"Mapping the white British response to ethnic change…"

CHANGING PLACES

Eric Kaufmann
Gareth Harris

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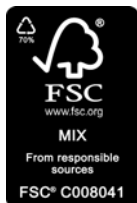
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Executive summary

In May 2014, immigration overtook the economy as the leading concern of British voters. The UK Independence Party (UKIP), campaigning on a platform of immigration control, came first in the May European elections with 27.9 per cent of the vote, two and a half points ahead of Labour, four more than the Tories. This was an unprecedented achievement for a third party in British politics. Since 2002, immigration has typically ranked among the electorate's top two priorities. The rise of the British National Party (BNP) in the years to 2009, and of UKIP thereafter, underscores the importance of the issue.

We argue that the dynamics of the *ethnic majority* – not the nation, and not ethnic minorities – are critical for understanding these trends. During the 2000s, concern over integration and the 'parallel lives' led by minority communities rose to the fore while the fortunes of multicultural approaches waned. This was joined by a great deal of discussion of Britishness: the nature of British *national* identity. The ethnic majority, or white British, were not entirely overlooked, but the spotlight largely bypassed them. In other words, the key question for many is not 'What does it mean to be British in an increasingly diverse society?' but 'What does it mean to be *white* British in an increasingly diverse society?' This report tries to rectify previous omissions by concentrating on the ethnic majority. We argue for an explicit, evidence-based focus on the white British of England – what we call the ethnic English, as distinct from the British state-nation, which has hitherto been the focus of attention.

Many, ourselves included, embrace the idea that minorities possess a hyphenated identity, retaining their ethnicity as well as an inclusive British nationality. But alongside this, it has been assumed that the ethnic majority should relinquish its ethnic identity in favour of the new civic British one. Such an approach,

which consigns the majority ethnic group to a future of inevitable decline, assuming it will transfer its affections to civic Britishness, will in our estimation only feed the current malaise. Instead, an attempt must be made to rethink what it means to be of English ethnicity in a period of mass migration. Though immigration reduces the preponderance of the ethnic majority, a narrative of pessimistic decline can be countered with positive news about assimilation. Namely, that the fastest-growing group in England are those of mixed-race who share English descent with the majority, while the direction of identity change among the children of those of European and mixed-race background is also towards majority ethnicity.

The response of the ethnic majority to changes arising from immigration and minority natural increase forms the remit of this report. The central finding is that mass concern over immigration is driven by the rate of change in the non-white British population. Government policy, especially in housing and refugee resettlement, should avoid introducing rapid ethnic shifts in locales with little experience of diversity. Gradual, diffuse increases in diversity are preferable. Concern dissipates over time as members of the ethnic majority become used to a larger immigrant presence, and assimilation – notably of the children of Europeans – takes place. Despite UKIP's focus on European free movement, we find it is the rate of ethnic change caused by *both* immigration and minority natural increase that leads to opposition to immigration and stimulates far-right voting.

We conceive of three potential white British responses to ethnic change, inspired by Albert Hirschman's *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*: flee change, fight it, or accommodate it.[1] 'Voice', or fighting change, is expressed as anti-immigration sentiment, which influences the agenda of mainstream parties and the media and creates fertile soil for right-wing populist parties. 'Exit', or fleeing change, takes the form of white residential flight from minorities. While we find little evidence of 'white flight' in England, there are powerful unconscious forces preventing whites and minorities from becoming residentially integrated. Areas with higher initial white British populations tend to

attract white residents while those with significant minority shares lose them.

Accommodation, the third potential white British response to ethnic change, is also taking place. We find that white British people who live in diverse areas are less opposed to immigration, and less supportive of far-right parties. This is because they perceive minorities to have a legitimate presence in their locale, and by extension the country. In addition, contact with minorities takes the edge off negative preconceptions. Finally, accommodation takes place through assimilation: a significant share of the children of European immigrants and some of mixed-race background come to identify as white British, melting into the majority.

Despite the accommodation that is taking place, the balance of forces currently favours opposition to ethnic change: 'voice' over accommodation. From our research we argue economic hardship and political mistrust are not the main drivers of majority unease. Instead, we claim the pace of ethnic change has temporarily outstripped mechanisms of accommodation. Minority ethnic population growth has historically stimulated a defensive ethnic nationalism, whether in England, Scotland, Western Europe or North America. This is not an iron law, but exceptions to the nationalist rule stem from integrating shocks such as wars or major ideological shifts, which are not present in contemporary England. In short, rapid ethnic change drives a wedge between the ethnic majority and what they consider to be 'their' nation. Local experiences feed national imaginings. Residents of communities undergoing ethnic change often experience disorientation while those who live in whiter neighbourhoods or outlying areas of diverse cities and local authorities may fear impending change.

At present, political parties are seeking to address majority concerns, especially those of the working-class and lower-middle-class majority, solely by focusing on migration control. But local dynamics are also important: the Government needs to ensure that its housing and refugee dispersal policies do not lead to overly rapid cultural change in settled communities with little prior exposure to diversity. We find a statistically robust link

between wards with rapid increases in non-white British populations during 2001–11, such as parts of Barking and Dagenham, heightened white opposition to immigration and support for anti-immigration parties.

Time is a healer, however. Much of this is simple habituation: within a decade, white residents of diverse communities become accustomed to greater diversity. Provided the rate of ethnic change slows, local whites begin to exhibit more toleration for immigration and lower support for the far right than was true prior to the change. Young people, meanwhile, grow up in a more diverse environment and view this as the 'new normal', a state of affairs in which minorities are a legitimate part of English society, and hence the civic nation. On many levels, minorities and whites come to share an English and British national identity, though the two remain ethnically distinct and view their Englishness and Britishness somewhat differently.

Integration is important, especially the contact and familiarity that comes with residential mixing. Whether minorities are UK or foreign-born, English-speaking or not, employed or on benefits or identify with Britain matters less for white attitudes than whether they are residentially proximal. This is because residential mixing facilitates contact and habituation: local residents of diverse areas meet and observe the newcomers, correcting misconceptions and humanising them. Ethnic majority opposition to immigration in diverse local authorities is lower where minorities are more interspersed among the white British.

This said, the spread of ethnic minorities also introduces change and a sense of threat into adjacent homogeneous communities. Therefore, while residential mixing has effects on white attitudes in an immediate locale, this is difficult to scale up to the national level. Integration makes its imprint nationwide only in the long term, by hastening assimilation. Indeed, engineering high-speed ethnic mixing in particular communities may cause more problems than it solves. Thus diffusing ethnic change is more important than the imperative to integrate populations.

Findings

Our findings are based on quantitative analysis of several large datasets, including the Citizenship Surveys, *Understanding Society* (the UK Household Longitudinal Study; UKHLS),[2] British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), Office for National Statistics (ONS) Longitudinal Study, the 2011 ONS Census and local government election results from the University of Plymouth. We also commissioned a specially designed YouGov political tracker survey and undertook four focus groups, two in greater Birmingham and two in greater London.

Immigration opinion

Opposition to immigration in England and Wales, at around 80 per cent, is high by international and historical standards, which explains the success of parties such as the BNP, and to a lesser extent UKIP. Part of the opposition – as much as 50 of the 80 percentage points – cuts across ethnic lines, but an important component is specific to the white British majority. In this report we focus on the white British of England and use the terms 'ethnic English', 'the ethnic majority' and white British coterminously.

Disproportionate ethnic English opposition to immigration is primarily caused by the fact there has been a rapid increase in the proportion of ethnic minorities, which has outpaced the ability of the ethnic majority to assimilate or become accustomed to the change. It is not the minority share so much as the rate of change that matters. Opposition to European immigration was therefore the centrepiece of UKIP's message. Though many in surveys and the media cite white European immigration as cause for concern, the evidence shows that minority natural increase also matters. Many forget the fact the 2000s witnessed simultaneous European and non-European population growth. For instance, the share of visible (black and ethnic) minorities in England doubled from 6 per cent to 12 per cent in England and Wales between 2001 and 2011, which would have occurred regardless of whether Britain was inside or outside the EU. In most societies that have experienced ethnic transition on this

scale, such as the USA in the period 1840–1940 or Scotland from 1880 to 1960, there has been a rise in anti-immigration politics.

Curiously, white British opposition to immigration, and far-right voting, is lower in locales with more minorities and immigrants. This is because the ethnic majority in diverse areas is more transient, has more contact with minorities and is more used to the notion that minorities are an established part of English society. However, opposition to immigration tends to be higher in diverse local authorities, notably where white British are isolated in white wards. Residential integration spreads minorities within local authorities, which, after initial teething, tends to reduce white British opposition to immigration. But this also increases ethnic change. Our research does not clearly show that the positive effects of minority diffusion on white attitudes at the national level are more potent than those of threat effects experienced by whites who live just beyond the zone of contact with minorities. The effects of rapid ethnic change are more certain. Therefore, while we advocate residential integration, we urge a gradual approach, which avoids rapid change wherever possible.

White flight in England?

