goodhart seeks to avoid. Similarly, movement towards a "two-tiered welfare system" with reduced benefits for immigrants, which Goodhart also recommends for some new immigrants, was part of the 1995 welfare reform. These changes deepened political divisions in the US, generating a protracted political and legal campaign by

Hispanic-Americans to reverse decisions that, to them, challenged the legitimacy of their presence in the country. A stronger base of universal social programmes in the US would have helped mitigate such tensions.

This isn't to say that we should be complacent about maintaining solidarity in a context of ethnic diversity. Solidarity within contemporary nation states is not natural or automatic: it needs to be continuously sustained and nurtured. And we agree with Goodhart that this requires public policies to encourage immigrants to learn the national language and to promote feelings of citizenship (through citizenship ceremonies and so on). But it is a mistake to assume, as Goodhart does, that such "nation-building" policies are in conflict with multiculturalism policies. On the contrary, some of the countries with the most pro-active multiculturalism policies, like Australia and Canada, also adopt very pro-active citizenship promotion and language training policies. This may seem like a paradox to those in the grip of the "solidarity vs diversity" thesis. But if we look around the world, we can find many such stories about how accommodating diversity and nurturing solidarity can work hand-in-hand.

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WHAT ABOUT THE SCOTS?

by Bernard Crick

I JUST ASK "solidarity" of what? Of British society and values, it seems; of our "British" identity. Under threat? Certainly changing. I sniff a certain undertow of nostalgia in your honest anxieties. I sometimes share it, particularly when comparing the old paternalist Conservative party to the populist children of Thatcher.

I ask "solidarity of what" because you do, as ever, write and edit with a very English perspective. If you named our country as the United Kingdom (instead of Britain) it might remind us all that we have been a multi-national, indeed multi-ethnic, state for a long time. Dual identities are something many of us are used to living with, and enjoy: the 10 per cent who are Scots, for instance. In recent years they have raised some fascinating constitutional irritations, but not social or racial, and

what of the 6 or 7 per cent who are part Irish and worship as distinctively as Hindu and Muslim. Nowadays they are fully accepted despite or together with their dual identity. The fallacy of the excluded middle is hard at work here: it is not either solidarity or loss of identity—our identity lies in our political sense of living with dual identities—even “English and British.”

You only notice the four nations when you say “the British sense of national identity has arguably been rather weak—diluted by class, region, empire and indeed the existence of four different nations.” Hence, you suggest, our greater tolerance. Weak indeed, thank God—or rather history.

But mainly you use “British” as if a synonym for “English.” I see British as a patriotic allegiance to institutions of parliamentary government and law, symbolised in the crown, that binds four national cultures together on partly historical and partly pragmatic grounds. After all, peace and prosperity are stronger than nebulous and exclusionist values.

You say it was a mistake that “ethnic minority citizens were not encouraged to join the common culture (although many did)... Citizenship ceremonies, language lessons and the mentoring of new citizens should help to create a British version of the US ‘melting pot.’” But we do not threaten immigrants with the button-moulder’s melting pot. If you look at the new citizenship curriculum in schools and at the report “The New and the Old” (2003) on education for naturalisation, both of them stressed diversity, how the practices of free politics itself, of active citizenship, enable groups with different (dual) identities to live together.

One thing I agree with you. The English have been slower to recover a distinct and particular pride within the wider Britishness than have Scots and Welsh. But it should and need not be negative, even in the most urbane tones, and our leaders should reprove ignorant populism.

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DIVERSITY GOOD FOR GROWTH

by Diane Coyle

TOO MUCH DIVERSITY for social cohesion could well be too little diversity

for economic growth. Although there is indeed some evidence that diverse populations make for less social solidarity, there is also evidence that diverse populations contribute to faster economic growth.

The latest studies comparing long-run productivity in the developed countries, published by the OECD, find that immigration is one of the characteristic features of high-growth countries. Experiments in group decision-making carried out at the Los Alamos National Laboratory found that diverse groups (in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, social origins) make better and faster decisions.

It’s a reasonable hypothesis that the more important analysis and ideas become in creating value in the leading economies, the more valuable the potential contribution from immigrants. Of course, this is only one of the ways in which economic growth and social stability are in tension. Since

The left has relied on the positive value of diversity alone. This doesn’t work

the dawn of capitalism it’s been clear that the constant change characterising a growing economy rarely makes for calm and order.

Whether the poorest members of a society would gain more from greater redistribution or faster growth is an empirical question we are not in a position to answer; but the *average* member will do better from growth.

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REAL AND IMAGINARY FEARS

by John Denham

DIVERSITY IS A challenge to solidarity, but there is nothing inevitable or mechanical that links the scale of diversity with the weakness of solidarity. We need to recognise that there are two rather different problems, and we have ways of tackling both.

Most of the time, it is strangeness, the fear of the other, the unknown, that is the problem, not diversity itself. David Goodhart mentions changing attitudes towards homosexuality just

briefly but the change is significant. Though the process is not complete, gays and lesbians have moved from the excluded, feared and despised to a broad social acceptance over a generation. The diversity has not changed and indeed has become more obvious. It is the fear that has diminished.

The key is that the change in attitude did not just happen. People set out to bring the change about. Diversity does not solve its own problems; it requires political and social leadership.

But what do you do when the problem is not an imagined fear but a real clash of cultures; where one person’s way of life does conflict with another’s? David’s article touches on one such case: why should working taxpayers fund the lone parent who wants to live on benefit? Over the past few years the government has given some sense of what can be done. The New Deal for lone parents has brought about a real change in the expectations of lone parents. Far more now understand and accept that they are expected to look for work, and are doing so. The change was not an accident. The New Deal has the key elements of behaviour changing: a clear message about what is expected; a personal challenge to individual behaviour (through the New Deal interviews) and, crucially, the chance to change through employment advice, training and tax credits.

Many people saw the problem as diversity, the state of lone parenthood itself. The real issue was much narrower; should lone parenthood bring privileged state support. Labour has not challenged lone parenthood or reduced diversity, but it has begun to change popularly unacceptable attitudes of some lone parents.

We’ve got to learn from both types of change in making racial and ethnic diversity work. The left has often thought you could rely on the positive value of diversity alone. We can’t. Just as we had to take sides on work or benefits for lone parents; so we have to build a positive notion of British citizenship for the 21st century.

While a modern British identity will inevitably draw heavily on the history of the white British majority, we cannot discover Britishness in that history alone; it will have to draw on the histories of all those who now make up our country. Even though we now have a Tory leader of Transylvanian origin,

until now, the political leadership in this country has avoided articulating a 21st-century Britishness. (Some on the liberal left don't even want to discuss Britishness; a catastrophic case of filing under "too difficult").

We have now got to grasp that challenge which was set out cogently in Ted Cantle's report on the northern riots. As we do, we will both break down the misunderstandings that come from strangeness, and be clear about where some attitudes (like racism or ethnic and cultural separatism) are incompatible with a modern citizenship.

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INEQUALITY IS THE PROBLEM

by David Donnison

DAVID GOODHART DESERVES thanks for compelling us to reflect on dilemmas we prefer to forget about. But there are big gaps in his analysis. I focus on two.

Richard Tawney, in his classic work *Equality*, said "What a community requires, as the word itself suggests, is a common culture, because, without it, it is not a community at all... [That] cannot be created merely by desiring it. It rests upon economic foundations... it involves, in short, a large measure of economic equality." Growing inequality divides a society, making the poor angry, the rich anxious and everyone more suspicious.

For centuries Britain stumbled towards greater equality—faster in wartime, more slowly during depressions. Then, in the early 1970s, that trend reversed. Inequality increased—slowly at first; then, in the late 1980s, faster than in any other European country. Worldwide economic changes played a part in the story, but the biggest impact was made by changes in taxation that shifted its burdens on to poorer people, and changes in social benefits that again hit some of the poorest people, and made growing use of socially divisive means tests.

We cannot recreate lost solidarity unless we reverse these trends. That applies on a global scale too. The fastest and fairest way to restrict the immigration of poor people to Britain is to help them make a secure and decent living in their own countries.

We must also ask who are the people most likely to be hostile to strangers, and why they feel this way.

The British Social Attitudes survey shows that those most likely to say that higher spending on the social services would not benefit them are not the poorest or the richest people but those in the middle. The differences are not dramatic, but they are very consistent, covering a wide range of services from health and education to culture and public transport. This pattern is confirmed by experience in Burnley, where the BNP has won seats on the council. The neo-fascist vote has risen fastest, not in the poorest neighbourhoods or the richest, but in all-white suburbs of middle Englanders.

What has been happening to these people? Their jobs tend to be in zones of the economy most exposed to "flexibility," "downsizing," "outsourcing"—all the jargon that signals greater risks for workers and small entrepreneurs—and it has become harder for them to climb into more secure zones.



Meanwhile, today's middle Englanders have taken on heavier risks than their predecessors. Seventy per cent are buying their own homes. They struggle to get their children into increasingly expensive universities, without help from means-tested grants that go to poorer families. They watch state pensions unraveling but cannot afford a decent private substitute.

So they have good reasons to be worried and to feel they have to put their own families first. If we want them to be more generous towards strangers we shall have to give them more protection if they work in insecure jobs, more secure pensions, better opportunities for education throughout life, and an NHS that can be relied on. That means rebuilding universal services we all use, not services confined to the poor which always end up as poor services.

David Donnison develops these arguments further in his book, "Policies for a Just Society" (Macmillan)

DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY

by Amitai Etzioni

I PROFOUNDLY AGREE with David Goodhart's analysis of the issue and its importance for the future of societies that must cope with large-scale immigration but historically have not considered themselves immigration societies. The focus is indeed on the tension between old solidarity and new diversity. I also could not agree more that the proper treatment does not lie either in abolishing any sense of solidarity or demanding that diversity be wiped out.

The multicultural approach—which basically prefers to abolish national identities and replace them with a rainbow of tribes living next to each other in the same territory—is blind to the lessons of multiethnic states (from Bosnia to Nigeria), in which the overarching solidarity is too weak to sustain even a civil society. Nations are commonly defined as a community invested in a state. Without some measure of community, even if no civil war ensues, members of one tribe will be unwilling to make the kind of sacrifices required by people who share a state and, hence, a fate. (For an excellent essay on this see Charles Taylor's "No Community, No Democracy," the *Responsive Community*, Fall 2003.) On the other hand, the assimilation approach, which expects all immigrants to be like the native citizens, is unnecessarily homogenising and sacrifices the richness that pluralism brings to anything from cuisine to art.

Hence, I favour a third approach, which builds on the analysis that David Goodhart outlines so effectively but draws slightly different conclusions. A group of public intellectuals from across Europe (which I chaired) formulated such an approach. We called it "diversity within unity." It is best illustrated by the image of a mosaic, which has pieces of different shapes and colours—but also a shared framework (which itself may be recast). There are some basics which should be viewed as sacrosanct, but other cultural and social differences should be not just tolerated but welcomed as enriching.

To the European majorities, we say, "We feel your pain." If several families from—you fill in the blank—moved in

next to our apartments, they would give us pause, too. There is no sense in denying that many immigrants treat women and children, the law, and much else in ways we find troubling. Their conduct is not just different; it is wrong.