Minorities are leaving their areas of concentration but tend to seek 'super-diverse' places to live rather than the 80 per cent of England that averages 95 per cent white. Meanwhile, the white British are more likely than minorities to leave or avoid diverse areas whether composed of one or many minority groups. This is not because of 'white flight'. White conservatives and liberals, racists and cosmopolitans, all move to relatively white areas at similar rates. Thus whites in diverse areas are not more tolerant because conservatives have selected themselves out, but because they have contact and familiarity with minorities.

When white British people move they are unconsciously drawn to whiter places than minorities – this is true for all classes, but especially for the white working class. People often make decisions about where to move by consulting friends and family, who tend to be of the same ethnic origin. This may

account for the unconscious ethnic sorting that takes place. Though ethnic minorities enter whiter areas as they become socially mobile, this is counteracted by white British movement away from diverse neighbourhoods. This unconscious behaviour reproduces the established pattern of white Britons and minorities tending to inhabit ethnically dissimilar environments.

Policy recommendations

Our primary recommendation is for government to moderate the pace of ethnic change in particular localities. A rapid increase in the local share of ethnic minorities elevates white British opposition to immigration and stimulates far-right voting. This means policies designed to facilitate minority dispersion should aim for gradualism rather than shock therapy.

These are our recommendations:

· The Home Office avoid dispersing refugees to areas that have little prior experience of diversity and have low population turnover.
· In response to the Housing Benefit cap, there is a danger that diverse local authorities in London such as Newham may seek to send large numbers of social housing tenants to more homogeneous parts of the country. We recommend to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that it is better, wherever possible, for such tenants to relocate to areas with an existing history of diversity and population transience.
· White British opposition to diversity tends to be higher in the white fringes of diverse urban areas such as London. Minorities are likely to form a disproportionate share of new housing tenants in Greater London. Thus house-building policies should avoid large developments around existing communities as these may well introduce swift ethnic changes into established exurban communities. We recommend that DCLG endorse the garden cities and self-build initiatives as these ensure new minority households can become established while insulating existing communities from rapid ethnic shifts.

We endorse measures that seek to retain white British residents in diverse areas while gently diffusing minorities across a wider range of neighbourhoods. Yet our evidence shows that at the level of the nation as a whole, residential integration exerts only a modest dampening effect on majority attitudes and far-right voting. We therefore urge gradualism and caution when it comes to engineering integration, not radical change.

Finally, we are sceptical of the ability of government to craft a state-centred national story that both appeals to all social groups and addresses white British anxieties. National and ethnic identities in today's fragmented, low-trust societies are complex systems that often emerge from below rather than from the top down. Therefore, we recommend devolving the question of national identity to individuals and associations in civil society. The Government should set basic parameters such as liberty, the flag and fairness, but beyond this it should validate civic, majority ethnic and multicultural versions of what it means to be British, acting in a 'constructively ambiguous' manner that recognises there are many different ways to be British. This is not multiculturalism, in which people focus on separate ethnic identities, but *multiple nationalism*: different vantage points on a common identity, Britain. This ensures maximum attachment to the nation with minimal friction, in contrast to a 'one-size-fits-all' hymn sheet approach to Britishness.

Ethnic majorities who perceive themselves to be in inexorable demographic decline tend to become pessimistic, defensive and alienated. This is especially true for less socially mobile segments of the majority. For example, the phrases 'Protestant alienation' and 'siege mentality' are common currency among working-class Unionists in Northern Ireland, where Protestants, whose birth rate was lower than that of Catholics, have slipped from two-thirds of the population to about half in the past 50 years. Averting a similar predicament among the ethnic majority in England requires a positive vision that escapes this zero-sum logic.

An inclusive state-centred Britishness is unlikely to offer an answer. White British people in England who feel they must divest themselves of their English ethnicity in order to make

room for an inclusive Britishness may resent this. That is, people who consider themselves indigenous to England by virtue of having ancestors who have lived in England for centuries do not wish to discard their ethnic identity. Ethnic Englishness is a distinct identity from Britishness, which is political, legal and mass-cultural. Both may happily coexist.

One option ethnically English people could consider is a movement of liberal ethnicity, in which they conceive of themselves as an assimilating people who accept newcomers through intermarriage or boundary extension while retaining myths of ancestry, ethnic traditions and memories. The ethnic English could share a positive vision of their future in that people with English ancestry or who identify with its collective memory, including the fast-growing mixed-race group and children of European immigrants, are likely to remain the majority. English ethnicity should stem from private activity in civil society rather than government since the British state must represent all citizens and can therefore only address questions of British national identity.

1 Introduction

Analysing why Labour lost the 2010 UK election, Peter Kellner remarked that 3 million people who voted for the party in 1997 switched to a right-wing alternative or abstained from voting in 2010. A salient characteristic of Labour defectors was that 78 per cent called for 'zero net immigration'.[3] Hence the argument runs that defectors were punishing Labour for presiding over unprecedented levels of immigration during their 13-year term. Net immigration had increased from approximately 55,000 per year when Blair took office in 1997 to nearly 250,000 in the latter half of his and Gordon Brown's 13-year tenure. Immigration shot up the ranks of voters' priorities, ranking first or second since 2002.

Indeed, a new movement within the Labour Party, Blue Labour, emerged in 2009 to woo culturally conservative working-class voters back. One of the new movement's central planks was support for reduced immigration, echoing ex-Prime Minister Gordon Brown's call for 'British jobs for British workers'.[4] Meanwhile, the white nationalist and anti-immigrant BNP experienced unprecedented support, garnering nearly a million votes in the 2009 European elections before collapsing following infighting. UKIP, widely viewed as inheriting the anti-immigration mantle from the BNP, experienced rising support in the years thereafter. Despite tough Tory talk on immigration, many UKIP supporters, reflecting mass public sentiment, express deep distrust of the Tories' ability to control migration.[5] In 2013, UKIP won the equivalent of 22 per cent of the national vote in local elections and topped the polls in the May 2014 European elections.[6]

At this point it is important to stress that our terminology is drawn from academic discourse and should be interpreted as such. 'Threat' refers to threat theory, which is the counterpoint

to contact theory, and denotes a particular psychological response to a perceived challenge. When we use 'white', we are referring to the white British ethnic majority of England unless otherwise specified. 'Anti-immigration party' refers to parties of the far right (BNP) and populist right (UKIP) for whom immigration is a central part of their platform, even as we recognise that all major parties endorse the idea of immigration control. 'Minority' refers only to black and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals and not to European immigrants and their descendants. When we speak of segregation or integration, we do so in relative terms, and do not wish to imply that minorities live in ghettos in Britain nor that they are automatically better off outside than inside areas of minority concentration.

Immigration and national identity are pivotal questions in twenty-first century Britain. We argue the common thread is not economic crisis or deindustrialisation arousing deskilled native whites. Nor can it be adequately grasped by focusing on mavericks like Nigel Farage or the tabloid media. Instead, we point to a more prosaic source of discontent, ethnic change, which has over the past decade outpaced the coping mechanisms of the majority group. Higher immigration, especially from Europe, was a headline story in the 2000s. Yet the share of ethnic minorities in England also rose quickly in the 2000s in large part due to natural increase rather than migration. For mathematical reasons this cannot continue indefinitely. Falling minority birthrates and minority ageing already signal a slower rate of change. Yet diversity will continue to rise. Reducing net migration to zero, even if that were possible, would not prevent ethnic change. Some, such as Sunder Katwala, contend that Britain has a problem of integration rather than one of immigration. Yet we find that majority sentiment is unaffected by whether local minorities are native or foreign-born, employed or not, and whether they are native English-speakers or speak a foreign language at home. Integration matters, but only residential integration seems to have an effect on white British sentiment.

Immigration is not an exclusively white issue: in the Citizenship Surveys of 2007–11, 43 per cent of ethnic minorities

said they wanted lower levels of immigration, rising to 52 per cent for UK-born minorities, 63 per cent among UK-born Hindus and 77 per cent among UK-born Sikhs. Among whites and non-whites, those from upper-working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds tend to be most opposed to immigration. Londoners, young people, the university educated and students are less opposed. Those of all ethnic backgrounds in deprived wards want less immigration. Many complain about strained services such as the NHS, housing and schools, and overpopulation. Britain has a high baseline of opposition to immigration which has nothing to do with ethnicity.

That said, white British people are some 30 points more opposed to current immigration levels than UK-born minorities and virtually the only group to support populist and far-right parties. In our focus groups with non-university-educated white British people in greater London and Birmingham, respondents unconsciously drew a distinction between a white British 'we' and minority and immigrant 'them'. The precise boundaries of the ethnic majority are ambiguous. UK-born minorities occupy a middle ground, with British-born mixed race and Afro-Caribbeans closer to 'us' and British-born Asians, notably Muslims, seemingly more like 'them'. White British are deemed to deserve priority through the logic of taking care of 'our own first' as well as because of the sacrifices and contributions of earlier generations.[7] A white mother of mixed-race children in our Croydon focus group, strongly hostile to racism, nevertheless viewed her children as part of an 'us' distinct from newcomers, and wanted 'our' interests to be prioritised. She resented excess pressure on school resources caused by the presence of immigrant children whose first language was not English.

Given the foregoing, this report focuses on the white British – especially white working-class – response to ethnic change. When challenged, people can fight, flee or join their challenger. Something of this logic is captured in Albert Hirschman's classic work, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*.[8] Accordingly, we conceive of three possible white British responses to rising diversity: voice, exit and accommodation. 'Voice', a fight response, is represented by anti-immigration attitudes and

radical-right voting; 'exit', a flight response, by 'white flight' and avoiding minorities; finally, white British can opt to 'accommodate' newcomers through integration or expanding their notions of community. In this report we use quantitative modelling of survey and census data as well as focus groups to ask which of these three modes predominates, and whether policy makers can do anything to address flight and fight responses among the ethnic majority.

2 Identity: theory and practice

We can think of Britishness and Englishness as concentric circles of identity, portrayed graphically in figure 1. Our focus is England, which makes up 84 per cent of Britain's population. Within this, we concentrate on the roughly three-quarters of England's population who identify as ethnically English: those who answered white British to the ethnicity question in the 2011 Census (77 per cent of England) but excluding the 3 per cent who regard their national identity as Scottish, Irish, Welsh or Cornish. Ethnic Englishness is a subjective identity in which insiders identify boundaries. Yet like all ethnic identities it is also reinforced by outsiders: national minorities like the Scots or ethnic minorities like British Pakistanis who label white Britons in England as 'English'.

States like the UK are political units which control territory; nations like the British and English are communities of shared memory and political aspiration whose people live in a well-defined land; and ethnic groups like the English or Irish are communities who claim shared ancestry and manifest an attachment to an idealised homeland. The English are a nation and an ethnic group: someone of Pakistani descent can consider her nation to be England, even if she is not ethnically English, that is, does not have many generations of English ancestry. Britain is both a state and a nation: many perceive their national identity as British, identifying with the history of the entire British state. Others identify only as Scots or English, with Britain serving as just a functional outer layer, which offers a passport, protection and services. England is not a state and the British are not an ethnic group. The exception is in Northern Ireland and in settler societies such as Canada or Australia where Scots, Welsh, Irish and English settlers have intermarried to form a distinct British ethnic compound.

Figure 1   **Mapping English ethnicity: state, nation and ethnicity in Britain, 2011**

White British: 77% of England

Other White British: Scots, Welsh, Irish, Ulster British

Britain

England: 84% of Britain

English ethnic core: 73% of all people in England
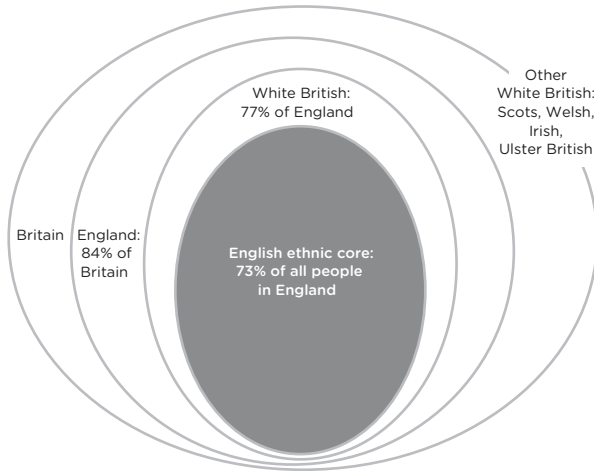
Source: ONS, Census 2011

Assimilation over the past three generations has played a part in increasing the share of ethnic English in England: the share of the population whose grandparents were all born in England is around 65 per cent of England's population yet 73 per cent now consider themselves part of the ethnic majority.[9] This tracks census figures showing that the ethnic majority share is higher among those under 20 than among those aged 20–40. All told, the ethnic English of England account for around three-quarters of Britain's population and are the central focus of this report.

Ethnic change and English nationalism

How does an indigenous ethnic majority respond to rapid ethnic change? One response is through nationalism, which seeks to render cultural and political boundaries congruent. Often this

Figure 2 **A model of anti-immigration sentiment**
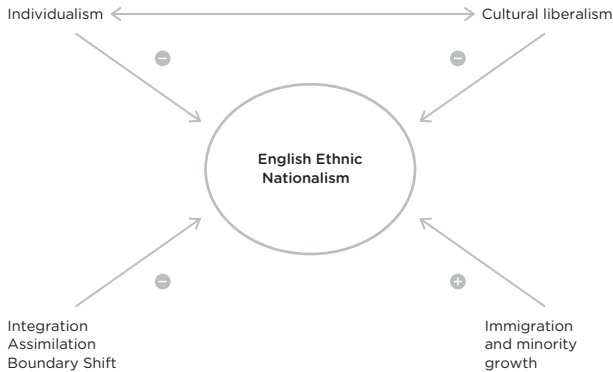
takes a 'civic' form in which culture is defined in an inclusive way. Thus integrating minorities into a common public culture becomes the sole objective. Ethnic nationalism, by contrast, seeks a deeper alignment of political and ethnic boundaries. Immigration introduces multiple ethnic groups under one political roof, prompting ethnic nationalists to seek to restore the congruence between ethnicity and the state – often through repatriation of minorities or halting immigration. We thus conceive of English ethnic nationalism as the engine of anti-immigration sentiment and far-right support, as shown in figure 2.

English ethnic nationalism is stimulated by ethnic change in the form of immigration and a faster rate of natural increase among ethnic minorities. The latter arises from a younger age structure or higher birth rates than the ethnic majority. Majority ethno-nationalism develops because the perceived symbolic continuity of English cultural or physical traits is irrupted by change. This is denoted by the plus sign in the bottom right of figure 2 connecting immigration and minority growth to nationalism.

Against this, the pitch of ethno-nationalism falls with certain kinds of integration, as illustrated by the minus sign at

the lower left in figure 2. We use this term advisedly because its meaning differs somewhat from its common use in policy contexts. Integration can refer to minorities taking on the language and culture of the host society, their economic and political mobility or their full ethnic assimilation. The ethnic majority may simply become used to the presence of minorities, or it may loosen its membership criteria to include members of formerly excluded groups. Assimilation is used here to denote the full absorption of minorities into the ethnic majority through intermarriage and identity change. One example is the disappearance of seventeenth-century Huguenot immigrants into the ethnic majority in England (Paul Gascoigne) and the USA (Paul Revere).

Integration refers to the immersion of minorities in the politics, economy and mass culture of a nation.[10] Integration is typically viewed as a more acceptable policy goal than assimilation, though it often serves as a prelude to the deeper connections which Milton Gordon in his seven-step model, dubs 'marital' and 'identificational' assimilation.[11] Though currently unpopular among progressives, some argue that large-scale assimilation has in fact taken place in Western societies, and as long as it occurs voluntarily, liberals should feel comfortable with it.[12]

Boundary change differs from assimilation. Whereas assimilation involves individuals intermarrying and taking on the host culture and identity, boundary change occurs when the ethnic majority redefines the criteria of membership to include former outsiders. The best example in recent times has been a social change which permitted Irish Catholics and Jews to be accepted as members of the ethnic majority in England even if they did not intermarry. This kind of change can suddenly usher large numbers of people inside the majority tent. Occasionally such processes reverse themselves, stoking exclusionary nationalism. The exclusion of secular or Christian Germans of part-Jewish background in Nazi Germany offers an especially tragic example.

Ethno-nationalism can decline for other reasons, portrayed in the top half of figure 2. People may become more

individualistic, no longer relying on the symbolic continuity of the nation as a vessel through which the story of their lives unfolds. Instead, individuals come to narrate their existence as a story of their personal achievements and consumer lifestyle, or attach themselves to social categories like a generation or subculture, which rarely transcend individual lives. Modernity has brought increased wealth and education, greater physical separation of people, the rise of nuclear and single living, mass literacy and private entertainment technology – all of which empower individualism.

Expressively, the novel, romantic love and modern art have advanced a more individuated version of the self, altering people's consciousness.[13] Increased social and geographic mobility in society can generate an individualism which attenuates national and ethnic attachments. The growth in the university-educated population; the rise in single living; the opportunities for transnational identity opened up by cultural fragmentation induced by cable television and the internet; and the increase in the share of renters are examples. However, one must be alert to counter-currents as well; in Britain this includes population ageing and a decrease in people's geographic mobility, with short-distance moving falling from 55 per cent to 45 per cent per decade between 1971 and 2011.[14]

Cultural liberalism refers to ideological alternatives to nationalism such as universalist socialism or market liberalism. When these are strong, they are able to reshape the narrative of nationhood in an inclusive direction and raise moral sanctions to marginalise ethnic nationalists, blunting the effect of immigration on ethnic nationalism. In all Western countries there is some moral opprobrium attached to opposing immigration. In Western Europe, this mainly occurs in progressive circles. In the population at large, the anti-prejudice norm applies to voting for far-right parties.[15] However, in Canada and the USA, and to a lesser extent in Germany, Sweden and Australasia, the view that opposition to immigration is racist is more widely held. This represents a successful mobilisation by the cultural left, drawing on their nations' historical experience to press a moral case. This is why white opposition to high rates of legal immigration in

North America has been relatively modest since the cultural revolution of the 1960s, in contrast to Europe.[16] In addition, no established political party in North America is willing to campaign openly to reduce the number of legal immigrants whereas many major European parties do. Australia leans in a more European than American direction on this question.