Therefore, we hold that immigrants who wish to become members of our national communities (or the EU, for that matter) must accept certain basics. These include respect for human rights, the democratic form of government, the law, as well as a command of the prevailing language(s) and an acceptance of both the glory and the burdens of our national histories.

That being said, if immigrants buy into the basics, there is no reason to protest if they eat and dance differently, or even pray to different gods.

At the same time, we utterly reject the multicultural notion that we should abolish societal identities to accommodate the sensibilities of the newcomers. In Britain, for instance, the Commission on Racial Equality challenged the concept of “Britishness” and advocated a formal declaration that the United Kingdom is “a multicultural society.” No society can flourish unless it has some shared values; nor is there any reason to hold that the human rights which we insist must be respected by people all over the world could be ignored in our inner cities, or that the democratic way of life could be treated as one option among many. Aside from being normatively unacceptable, such concepts also further inflame the majority’s fears that immigrants will destroy all that they hold dear.

The diversity within unity position has specific policy implications.

1. Ideally, all children should attend the same public schools to ensure that they all will be introduced to the same core of shared values and that children from different backgrounds will mingle. At the same time, children should be allowed electives—amounting to, say, 15 percent of the curriculum—in which they could learn more about their culture of origin, the language of their parents and so on.

2. Citizenship should be based on achievements and not blood lines. However, immigrants should not be given citizenship automatically, but rather should be expected to complete tests that determine whether they have acquired a reasonable command of the

host society’s language(s), knowledge of its core culture, and familiarity with its institutions.

3. There should be no official state religion. We prefer this position over one that tries to establish all religions, whereby state coffers are used to fund all religious functionaries. Unity in this matter is best left to informal understandings. Many states used to insist on Sunday as the day of rest, but have accepted over time that a shopkeeper may close on some other day of the week, depending on their religious affiliation. None the less, Sunday has maintained a special informal status which allows the majority to feel that they have not lost “their” day while immigrants (and other minorities) feel that they are not forced to violate their traditions. Such fudges have a place in societal redesigning.

One may well differ on the details and much remains to be worked out. However, the basic approach—reas-

Can a national story overcome an increase in diversity? I think so

sureing the majority that immigrants will be expected to respect the basics but allowed to diverge on other matters—seems to be a sound one. Indeed, it works well in the society that Europeans love to criticise but is clearly ahead in this matter—America.

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BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA *by Nathan Glazer*

I BELIEVE there is a conflict, as David Goodhart argues, between the solidarity that sustains a welfare state and the increasing diversity, in values, ethnicity and race that characterise our liberal and progressive western societies. But when you look at the US, Britain, and continental Europe, there is more than this contradiction at work in the explanation for our different courses in social policy. There is such a thing, hard as it is to quantify, as a national culture or tradition which operates independently of the increase in diversity.

In terms of its values and behaviour,

Britain seems to stand halfway between the US and continental Europe. Twenty-five years ago, when Britain was less diverse than it is today, Rudolph Klein noted from surveys that the people of Britain were less “egalitarian” than Germany, France, or the Netherlands (the question was, do you consider it “very important to try to reduce the number of both very rich and very poor”); and many more Britons than European continentals attributed the cause of poverty to the “laziness and lack of willpower” of the poor (43 per cent for Britain, 23 per cent for Germany, 16 per cent for France, 12 per cent for the Netherlands). Britain also had the lowest percentage of GDP for income support.

Of course the US shows an even greater distance from continental Europe in egalitarianism, willingness to blame the poor, and income support. Every diversity is different, and US diversity is marked most strikingly by a racial division which goes back to the origins of the American colonies, and there is nothing in either Britain or Europe to compare with this. And so, as the economists referred to by David Goodhart show, it is pretty much common knowledge in the US that welfare programmes have traditionally been weakest in the south, where the percentage of blacks is highest.

But this is only part of the story. There is a peculiar individualism in the US, in part based on its immigrant history, in part based on English origins: People think they can make it on their own, do not need the support of the state, that their fate is in their own hands. Forget whether or not this is myth or reality: sociologists have never been able to demonstrate there is more social mobility in the US than in Europe but people believe there is. Call it the national myth or story: It can outweigh a good deal of diversity.

Can the national myth, culture, traditions, or what you will, overcome the effects of the increase in diversity? I believe it can. I noted with interest that Sweden and the US have the same percentage of foreign-born today, but the high percentage of the foreign-born has hardly weakened the Swedish welfare state. (Of course American diversity, in its key respect, race, is not based on recent immigration).

But there is another rising and overarching tradition that increasingly

influences all our western democracies, and that is the commitment to equal treatment of all citizens—and to some degree residents—regardless of race or ethnicity. This is a powerful trend indeed, and may well overcome the specificities of our various national myths and stories, and requires us to live with rather than repel the tide of increasing diversity.

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WHO NEEDS HOMOGENEITY?

by Nigel Harris

DAVID GOODHART'S ESSAY offers a sensitive account of some of the fears of the effect of sustained immigration on social solidarity, on a collective sense of mutual trust but there are several unresolved issues:

1. Was there ever a period in which we could safely say that the inhabitants of these islands shared common values? During the second world war, the upper classes certainly thought so, but what they saw as social homogeneity depended on screening out the differences—from Scottish Catholics, Yorkshire miners, Welsh communists, east end Jews and so—and substituting the narrower vision of the home counties middle class. The wartime B-movies captured the illusion vividly—"the men" were comical with risible accents and "personal problems," while normal people shopped at Harrods or took tea in the Savoy. In turn, the majority of people in the country regarded the home counties middle classes as at best comical, at worst, completely alien. If the middle classes were the nation—as they thought—the majority were excluded, by reason of origin, way of life, accent, clothes and so on. Many still feel the same. The family, at least in its ideal form, remains a paradigm of altruistic behaviour, but it would be absurd to transfer this model, as do romantic nationalists, to the large and alien abstraction of the nation. Never, as far as I know, could the average person regard other people in the country as being quasi-family members. What we share are not common values, but a common state, a common framework of laws provided by the state. That ought to be enough in a liberal society for both natives and newcomers.

2. Furthermore, insofar as there is social homogeneity, it is enforced, not spontaneous. For at least a couple of

hundred years, the "diversities" have been drilled, shamed or bludgeoned out of existence. The village school teacher, cane in hand, policed the perimeter of the nation to shame or exclude those who could not speak, dress or wash proper. It was a cruel and remorseless process, deeply hurtful to the victims and, I suspect, powerfully inciting the fierce class hostility to the ruling order in the 19th century. I fear that David Blunkett's "integration" for foreigners (integration into what, one wonders? The Blunkett family culture?), like Chirac's attitude to what French women shall wear on their heads, will similarly stimulate deep resentment at not being treated with equality with the natives.

3. Why should states be so concerned to enforce by whatever means social homogeneity? Perhaps to create the solidarity which would support obedience and paying taxes, but also for



the purposes of war, particularly in the 20th century's "total war." In such a paranoid context, the foreigner, worker or asylum seeker, is invariably the spearhead of invasion. But wars can be fought with diversities intact (witness the US armed forces). And, in any case, globalisation and military technology have made it most unlikely that total war will return—in response, the BBC has perhaps abandoned BBC English and parades a variety of Englishes.

4. Of course, we might say that, regardless of the injustices involved in creating and sustaining social solidarity, it is now done and to jeopardise it by increasing diversity would be to threaten the civilisation which it has created. And yet there is no solid evidence that diversity does threaten solidarity. Indeed, we can imagine a society in which pride in diversity is the basis of solidarity. Consider Canada—

the governor general is Chinese and when asked how she represents all the diverse peoples of the country, says that she embraces all their histories; Canada is heir to a world history. Why is this so wrong?

5. Dynamic societies endlessly recreate themselves, remanufacturing solidarity out of a continuing changing menu of differences, regardless of the presence or absence of foreigners. Of course, almost everyone (especially the poor) hates the poor and, one subgroup, benefit scroungers. But the ferocity of resentment here is surely related to reform of the welfare state and the new principle that you only benefit according to what you pay.

6. Furthermore, there are many other frameworks for social solidarity apart from the national—city, province, village, clubs, NGOs, even the anti-globalisation movement. Furthermore, just as British expatriate communities abroad bind us into a wider diaspora of solidarity, so do minorities who live in Britain but sustain family linkages in their places of origin—Britain is going global with a wonderful variety of cultural cocktails. We should rejoice that it is no longer necessary to sterilise the differences or go to war in order to live with, trust and be helpful to, each other. *Nigel Harris is professor of the economics of the city at University College London*

DIVERSITY OF PEOPLES OR VALUES

by Kenan Malik

THE DEBATE ABOUT immigration and multiculturalism has been bedevilled by a confusion between the diversity of *peoples* and the diversity of *values*. Multiculturalists argue that the presence in a society of a diversity of peoples precludes the possibility of common values. Little Englanders suggest that such values are possible only within an ethnically homogeneous society.

David Goodhart's attempt to negotiate a new path through this swamp is welcome. Yet his argument that beyond a certain level immigration undermines social cohesion and makes the indigenous population less willing to share resources seems also to conflate the diversity of peoples and values. I agree with his concern about the erosion of common values—but not with the claim that underlying such erosion is the greater diversity created by mass immigration.

Historically, postwar black immigrants to Britain were concerned less with preserving their cultural differences than in achieving political equality. The political elite, on the other hand, has been obsessed by the question of cultural difference. In the 1950s policy makers feared that, in the words of a colonial office report, “a large coloured community would weaken... the concept of England or Britain.” By the 1980s, they had come to view cultural difference, not as a threat to national identity, but as an *affirmation* of it. The very notion of creating common values was now abandoned except at a most minimal level. Partly this was due to the recognition that the old British identity was rooted in a Britain that no longer existed, if it ever did. But mostly it resulted from a lack of a political vision of what a new common culture might look like. Many of the public institutions in which such a culture was traditionally invested—from church to parliament, from the monarchy to the BBC—have lost their capacity to inspire trust. Nothing has come to replace them. Britishness has come to be defined simply as a toleration of difference. Multiculturalism, in other words, did not cause the fraying of a common set of values, but is itself the product of such frayed values.

The answer to the question at the core of Goodhart’s essay—whether or not, in a diverse society, universalism necessarily conflicts with solidarity—depends on how one defines solidarity. If we define it in narrow particularist or ethnic terms—in other words, if we accept that a diversity of peoples necessarily entails a diversity of values—then by definition the two must conflict. If, however, we define it in political terms—solidarity as collective action in pursuit of a set of political ideals—then a universalist perspective becomes a means of establishing solidarity.

From this perspective, the real problem is not a surfeit of strangers in our midst but the abandonment over the past two decades of ideologically based politics for a politics of identity. The result has been the fragmentation of society as different groups assert their particular identities—and the creation of a well of resentment within white working-class communities who feel left out. Shared values and common identities can only emerge through a process of political dialogue and struggle, a

process whereby different values are put to the test, and a collective language of citizenship emerges. The narrowing of the political sphere makes such a process much more difficult to pursue. That is why there is today no source of Britishness from which anyone—black or white—can draw inspiration.