Legal immigration is not a taboo subject in England as it is in North America, but moral constraints still apply to explicit expressions of ethnic nationalism. A powerful example of how the anti-prejudice norm displaces cultural and ethnic concerns into the economic sphere comes from an older woman in our Croydon focus group who commented that, coming in on the Croydon tramlink, 'I might have been the only English person on that tram... I didn't like it... I could have been in a foreign country.' Challenged by another participant who asked, 'Why should that affect you that there's minorities on the [tram]?', the woman swiftly changed her narrative to a more acceptable, economic, form of opposition to immigration: 'It doesn't affect me. It, um... I've got grandchildren and children... I don't think things are going to get any better or easier for them, to get work.' We need to be aware therefore of the important role that cultural motivations play in white British opposition to immigration.

Might cultural liberals prevail in England as in North America, subsuming majority identity within an inclusive state-defined Britishness? This would alter the bounds of respectable discourse to redefine concerns over immigration as racist – outside the ambit of legitimate political discussion. Such a strategy, if successful, could allow for higher immigration levels and more muted anxieties, as we see in North America. We doubt this will succeed, however, because of differences in the historical record on the two sides of the Atlantic which offer fewer resources for English liberals to work with. First, cultural liberals in North America seized a particular historical moment in the 1960s to press their claims for immigration reform, whereas British and European liberal movements of that era generally focused their energies elsewhere. Second, the existence of a memory of recent conquest of aboriginal peoples, oppression of blacks and a history of immigration makes it somewhat easier for

North American progressives to shape the political culture of 'New World' societies on questions of immigration than is true in Europe. In reality, the difference is only one of degree: virtually all European societies involved the conquest of indigenes – often by Germanic or Celtic invaders. Meanwhile, most 'New World' countries had a clear majority settler group which lost its dominance only in the late twentieth century.[17] White Anglo-Protestant claims to 'native' indigenousness were unseated in North America in the 1960s but remained in place in Europe.

Given its history, Britain's political culture is more likely to follow that of Europe and Australia than the post-ethnic, ideological path of North America. This is not to say there are not resources the cultural left can use to contest the English ethnic group's claims to indigenousness. The history of Britain as an island in which successive waves of invaders – Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians – overwhelmed the original inhabitants, with their Basque-related language, offers cosmopolitans some leverage. The empire linked the history of England with that of much of the world. Likewise, the musings of writers such as Daniel Defoe furnish grist for the liberal mill:

Thus from a mixture of all kinds began/That het'rogeneous thing, an Englishman… From whence a mongrel half-bred race there came… In whose hot veins new mixtures quickly ran… Infus'd betwixt a Saxon and a Dane/While their rank daughters, to their parents just/Receiv'd all nations with promiscuous lust.[18]

However, the antiquity of Anglo-Saxon settlement in England (in 560 as opposed to 1607 for the USA) and the more limited experience of immigration prior to 1948 help tip the balance towards nationalists who argue that a 'native' English ethnic group had formed and become established, retaining its broad characteristics over centuries. Most ethnic majorities in Western Europe have been using their group's proper name since before 1500, thus claims to majority-group indigenousness are more difficult for liberals to unseat than in the New World.[19] This makes it harder for cultural liberals to pull the rug out from under European ethno-nationalism. The recent European

experience, in which far-right parties speaking the language of indigenous nationalism have gained significant ground, is therefore more relevant than in North America, where such movements only exist on the fringe of political life. Finally, as figure 2 shows, individualism can empower cultural liberalism because it frees individuals to consider identities other than their ethno-national one. Cultural liberalism reciprocally engenders individualism by breaking the hold of national identities on individuals.

3 Voice I: attitudes to immigration

In this chapter we examine white British attitudes to immigration. Most analyses focus only on static predictors of attitudes such as age, education or class, which could be serving as relative markers of one's position in society and therefore tell us little about where attitudes are headed. What we instead seek to do is to add information to the picture of people's demographic environment and how it changes over time. Do people live with minorities? Is there a fast rate of local ethnic change? Is there ethnic diversity nearby? We have a sense from census data of the growth and spread of minorities, and the possible trajectory of these flows into the future. Geography can also help us identify potential flashpoints of anti-immigration hostility. Thus it is important to identify how demographic and geographic contexts affect attitudes to immigration.

Fight, flight or join?: the white British response to change

When faced with a threat, an individual can fight, flee or join forces with the perceived enemy. This report conceives of three possible responses to ethnic change: exit, voice and accommodation. In his influential *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Albert Hirschman remarked that tensions between a person and the group they belong to could be met either through the person 'exiting' from the group or by the person 'voicing' their discontent and reforming the group.[20] The same dilemma concerns diversity in a nation. When ethnic change takes place in England against the wishes of an existing resident, she can 'fight' ethnic change by 'voicing' her concerns to national politicians and voting for anti-immigration parties like UKIP or the BNP. Alternatively, she can 'exit' from diverse areas to homogeneous

locales from which she can reimagine she inhabits an ethnically English nation, with diverse spots existentially contained. In extreme form exit takes the shape of rapid white flight from a diversifying area. Accommodation is the third possibility.

Where there are potent obstacles to voice such as a consensus among major parties and the media that immigration is not a legitimate issue for debate, we might predict whites will choose exit over voice. Self-segregation reproduces the homogeneity communities seek. As leading American communitarian theorist Michael Walzer writes:

Neighborhoods can be open only if countries are at least potentially closed… The distinctiveness of cultures and groups depends upon closure and without it cannot be conceived as a stable feature of human life.[21]

He adds that where closure is not provided by the nation state, it will be implemented by ethnic communities. As applied to Britain, this means white British flight from diverse areas is a form of exit that maintains the ethnic majority's sense that they live in an imagined homogeneous nation continuous with that of their forebears. This provides a continuity of context, a form of immortality and existential security. In Anthony Smith's words, paraphrasing Regis Debray, the ethno-nation:

With its stress on a beginning and flow in time, and a delimitation in space, raises barriers to the flood of meaninglessness and absurdity that might otherwise engulf human beings. It tells them that they belong to ancient associations of 'their kind' with definite boundaries in time and space, and this gives their otherwise ambiguous and precarious lives a degree of certainty and purpose.[22]

The implication here is that anti-immigration politics and white flight are forms of white British ethnic boundary defence. As the threat from ethnic change mounts, exit and voice should rise. In addition, those most opposed to ethnic change should be in the forefront of anti-immigration politics and white flight.

Yet native-born whites can choose a third path, accommodation. In this mode, white British people habituate

themselves to higher levels of diversity and ethnic change. They rework their affections, detaching themselves from the notion that England is umbilically connected to the English ethnic group. They loosen their connection to ascribed criteria such as ancestry, surname and appearance while forging new links to British civic symbols and values – or reinterpreted English ones like St George's Day, which become more inclusive.[23] Accommodation, which is boundary-expanding, seems at odds with exit and voice, which concern defending existing identity boundaries.

The local and the national

The nation is often imagined through a local lens. This represents what historians term the *Heimat* version of the nation, in which the local is perceived as the nation writ small.[24] Yet we find that when minorities establish a presence in a neighbourhood they earn a degree of legitimacy, which lowers anti-immigration sentiment. Minorities come to be seen as part of the civic nation, even if they remain outside the ethnic boundary. Hence white British who are very close to, or extremely remote from, diversity are less ethnically defensive than those in between. The in-betweeners are people who experience difference in their city and local authority but not in their immediate neighbourhood. This resembles similar phenomena, thus finds those living very close to, or far from, nuclear power plants to be less opposed to them than those in the middle because it is there that the balance between fear and understanding tilts most towards the former.[25]

The implication of the foregoing is that opposition to immigration will, all else being equal, be lower among those who live close to minority groups. Figure 3 shows this counterintuitive result: in England, ethnic majority opposition to immigration is greater in wards with a lower share of immigrants than in more diverse wards: 82 per cent of white British people in locales with less than 2 per cent immigrants favour reduced immigration against just 60–63 per cent in places with more than 10 per cent immigrants.[26] This holds almost as much for the white British working class as for white British as a whole.

Figure 3   **White British opposition to immigration, by share of immigrants in ward, 2010–11**
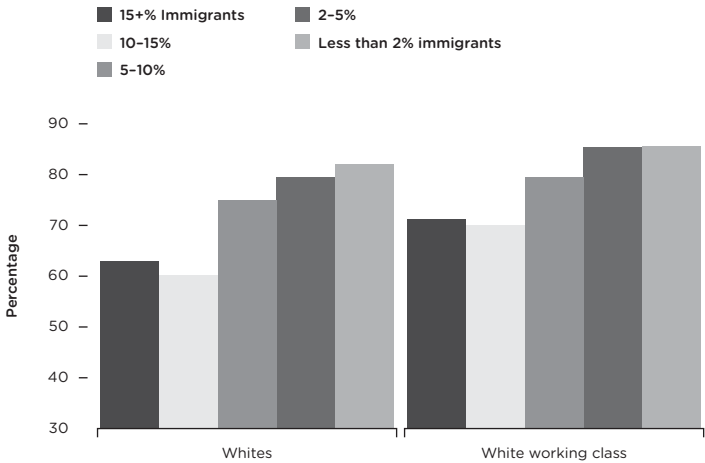
Source: DCLG and Ipsos MORI, Citizenship Survey, 2010–2011[27]

One interpretation of this counterintuitive pattern is that white British who dislike immigrants have self-selected themselves out of diverse wards leaving only tolerant folk behind. Later we shall see this 'white flight' explanation does not accord with the facts: anti-immigrant whites are in fact no more likely than pro-immigrant whites to leave diverse areas. Familiarity and contact really do make the difference.