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NEW NATIONAL MYTHS

by Anshuman Mondal

TO POSE THE progressive dilemma in terms of solidarity and diversity inevitably involves talking about identity, and talking about identity is unsettling. Identity is intangible and difficult to define, and yet it is at the very core of our being, an intimate part of who we are. Invariably, then, debates over identity are contentious, especially when they assume political form.

It is often said that “identity politics” is part of a postmodern, globalising

The conversation about who “we” are must be kept open and negotiable

moment that accompanies the decline of the nation state. The assumption is that whatever politics was based on prior to this, it was not identity. This is not true. In fact, the modern era was the historical moment when “identity politics” shuffled onto the world stage for the first time. Hitherto, identity was framed in terms of religious universalisms and local particularities. One’s identity shifted loosely between the two and seldom, if ever, was identity a basis for politics.

With the emergence of modern representative government came a new concept of culture and identity—the nation—which in turn became the basis for politics (of the nation state). National identity emphasises sameness: culture is identical to society which in turn is identified by a state. The notion of inhabiting different identities at the same time receded. With nationhood came our current conceptualisation of solidarity and diversity as opposing forces.

The point is that such a conception emerged historically and so there is nothing natural about it. Our prevailing

notions of solidarity and diversity in terms of either/or and not both/and were constructed in order to ground a particular type of politics in a particular notion of culture at a particular historical juncture. Representative government needs to represent itself in the form of narratives that identify who is being represented. That remains true but the moment of national representativeness is now passing. Ironically nationhood—one of the great myths of modernity—is itself being undermined by identity politics. These other identities are themselves myths—stories we tell ourselves in order to make sense of who we are. Why should we continue, at this moment in time, to tell ourselves stories that do not adequately represent us anymore? The old national myths will not do; we need new ones.

To be sure, such an effort at re-presenting ourselves will not be easy and our current problems testify to the difficulties involved in retelling cultural narratives fit for a globalised reality. This does not mean, however, that we should just ditch solidarity in favour of diversity. We cannot reject the notion of a common culture; rather, the point is to redefine the very notion of what is common to us all. Cultural diversity actually needs a concept of what is common to all the cultures in a given society in order for each individual culture to recognise itself as different in the first place. So let us not believe that when we reimagine ourselves we will disappear into cultural relativism, that we will lose any sense of identity. That is impossible. Nor should we settle on a new story once and for all. That would merely reproduce the same kind of tensions and replace one set of strangers with another.

Rather we should recognise the value of keeping the conversation about who “we” are open and negotiable. This in turn requires that we should recognise all the participants in this dialogue as possessing equal value, both those of us who have been here for many generations, and those of us newly arrived. It places responsibility on those that are “in” to recognise that they have no special privilege to Britishness based merely on longevity, but it also requires those who arrive into the conversation to identify, to an extent, with the narratives that have emerged out of a history that cannot be wished away.

History is thus the ground on which a multicultural, post-nationalist sense of solidarity must be fashioned. As such, it is of course desirable that the history of the British isles is taught to immigrants; however, such a history should not be bracketed off from other histories, for the history of these isles has in large measure been shaped by the history of others. The histories of immigrant communities are not alien to Britain; they are part of its fabric. Taken together, the many overlapping histories of the peoples of Britain can represent the story of Britain in a more open, global and culturally diverse way. Only then will ethnic tensions lose their force. "The trouble with the British," says a character in *The Satanic Verses*, "is that most of their history happened overseas." Quite. Now it has come home, and there is no stopping now, no going back; there is no alternative. We must push on, together.

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LOSING YOUR BEST PEOPLE

by Kamran Nazeer

DAVID GOODHART states the progressive dilemma very clearly. There's clearly also a presentational dilemma lurking within it: how do you express solidarity without using language or symbols that are exclusionary or which will be read by some in that way? The presentation has the potential to damage the project itself.

His approach may get around this by prescribing a solidarity of entitlements. Being a full British citizen means having all of these entitlements; if you are not a full citizen, you get only a set of these. This may avoid the problems inherent in saying that being a full British citizen means having certain cultural/social/political traits. That is a very difficult issue and that sort of solidarity is much harder to gather. Goodhart's notion of citizenship instead is based on a contractual model of society and of mutual obligation and may be more palatable and workable for that reason.

I would also add another aspect to the progressive dilemma. If the progressive is concerned about economic and social justice, in the international sense, I expect that the progressive

should be careful about what he or she advocates on immigration. Depending on who it is that migrates (the bright, the ambitious, the determined, the educated?) the less developed country from which they depart is left worse off and the developed country in which they arrive benefits. Immigration may not therefore serve the cause of economic and social justice in the global sense; it may further compromise efforts to attain that justice, by redistributing talent and potential from the third world to the first.

Kamran Nazeer is a writer from Glasgow

WHAT ARE CIVILISED RULES?

by Bhikhu Parekh

WHILE SHARING David Goodhart's basic concerns and political sympathies, I remain uneasy about some of his arguments and conclusions.

First, he sets up an abstract and untenable contrast between solidarity



and diversity. Devoid of diversity, solidarity leads to a bland and oppressive society. And without solidarity, diversity leads to fragmentation and ghettoisation and creates a climate of anxiety that is inhospitable to diversity. Since the two are complementary and equally important, there need be no inherent tension between them. The question we should be asking, therefore, is what degrees and kinds of solidarity and diversity we should seek such that neither frustrates the other.