The local is intimately tied to the national: the more of a 'local' one is, the more national. Consider that people's threshold for ethnic diversity at local and national scales is highly correlated. To understand this further, we commissioned a YouGov tracker survey of 1,869 British adults in late July 2013.[28] Of those who responded, 1,638, or 88 per cent, identified their ethnicity as white British. We asked, 'When do you think you would start to feel uncomfortable about the number of people from ethnic minorities living in your neighbourhood?' Answers

covered an 11-item scale from trace numbers of ethnic minorities to more than 75 per cent minority. We next asked those surveyed if they might become uncomfortable with the ethnic mix in their area in the future. More than one-third (36 per cent) replied they would always be comfortable with their local ethnic mix and more than half (56 per cent) said they might become uncomfortable if the share of minorities increased beyond a certain point. Just 3 per cent said they might become uncomfortable if the share of minorities declined beyond a given level.

It could be argued that the 'I will always be comfortable' response may be functioning as a socially desirable and easy way out for respondents rather than reflecting a genuine expression of toleration. Therefore, it is useful to consider the breakdown of responses among the 56 per cent who said they possess a comfort threshold for minorities in their ward. Among white British who gave a tolerance threshold, about 35 per cent said they would be comfortable being at 50 per cent or in the minority in their area, whereas 60 per cent said they would be comfortable only at minority proportions of a quarter or less. About 25 per cent exhibited very low tolerance for minorities, evincing comfort thresholds of 10 per cent minorities or less.

We next applied the same scale to the national-level question, 'When do you think you would start to feel uncomfortable about the number of people from ethnic minorities living in Britain?' In this case thresholds were generally lower than for the locale, suggesting people are willing to put up with greater diversity locally than they are nationally – which may strike some as a counterintuitive result. For white British responses, the local comfort threshold *predicts 60 per cent of the variation in national comfort threshold*, an extremely powerful correlation. Thus a one unit move up the local comfort scale results in seven-tenths of a unit shift up the national comfort scale. This neatly illustrates how local and national perceptions intertwine. Many craft their ideal of the nation on the model of their locale: threats to the homogeneity of both are perceived in similar ways.

The relationship between being a Cockney from Barking and being white English is complementary, like that of being Irish and Catholic, or Arab and Muslim.[29] Local and national

identities unproblematically reinforce each other. On the other hand, while the relationship between being Bangladeshi and from the Tower Hamlets area of East London is complementary, and that between Bangladeshi and British is neutral or complementary, tension exists between Bangladeshi and English identity, as the 2011 Census revealed when few minorities in England described their national identity as English.[30] Interestingly, minorities who describe themselves as English rather than British are more likely to live in white areas and oppose immigration.[31]

Broadly speaking, researchers in the USA, Britain and Europe find that a larger share of minorities and immigrants in whites' wider geographic space – their metropolitan area or local authority, for example – is linked to greater hostility to immigration and minorities. On the other hand, a higher share of minorities in the immediate neighbourhood is associated with greater acceptance. We looked at about 70 studies across Europe and the USA. Of 24 studies at ward level (population generally 10,000 or below), we find about three-quarters show local diversity reduces animosity towards minorities, immigrants and immigration. Work at larger scales shows the opposite: more diversity is associated with heightened white threat perceptions in 84 per cent of a sample of 44 papers at contexts containing about 100,000 people or more.[32] The same pattern holds in most of our analyses.

There are three competing explanations for this perplexing finding. The contact hypothesis argues that when white English people have the chance to interact positively with minorities and immigrants in their locale, they form a better opinion of them and feel less threatened. This leads them to express more positive views of immigration. Greater local diversity is associated with more inter-ethnic contact, which psychological research shows lowers ethnic animosity.[33] Whites who live in white neighbourhoods and suburbs of diverse cities have little contact with minorities so their attitudes are unaffected.

Against the contact hypothesis, the threat hypothesis claims that diversity in a metropolitan area stimulates white opposition to immigration.[34] There is an extensive tradition of

research on racial threat, mainly in the USA, beginning with the landmark studies of Key and Blalock, which found higher levels of white antipathy towards African-Americans in the South, especially in counties – a large geographic unit – with higher proportions of African-Americans.[35] Many other studies confirm the threat response, but find – as we do – lower animus in more diverse locales.

The disjuncture could arise because white English people who dislike diversity move out of diverse neighbourhoods while the tolerant remain. This creates the illusion that diversity breeds toleration in diverse areas. Those who leave cannot afford to move far, so typically move to another section of the city, perhaps radicalised by their negative experience of ethnic change. Then white opinion in the whiter parts of the metropolitan area becomes radicalised by threat while tolerant whites collect in the diverse sections of the city. Local conditions reflect racial comfort levels and self-selection rather than contact.

Results of our geographic analyses of mobility do not support this 'white flight' hypothesis. Yet there is another possibility: whites in diverse wards are more tolerant because inner-city areas are transient and young, and this rather than contact is what counts. Transience lowers whites' attachment to their English ethnicity, reducing their antipathy to ethnic change. And whites in diverse wards tend to be more transient and younger than those in whiter wards, and diverse wards have much higher population turnover than whiter wards.

Figure 4 shows that whites in the more transient fifth of wards, as measured by proportion renters, are about 15 points more tolerant than those in wards with a mainly home-owning population. In our focus groups, it was notable that two of the more positive individuals on immigration were long-distance migrants: an Irishman in Lozells and a woman with a Geordie accent in Croydon. Notice that transience is a contextual effect operating independently of an individual's housing status. A white homeowner is more tolerant of immigration if he lives in an area with lots of rental stock than a white homeowner in a ward dominated by owners. This, rather than inter-ethnic contact partly accounts for the patterns we see.

Figure 4   **White British desire to reduce migration, by share of renters in ward**

■ Least renters   ■ Second most renters
■ Second least renters   ■ Most renters
■ Average renters

Percentage

Share of renters
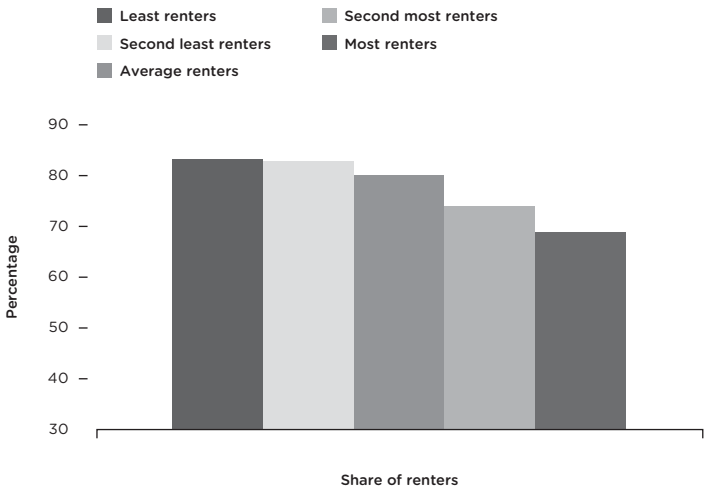
Source: Citizenship Surveys[36]

We can assess the relative merit of the contact, threat and transience arguments through multivariate statistical analysis. This basically compares two hypothetical individuals who share the same characteristics, such as age, class and area deprivation, but differ in one respect, such as the share of minorities in their area. How much does this one difference affect their opinion of immigration? Let's examine two models which ask 'what are the best predictors of whether someone wants to reduce immigration or not?' We use data from four Citizenship Surveys of 2007–11, covering over 62,000 respondents.

In figure 5, we consider individuals in the context of their local authority, containing some 100,000–200,000 population, and middle layer super output area (MSOA), a unit averaging 7,700 people in 2011. We only look at individual economic and demographic characteristics, as well as the density, ethnic

Figure 5   **Predictors of desire to reduce immigration, MSOA level**

Predictor	Value
Deprivation of MSOA	(positive, ~6.5)
Population density in MSOA	(negative, ~-6.5)
% Minorities (MSOA)	(negative, ~-5.5)
% Minorities (local authority)	(positive, ~5.5)
Resident over 10 years (ref: less than 10 years)	(positive, ~5)
London	(negative, ~-1.5)
Age	(positive, ~4)
Renter	(negative, ~-2)
Living in social housing	(positive, ~2.5)
Student (upper ref.)	(negative, ~-1.5)
Never worked (upper ref.)	(positive, ~1.5)
Working class (upper ref.)	(positive, ~1.5)
Lower supervisory class (upper ref.)	(positive, ~1)
Middle Class (upper ref.)	(positive, ~1.5)
No children (children ref.)	(negative, ~-0.5)
Single (couple ref.)	(negative, ~-0.5)
No qualifications	(positive, ~0.5)
Income	(negative, ~-0.5)
Male	(positive, ~0.3)

Source: Citizenship Surveys[37]

makeup and percentage of ethnic minorities in the individual's MSOA. The most powerful effects are shown at the top of figure 5, the weakest at the bottom, with all z-scores above 2 or below −2 being statistically significant. Everything from 'never worked' on up is statistically significant while everything below is not.

Figure 5 shows that contextual characteristics are strongly linked to people's attitudes: the more deprived the location, the greater is white opposition. More urban and diverse locales are more tolerant than rural and white MSOAs. These are general findings which apply to both white and minority views of immigration. The next finding is specific to whites, though: the share of minorities in one's locale has a dampening effect (−6) on anti-immigration opinion. On the other hand, the share of minorities in an individual's local authority achieves a z-score of around +6, showing that the more minorities in one's wider area, the more likely one is to favour a reduction in immigration. Those in very white local authorities, or very diverse wards, are less opposed to immigration than those who are in diverse local authorities. In other words, those who approach diversity by living in a diverse local authority, but are not too close to it because they inhabit whiter wards, are most opposed to immigration. This conforms to our nuclear power plant analogy where threat perceptions are strongest when something is neither too far nor too near.[38]

Figure 6 repeats the model using ward (populations averaging 6,600 rather than 7,700 as in an MSOA) as the locale. White British people who read tabloid newspapers, have low trust in others, identify as English rather than British, and whose national identity is very important for their self-identity are more opposed to immigration. Those whose friends are all white British and rarely mix with ethnic minorities in public or private settings are more opposed to immigration than those with more inter-ethnic social ties. Indeed, we know from the census that white Britons in diverse wards are far more likely than those elsewhere to live in multi-ethnic households: 21 per cent of white British living in diverse Inner London wards live in a mixed-ethnicity household whereas in the whitest four-fifths of the country just 2 per cent do. Younger, professional and single

Figure 6   **Predictors of opposition to immigration, white British only**

Predictive power (z-score)
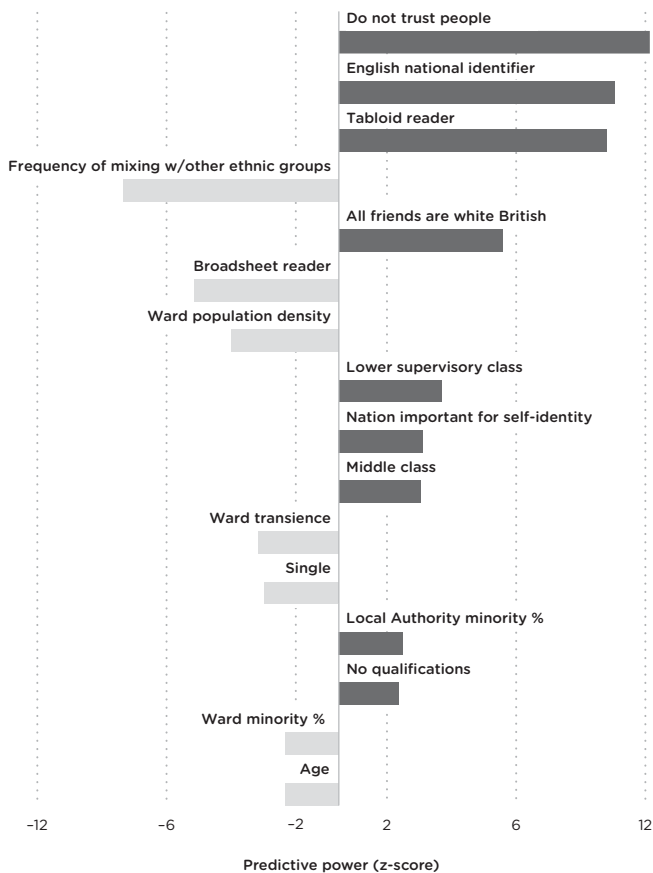
Source: Citizenship Surveys[40]

people are less opposed to immigration than older folk, the lower-middle class and couples. Those with degrees who read broadsheets are, predictably, more liberal than others. This conforms to findings in the general literature on immigration opinion and the far right.[39]

It could be argued that many attitudes are connected, which is why economists tend to focus only on contextual factors when they perform statistical analyses. For instance, when we add measures of inter-ethnic mixing to our analysis, the importance of local minority share in dampening white opposition to immigration falls. Its explanatory power is cut in half because one reason a large share of local minorities is important is that mixing happens more in more diverse wards. But even with attitudes and the frequency of mixing included in the model in figure 6, the share of minorities in one's local authority and ward remains significant. Notice how these contextual forces pull in the opposing directions we have come to expect from the nuclear plant analogy.

As we saw in figure 5, population turnover is a vital part of the picture, with transient whites more tolerant. This speaks to the importance of individualism in adulterating English nationalism. Imagine two individuals of the same age, class and education living in a ward with an identical level of population density and deprivation. One lives in a very diverse ward, another in a very white one. The probability of them opposing current immigration levels is 80 per cent for the first individual and 70 per cent for the second. Now perform the same experiment moving from the least to the most transient group of wards. Here the median individual shifts from 79 per cent to 74 per cent likely to be opposed. Local diversity appears twice as important as transience in explaining reduced opposition to immigration.

In tests, about half the effect of ward diversity is due to its association with increased inter-ethnic contact. The other half is likely to do with habituation: those living in more diverse wards are more used to minorities even if they do not mix with them. They may view their neighbourhood as a multicultural rather than English-defined space, and therefore accept the legitimate

presence of minorities in the area. This sentiment of acceptance appeared among some of those in our diverse-area focus groups. 'The country is built on immigration,' said one Croydon respondent. 'Our country is now multicultural,' noted another in our Lozells, Birmingham group. It is unclear whether this acceptance is positive or reluctant. One Bromley resident we heard from said that visiting Brick Lane was like being 'on holiday… it was lovely… but was not England'. This speaks of familiarity, even if the 'other' is not 'us'. Overall, inter-ethnic contact, habituation and transience reduce white opposition in roughly equal measure. All help explain the lower hostility to immigration we encounter in diverse wards.

The role of class

This project is particularly interested in the response of the white working class to ethnic change. This group has emerged as a much-debated but under-researched category in British, North American and Australian political discourse.[41] It is often perceived as being alienated from political elites, diversity and multiculturalism, giving rise to new political movements such as the BNP or UKIP.

Why might social change elicit a distinct response from the majority working class? Part of the answer lies in the marginalisation of blue-collar workers through deindustrialisation and competition with immigrants for jobs and housing. We saw that white and minority working-class people are somewhat more opposed to immigration than those from other classes. But identity dynamics are arguably more important. Social identity theorists contend that the university-educated middle class achieves a positive status identity through its credentials, occupation and lifestyle. This enables the middle class to relinquish its ascribed ethnic identity more easily. By contrast, lower-status members of ethnic groups benefit more from their ethnicity because it is their most positive one. This explains why lower-status members of dominant groups (poor whites in the American South, Sephardi Jews in Israel) have often been the staunchest defenders of ethnic boundaries and privileges.[42]

Qualitative research finds that white English working-class people in England and Wales often experience multiculturalism and rising diversity as a threat to their existential security. Minorities are also considered a challenge to what they perceive to be a postwar social contract between the white working class and the British welfare state.[43]

Accordingly, when it comes to majority-group behaviour under conditions of ethnic change, we might expect lower-status members to be more resistant to accommodation. It can be argued that working-class whites have a greater psychological investment in their English ethnicity than the university-educated middle class. Consequently they are more sensitive to ethnic change. In our Croydon focus group, one of the more pro-immigration individuals was a man whose son was excelling at maths at Oxford, showing how identification with achievements (of self or children) can deflect attention from one's ascribed ethnicity. But there is also ambiguity: the upper end of the white working class and lower middle class seem to exhibit stronger levels of white exit, anti-immigration sentiment and far-right voting than the unemployed and unskilled.

In our analyses of Citizenship Survey data for 2007–11, we found anti-immigration sentiment is highest among lower supervisory (89 per cent) and routine occupations (87 per cent). On the other hand, 70 per cent of students and 77 per cent of professionals and managers favour a reduced intake. Divides by education are starker and more linear, with 90 per cent of those possessing less than GCSE qualifications favouring reduction in immigration, falling to 83 per cent for those with A levels or O levels and 66 per cent among degree holders. White working-class men are more likely to express strong views on immigration. For instance, when we examine those who want immigration reduced 'a lot', the working class emerges as distinctively more opposed than other classes whereas it does not stand out when the question merely concerns reducing immigration. This shows that class and education matter, but that even in the most liberal sectors of white British society, a significant majority want lower immigration.