Although Goodhart talks a great deal about solidarity, it is not clear what he means by it. Sometimes he thinks that it involves mutual commitment and loyalty, which is fine. On other occasions he wants a strong sense of national unity based on homogeneity and shared values, which is neither possible nor desirable in a liberal society. The same difficulty bedevils his

conception of diversity. He frequently links diversity and immigration but there is a far wider and deeper diversity among the British people themselves than between them and the immigrants. Even if all the immigrants were to leave the country, deep diversity would remain and continue to pose challengeS to a strong view of solidarity, as the remarks of Patricia Hewitt's constituents make clear.

Secondly, while paying lip service to diversity, Goodhart shows little appreciation of its value and fragility. Diversity fosters new sources of energy, creativity and imagination, expands our range of choices, enables us to see the strengths and limitations of our own way of life, and so on. Furthermore Goodhart is wrong to think that diversity can look after itself. In Britain, as in other societies, there is increasing pressure towards assimilation and homogenisation, and diversity can easily wither away unless it is nurtured with the same diligence as solidarity.

Thirdly, Goodhart is convinced that solidarity is a necessary precondition of redistribution. That is a half truth, and does not explain how solidarity comes into existence in the first instance. One could just as plausibly say that redistribution generates loyalty, creates common life experiences, etc, and thus paves the way for solidarity. The relation between the two is dialectical and far more complex than Goodhart's analysis suggests. The researches that he cites are open to different interpretations, mistake contingent connections for causality, and can be easily matched by others with a different message. Japan has a strong sense of solidarity but only a limited programme of redistribution. Even the US is characterised by a strong sense of patriotism and solidarity, but has virtually no redistributive impulse even with regard to the poor whites.

Finally, it is not entirely clear to me how Goodhart proposes to integrate immigrants and generate a sense of solidarity. Citizenship ceremonies and so on, are fine, but largely symbolic. I do not know what "adopting" British history means, especially for Britain's ex-colonial subjects and their offspring. As for common culture, Goodhart recognises the obvious difficulty of specifying its contents and enforcing them. Common values are more promising, but they can only be pub-

lic and political in nature. He surely does not want all Britons to share the same set of personal ideals and visions of the good life. An ominous note is stuck when he says that those violating “the rules of civilised behaviour” should be denied the unconditional benefits accruing from citizenship. What are these rules? The most important of them are embodied in laws, which we should obviously require immigrants to observe. Difficulties arise when we go beyond them. Who is to lay down these rules, and what do they exclude? Football hooliganism and racist attacks obviously. But what about corporate fraud? Evasion of taxes? Media lies and demonisation of asylum seekers which poison the well springs of civility?

Bhikhu Parekh was chair of the commission on The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain and is author of “Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory” (Macmillan)

RISKS OF MASS IMMIGRATION

by Bob Rowthorn

DAVID GOODHART HAS written a stimulating article on diversity and social cohesion. He has been criticised for being alarmist about the present rate of immigration and its implications for British society. In fact, the pace of transformation resulting from immigration is much faster than he implies.

Goodhart cites a figure of 150,000 per year for net immigration into Britain. This may be an underestimate because it excludes illegal immigrants. It is also not the appropriate statistic to use in the present context, since it lumps together all types of migration irrespective of nationality. If migration is broken down by citizenship, official statistics reveal that in 2002 the net inflow of foreigners into this country was equal to 244,500, whilst the net outflow of British citizens was 91,000. Goodhart’s figure is derived by subtracting the British outflow from the foreign inflow.

Such flows will have a huge effect if they are sustained for a prolonged period of time. By the middle of the century they will imply the addition of 11.5m foreigners to the population of this country and a net loss of 4.3m British citizens. These numbers represent a huge cumulative transformation. They also understate the scale of change since the immigrants are on

average young and many of them come from cultures where fertility is high. If we take into account both the number of immigrants and their higher than average fertility, the transformation of our society implied by present rates of migration is truly dramatic.

The advocates of mass immigration seem to think that it will be easily absorbed as it has been so far in settler countries like Australia or Canada. They may be right. But why are they so confident? Britain is not a settler country and for many centuries the scale of immigration was normally modest. Only in very recent times has there been a sustained upsurge in immigration. If current rates of migration continue, how can we be sure that Britain will not end up like continental Europe, where opinion against immigrants is hardening rapidly in many countries? Some of the continental measures towards migrants, such as the Rotterdam policy for the dispersal

To admit many millions of immigrants is a huge and irreversible experiment

of immigrants, or the French policy towards the wearing of religious symbols, are highly oppressive. Such policies, it can be argued, are a belated reaction to the unwanted consequences of a previous period of mass immigration. To admit many millions of immigrants over the course of a few decades is a huge and irreversible social experiment. If it turns out to be wrong then we will be stuck with the consequences. This is not an argument for opposing all immigration, but it is an argument for proceeding cautiously.

Bob Rowthorn is a professor of economics at Cambridge University

GOODHART TOO PESSIMISTIC

by Shamit Saggar

THE DIVERSITY VERSUS community debate has been around a long time. It was the Little Englanders, spurred on by Powell, who brought the argument into the open in the late 1960s. Britain’s rapid absorption of large numbers of black and brown immigrants was opposed because of two fears. The first was the fear of undermining the integrity of a distinctive,

cultural Britishness. The second held that the strangers in our midst would detract from common, shared values as the basis of our national community. Both arguments were mistaken in the long run, as the record of British integration policy and practice shows.

To what extent is nationhood dependent on ethnic and cultural homogeneity? Social and moral conservatives such as Casey and Scruton have often protested vehemently about this. However, as the US and Canadian cases amply demonstrate, the viability of the nation and its politics is not conditional on a sense of unified ethnic identity. A common attachment to the nation—something that immigrants often excel at—is certainly desirable. In any case, it is highly questionable to think (or even have thought) that post-war immigrants to Britain have been unable or unwilling to develop a sense of shared national identity with locals. Evidence from the British election study and the British citizenship survey highlight a clear pattern of black and Asian Britons declaring a stronger attachment to British identity than their white counterparts.

Shared values are a trickier matter. David Goodhart’s essay raises the profile of this elusive social glue. But it is here that a sharper reading of contemporary immigration politics and history is needed. One distinction is between the major political parties, acknowledging the Conservatives’ past ability to speak to the people in terms of latent ties, even kinship. David Willetts describes this as the Tories’ “ability to reach the hearts of the electors and evoke instincts and emotions which were a closed book to the rationalist progressives.” Such ability has been feared by their political opponents, in part because of the left’s ambiguity in speaking openly about common values in cultural terms. But it was Andrew Marr in 1992 who spotted John Major’s potential is building a broader British “family” of belonging that was conspicuously inclusive towards immigrants and their children. Major’s strength was nothing more than his generational capacity to address new commonwealth immigration in a way that did not stick in the throat. He and his generation were at home in pragmatically building commonness in a way that Margaret Thatcher’s generation was not.

Moreover, by measuring sentiment on social distance, it is possible to show that the white majority has, overall, softened its previous hard-line stance towards black and Asian immigrants and their offspring. The British social attitudes survey shows that opposition to these groups as workplace colleagues, neighbours, bosses, friends and even in-laws has declined considerably over the past 20 years. Equally, four fifths of the (mainly white) public freely acknowledge the “fact” of racial discrimination in employment, with a similar proportion reporting that this was “always wrong” as a matter of principle. These changes have been much greater among the young, and it is likely that Britain is gently filling up with new generations who are not only more comfortable with ethnic pluralism but are also keen to want more of it. A slim majority state that black and Asian immigration has turned out to be “good or very good” for Britain, according to the British Election study.

Contrary to predictions, intermarriage rates among Asian groups are currently running at between 12–15 per cent of all unions; 15 years ago it barely registered at 1 per cent.

If Britain *is* characterised by an unwillingness to live and share with strangers, there is only patchy evidence to back this outlook. Little Englanders ironically were right in drawing attention to kith and kinship as a factor in the transition process but one that is frequently misread and extended inappropriately. Membership of a community, national or otherwise, implies a sharing in values and codes of conduct as well as in distributional concerns.

Goodhart’s discussion of a trade-off between diversity and community ends up obscuring a three-way relationship in which equality represents the missing link. As communities experience greater inequality than they have previously known, it is probable that this will impact on social cohesion and solidarity. The relationship works both ways, and cohesion can be destabilised by more than growing ethnic diversity. Robert Putnam has pointed to this broader account in the US where evidence suggests declining trust not just across, but also within, ethnic groups.

With ethnic pluralism set to grow in every large-scale industrial democracy in the next decade and beyond, it is vital to develop a clear and practi-

cal understanding of these interplays. In the first two decades of the 20th century public intellectuals and political leaders concluded that the US was not so much full as already approaching its absorptive capacity of difference, as brought by alien immigrants who shared little in common and who, it was feared, would threaten Americans’ sense of “we.” This conclusion was flawed for reasons that are now readily apparent. Britain’s position today can learn profitably from this legacy. *Shamit Saggat is a world fellow at Yale University and author of “Race and Representation” (Manchester University Press)*

DIVERSITY AND HISTORY

by Saskia Sassen

LET’S SAY I agree with David Goodhart’s carefully reasoned examination of the constraints and possibilities our societies face in trying to combine solidarity and diversity. But what happens when we take a longer time frame and look at Europe’s history of immigration for clues about what is a constraint and what is a possibility?

One common and persuasive argument is that today’s challenges differ from those in the past because the cultural, religious, phenotypical, and social distance between most natives and most foreigners is far sharper than it was in the past. It is indeed the case that the distance is greater. But the question we need to ask is whether this greater distance is indeed the cause of the difficulty. The history of migrations inside Europe in the 1700 and 1800s suggests that it is not. At that time the cultural, religious, language, and phenotypes of migrants and locals were broadly speaking the same. Yet the immigrant was racialised and constructed as an outsider. (We have a powerful contemporary case in Germany, where east Germans are seen by many in the west as a different ethnicity, even overriding the romance of reunification). Looked at this way, I would say that invoking religious and cultural distance to explain today’s resistance is a stand-in for a far more basic trend to racialise the outsider.

And yet, historical demography shows us that all our European societies have over time incorporated many if not all the major foreign immigrant groups and, further, that it has often taken no more than a couple of gener-

ations to turn them into the we—the community that can experience solidarity in Goodhart’s analysis. One third of the French population is second or third generation foreign ancestry; for Vienna’s Austrians it is 40 per cent.

Incorporation was never easy; and it typically started like an inconceivable possibility. It was often the work of the excluded that led to eventual formalised inclusions, such as expanded rights. Our societies struggled and learnt to expand the meaning of the “we”—the gradual incorporation of a significant range of diverse foreign groups that could be subsumed under the logic of solidarity. There were battles in the streets and in courtrooms and at the ballot box to fight for the right to inclusion, to explode the settled boundaries for solidarity of a given epoch. Perfect equilibria between solidarity and diversity are difficult to imagine, and at any rate have had brief lives in most of our societies; they exist only in the analyst’s imagination or the policymaker’s chart.