Figure 7 **Attitudes to immigration by profile, white British only**
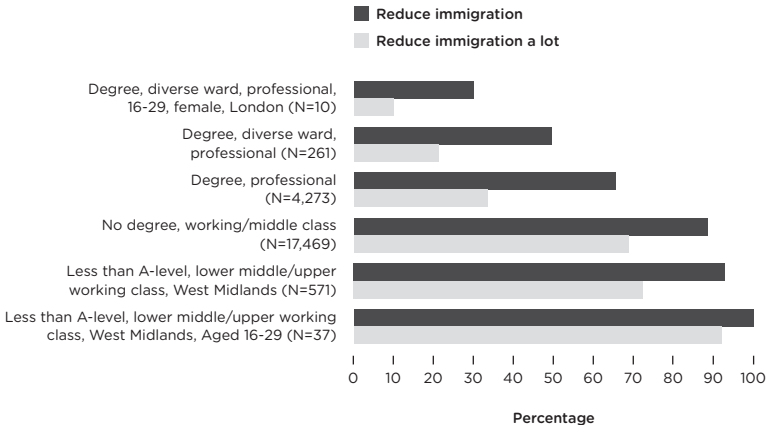
Source: Citizenship Surveys[44]

An easy way to grasp the importance of the different factors – age, class, diversity of ward, region, sex – we have examined is by considering how immigration attitudes change as we move from one 'profile' to another. This is shown in figure 7. Notice that, on average, just 30 per cent of white professional women aged 16–29 living in London feel that immigration should be reduced. At the other end of the scale, 100 per cent of whites of working or lower-middle class background, also aged 16–29 but with less than A-level education and living in the West Midlands, oppose current levels. Also note that while white professionals are more liberal than the white working class, nearly two-thirds of professionals with degrees support reduced immigration.

4 Exit: white flight?

Exit is a second possible white British response to diversity. This must be considered alongside attitudes to immigration for two main reasons. First, we saw in chapter 3 that majority attitudes to immigration tend to be more liberal in diverse locales. But this could be an artefact of white flight: whites who dislike immigration and diversity disproportionately flee and avoid diverse places while tolerant whites are more likely to enter, producing atypically liberal white British populations in diverse areas. Second, we find that whites in more segregated local authorities were somewhat more opposed to immigration than those where white British are less isolated from minorities. Again, white residential movements are critical because they determine the pattern of segregation.

We shall see that there is little evidence for white flight, and even less support for the notion that it produces the segregation we see. This validates our finding that diverse locales really do affect majority attitudes and allays concern about a downward spiral towards maximal white alienation. On the other hand, powerful unconscious factors perpetuate the relative segregation of whites from minorities, preventing the higher levels of inter-ethnic contact and habituation that might change majority perceptions.

Segregation and white attitudes

The white British isolation index is modestly associated with more far-right voting, even in local authorities with the same total share of minorities. A local authority in which white British are less isolated from minorities is somewhat less hostile to immigration than one in which minorities are tightly clustered in just a few wards – often the most built-up sections of town.

Hostility to immigrants in the abstract is moderated somewhat by the humanising influence of contact with actual immigrants and minorities. In the diverse Lozells area of Birmingham one lady related: 'I'm from Hereford... [The diversity of Lozells] was a bit of a shock to start with... being here has made me realise there are some lovely ethnic minorities around.' A woman from our Croydon focus group spoke of the bad publicity that Kosovan refugees received in 1999. Befriending a Kosovar interpreter she came to realise, 'a lot of things that was [sic] in the media didn't happen'. Contact also seems to be linked to mixed partnerships, or to a greater incidence of having mixed-race relatives. In our Croydon focus group, two of 15 present had mixed-race childen, another's partner had a mixed-race daughter, and others had dated minorities or immigrants. One should not overstate the case, however: even in diverse areas, most white Britons oppose current levels of immigration. Diversity matters, but one should not make the error of thinking that contact with minorities radically transforms people's view of immigration.

At a broader level, a wider spread of minorities would permit more whites to have contact with them, ameliorating attitudes. Yet this could also increase the threat levels of whites who formerly lived with limited exposure to minorities but now encounter them just often enough to experience heightened threat. Our research shows that increasing the residential integration of minorities modestly affects ethnic majority attitudes to immigration and populist right parties. If minorities could be collected from areas of concentration and slowly distributed across all 8,850 wards in England and Wales, after a tumultuous transition period, this would probably produce moderately more positive attitudes to immigration. The difficulty is that there is no liberal way to do this and no evidence it will occur of its own accord.

Exit: white flight in England?

Reducing segregation between white British and minorities may slightly mollify white opposition to immigration and might even curb far-right voting. But clearly this cannot happen if whites

flee diversity as minorities move in, reproducing segregation. This raises a question flagged earlier on: is there white flight in England? There is substantial qualitative evidence that white flight is occurring.[45] In our focus groups, a security guard who had lived in Newham in East London for 30 years and had recently moved to Eastside, Essex felt 'we [in Newham] were overtaken by different races, it's become an area where English are in the minority'.[46]

A study of residential movement in greater London in 1980 found that the 'perception of a change for the worse in the local area due to an increase in the coloured [sic] or immigrant population is the strongest single influence on the likelihood of a move to a self-described "better area"'.[47] A third of Londoners moving to 'better areas' compared with less than 10 per cent among those who stayed put said immigration and minorities had lowered the tone of their area. However, the study did not control for the fact that those staying put tended to live in whiter areas. While suggestive, it therefore does not permit us to discern whether a more anti-immigrant individual was more likely to leave a diverse neighbourhood than a less anti-immigrant person.[48]

On one level, the evidence for white 'exit' appears overwhelming. London, for example, lost 620,000 white British people off its population during 2001–11, a period when the city grew by over a million. The city's white British share fell from 58 per cent to 45 per cent of the total. When the figures emerged from the Census in late 2012, a number of newspapers led with headlines speaking of a white exodus in the face of unprecedented diversity.[49] As figure 8 shows, there is distinct pattern of displacement at ward level, with London wards recording the largest decrease in white British simultaneously registering the greatest increase in minority population.

Across England, 38 local authorities made the top 50 list for the highest minority growth and greatest white British loss over the past decade (figure 9). Many leading local authorities were in outer London. Redbridge, for example, came third on both counts, and Barking and Dagenham, which topped the charts for white British loss, came fourth for minority growth.

Figure 8   **White British change and minority change, London, 2001–11**
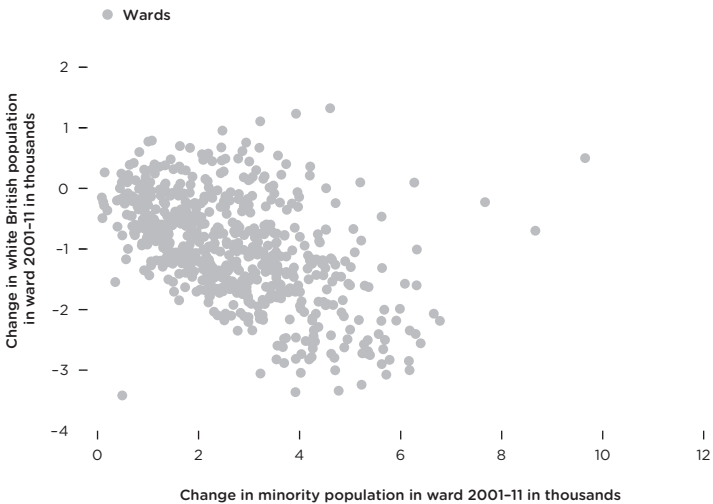
Source: ONS, Census 2011

These trends echo those found in the USA, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden.[50]

Segregation or integration?

In order to get a sense of how ethnic diversity is arrayed spatially, we sorted the 8,850 wards of England and Wales by their share of minorities, then allocated these to five quintiles in which each contains a fifth of the minority population (following the method of Simpson[51]). The results are shown in table 1.

Notice that the minority-rich quintiles 4 and 5 contain just a few hundred wards while the whitest quintile, 1, contains about 85 per cent of the wards in England and Wales. This said, the doubling of the minority population in England and Wales

Figure 9 **Drop in white British and increase in ethnic minorities in 38 local authorities, 2001–11**
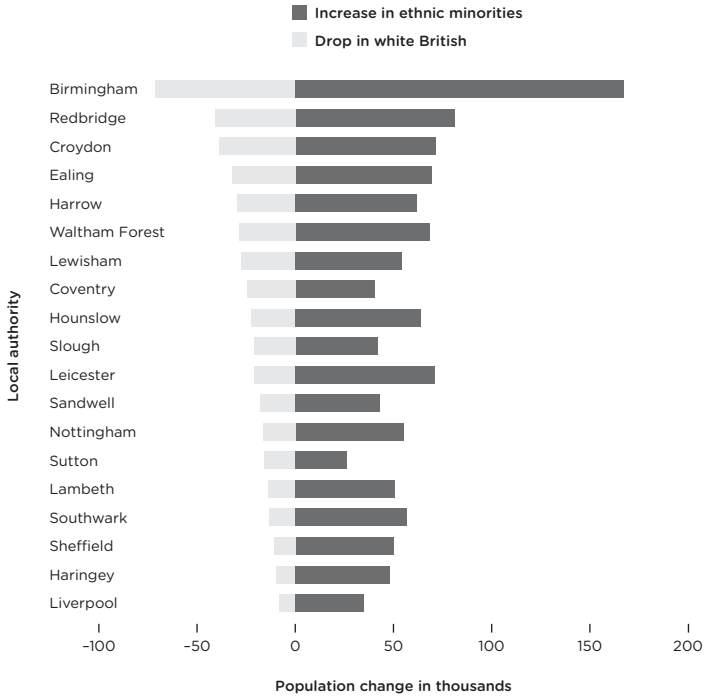
Source: ONS, Census 2011

between 2001 and 2011 has been accompanied by some spread of the minority population into whiter quintiles. For instance, we see that there are more minorities living in the country's whitest places: a fifth of the minority population lives in 6,722 wards in 2011 whereas it took fully 7,554 to collect a fifth of minorities in 2001. As well, the average white share in the whitest areas is down to 94 per cent in 2011 from 98 per cent in 2001. So

Table 1 **Distribution of the minority population of England into five equal zones, 2001 and 2011**

Quintile	Wards 2001	White share 2001	Wards 2011	White share 2011
1 White wards	7,554	98%	6,722	94%
2 Relatively white wards	726	87%	1,029	79%
3 Medium white wards	288	73%	406	58%
4 High non-white wards	180	57%	248	40%
5 Highest non-white wards	102	34%	166	21%

Note: Whites includes those who are not white British. Minorities refers only to non-whites.
Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011; Simpson[52]

minorities are less rare in rural and provincial England. In fact there are fewer than 800 wards that remain over 98 per cent white compared with more than 5,000 wards in 2001.