When you take this longer time frame we can see that integration happened. And, importantly we can see that in learning to cope and to do the difficult, often experimental work needed for this incorporation, our societies developed capabilities. Some of our most admired institutions come out of this history of struggle and making. But today when we discuss our constraints and options regarding solidarity and diversity we seem to have forgotten our history, and the work it took to construct our hybrid republics. We have wound up with a passive edge in our stance to integration: we want it ready made, no work, no pain. Have we become consumers of diversity rather than artisans of incorporation? *Saskia Sassen is the author of a history of migrations in Europe (Guests and Aliens, New York: New Press 1999).*

HUMAN RIGHTS AS GLUE

by Sarah Spencer

BRITAIN FACES A challenge in developing a strong sense of common citizenship. Migration is one dimension of that challenge. Yet there are highly questionable assumptions in David Goodhart’s analysis.

First, Goodhart overstates the uniformity of the 1950s, suggesting that divisions of class and region (not to forget those of age, gender and religion) were weak enough to leave intact

common values and a sense of mutual-ity only now threatened by ethnic diversity. Recent migration has undoubtedly added new dimensions to the mix of values and lifestyles in Britain. But did the Liverpool docker and home counties lawyer of the class ridden 1950s really share more life experiences—have been more likely to spend a comfortable evening together or been more willing to see the other spend his taxes—than an Indian and English surgeon working in a Birmingham hospital today, or an English and Caribbean parent-governor meeting at their London primary school?

In each case, the pair would have aspects of their lives which would have a resonance with the other, and aspects which would not. There would be issues on which they support each other's views; and limits on their willingness to share. We can exaggerate the "common culture," the "glue of ethnicity" that is perceived to have been eroded. Rather, there was a tapestry of lifestyles and values to which immigrants have contributed new dimensions; adding to, not creating the challenges for social cohesion which we face. Some indexes of cohesion have improved during the recent growth in migration: levels of social trust have stabilised since 1980 (British Social Attitudes survey) and, since 1996, the proportion of the public who say they live in a neighbourhood where people "help each other" has actually risen (British Crime survey).

Certainly, among the immigrants to Britain there are extremists with unacceptable views on the treatment of their own family (genital mutilation, forced marriages, honour killings), and on using violence to achieve political objectives. There is no reason to think, however, that the vast majority of immigrants and second-generation ethnic minorities are any more unwilling to pay taxes, to vote or contribute economically and socially than anyone else.

On the other hand—is the behaviour of the majority population so estimable that there is no irony in encouraging immigrants to emulate it? Britain is a society in which one third of men have a criminal conviction by the age of 40 and one woman in four is a victim of domestic violence. It is a society in which one in four boys have their first sexual partner before they are 16, and has the highest rate of teenage births in Europe. At the last general election,

only 59 per cent of the public bothered to vote. When Goodhart says immigrants should be encouraged to become Britons, which Britons does he mean?

If we have an innate hostility and suspicion of difference, a tendency to perceive "in groups and out groups," it is not limited to those born overseas. Sadly, we can be distrustful or disdainful of anyone who does not share our values (homophobia), whose behaviour we cannot predict (the mentally ill) or whom we consider undeserving (the elderly); and the capacity for ill treatment of people in those categories is staggering. It is suggested that immigrants should learn to become good citizens. Shouldn't we all?

Is support for the welfare state weakened because the public are unwilling to share with ethnic minorities? Public hostility, surely, is to the undeserving: as much for the teenage mother deemed to have become preg-

The vast majority of immigrants are as willing to contribute as anyone

nant to jump the housing queue, and the welfare scrounger unwilling to work, as for the asylum seeker: all perceived to be taking without contributing, their entitlement questioned. The competing notions of justice and acceptable behaviour which Goodhart identifies were apparent long before recent migration. It is not only migrants whom we need to know will make the effort to be self supporting.

The answer here is not some contrived limit on diversity, but to ensure that people receive according to entitlement. The challenge—as in relation to other sections of the needy community—is differing public perceptions of entitlement, in which ethnicity is already not the determining factor. The Japanese work-permit holder who pays taxes is not seen as a burden on the NHS; the east European asylum seeker, is. Goodhart proposes a two-tier welfare system, with limited access for temporary residents. This we already have, but the current rules on which migrants gets access to which services and benefits are inconsistent and lack any clear rationale—a review is overdue.

How then do we create the sense of

belonging, and mutual obligation, that we need? Goodhart suggests immigrants should be encouraged to share in the historic British "we" through the teaching of history and language. But immigrants will not feel part of "we" unless treated as "we": included, economically and socially, and treated as equals. If excluded from the opportunities that others share, if demonstrably "them" not "us," no amount of inclusive rhetoric will convince otherwise; with the consequences we see now in disaffection in some minority communities. Strategies to ensure equality of opportunity (not positive discrimination) should in this context be seen, not as protection of individual rights, but as a prerequisite of inclusion and cohesion.

Finally, Goodhart rightly suggests that social cohesion requires a level of common values, but that it is difficult to agree what these might be. Yet there is one code of ethics which does have a legitimacy beyond that produced by any single government, to which we can all be expected to adhere regardless of background or faith: international human rights standards. Here we have minimum, agreed standards on the treatment of others which outlaw extreme practices. But we also have a mechanism for balancing the rights of one person, say to freedom of speech, against another, to freedom from incitement to racial hatred. In most cases (excluding torture for instance), human rights standards are not absolute but can be limited by the state, where necessary and proportional, to protect the rights of others. In teaching respect for the human rights of others we thus have a valuable tool for promoting cohesion. In its recent decision to include human rights within the remit of the proposed Commission on Equality and Human Rights, the government recognised the importance of that dimension.

Goodhart questions whether there is a contradiction between universal human rights standards and the exclusivity of citizenship. Not so. Human rights standards set only minimum requirements of protection, and responsibilities towards others, which apply to all. Beyond that minimum, citizenship can accord additional rights and responsibilities to those for whom, residing in the longer term, that deeper level of mutual commitment is appropriate.

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