A quick glance at table 1 shows that minorities have spread out: if we imagine a situation in which all quintiles contain an even 1,770 wards to make up a national 8,850 wards, then it is the case that the upper quintile contains fewer wards and the lower four have more wards, indicating a slow correction of the skew. For instance, the number of wards in the lowest four quintiles has risen towards 1,770 and that in quintile 5 has fallen (from 7,554 to 6,722) towards 1,770.

On the other hand, the diffusion of minorities is true only in absolute rather than relative terms. In other words, the relative distribution of whites and minorities retains its strong skew. Although white areas have become less white, minority areas have not become less minority. In fact, 4.1 million minorities (41 per cent of the minority population) live in wards that are less than half white – more diverse than Yardley in Birmingham. This compares with about a million minorities (25 per cent of the minority population) living in white-minority wards in 2001. In 2001, just 119 wards were majority non-white, whereas in 2011, 429 were. In 2001, a fifth of minorities lived in the most diverse quintile, where 33 per cent of the population was white. Today, a
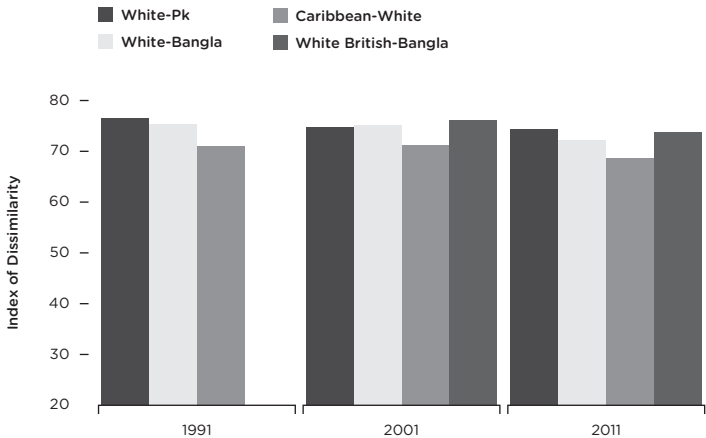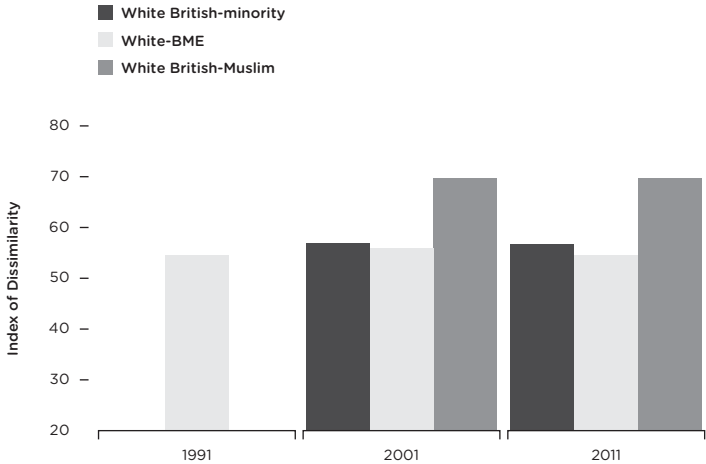
fifth of minorities live in the most diverse quintile, which is just 21 per cent white.

Moreover the rate of mixing between whites and minorities is considerably slower than that between individual minority groups such as Bangladeshis and Afro-Caribbeans. Consider figures 10a and 10b. All are based on the index of dissimilarity between two ethnic groups. If the groups were evenly mixed across England and Wales, the index of dissimilarity would be 0, and if perfectly segregated, 100. Figure 10a shows that the white-minority index of dissimilarity is around 55 and has remained relatively constant for the past two decades. White British–Muslim segregation can only be measured over the past decade, but shows quite a marked level of segregation, with an index of dissimilarity around 70. This, too, remains unchanged over the past decade. In other words, when white British are compared with a combined amalgam of minority groups, the segregation picture remains static – though it is worth noting that segregation has not risen during a period of rising diversity.

At the same time, whites are becoming more spatially mixed with individual minority ethnic groups such as Pakistanis or Afro-Caribbeans. White–Pakistani segregation, as shown by the 'White–Pk' designation in figure 10b, has dropped from over 76 in 1991 to just over 74 in 2011. For white British and Bangladeshis, the drop is from 76 in 2001 to under 74 in 2011. Yet minorities have been drawing together in spatial terms at a more rapid rate than they have been with whites. One way of thinking about this is to glance at patterns of dispersal for the three largest minority ethnic groups in the Census, Afro-Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.[53] When we look at the plot of Afro-Caribbean movement during 2001–11 in figure 11, it is very clear this group has been moving away from its areas of concentration. Wards with a higher share of Afro-Caribbeans in 2001 lost Caribbean share in the following decade while fewer Caribbean wards gained them.

The pattern is less dramatic for Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, but for these groups the line is generally flat, indicating little propensity to move towards their own group.

Figure 10 a and b **Changes in ward-level segregation (index of dissimilarity) between white and minority groups, 1991–2011**

■ White British-minority
□ White-BME
■ White British-Muslim

■ White-Pk
□ White-Bangla
■ Caribbean-White
■ White British-Bangla

Source: ONS, Census 1991–2011

Figure 11 **Change in percentage of Caribbeans in wards in Britain, 2001–11**
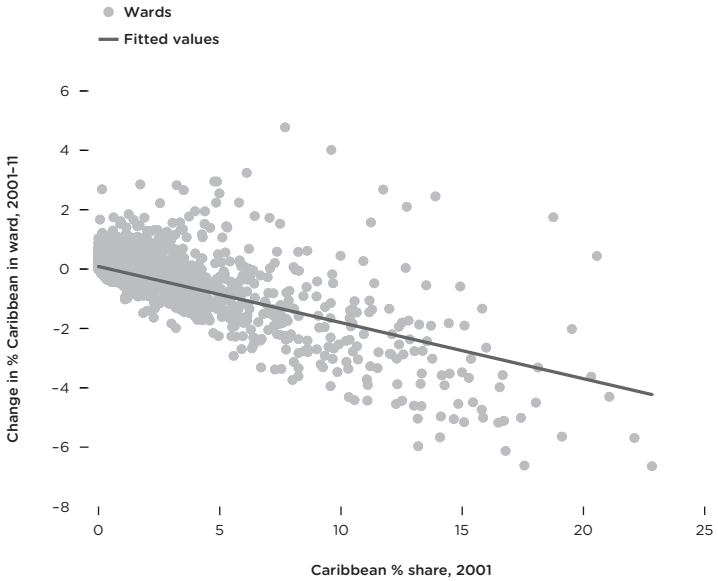
There are other indications that minorities are mixing with each other but less so with the white British. The index of dissimilarity for Bangladeshis with Pakistanis dropped from over 62 in 1991 to almost 56 in 2011, a near six-point drop, which exceeds the two-point decline with whites or the lack of any fall in the index of dissimilarity between whites and minorities over the same period. Hindus and Muslims, who have a history of antagonism on the Indian subcontinent, have seen a three-point drop in index of dissimilarity over 1991–2011 while Caribbeans and other minorities have experienced a four-point decline. There has been substantial diversification of minority populations in local authorities such as Newham over the past two decades.

When whites and minorities leave inner-city areas of minority concentration, their place is generally taken by other

minorities through natural increase or immigration. Overall, minorities are entering white areas but whites are often avoiding new multi-minority wards, producing a growing number of zones in which minorities are relatively isolated from whites. This pattern has also been commented on in the metropolitan USA.[54]

Work by Ron Johnston and his colleagues shows this in greater detail for four major minority ethnic groups in England and Wales.[55] All have fewer of their members living in output areas (population averaging 300) where their ethnic group is heavily concentrated – where it comprises over 70 per cent of the population. Yet all have fewer living in whiter areas – with fewer than 20 per cent non-whites. The big growth has come in 'super-diverse' mixed-minority areas where non-whites constitute over 70 per cent of the output area, but where many of the non-whites are from other ethnic groups and thus co-ethnics form less than 70 per cent. In other words, they move away from themselves but towards other minorities. For Bangladeshis, Indians and Pakistanis, there has been a jump of almost 10 per cent in the share of group members living in these mixed-minority areas caused by a relative drop in the share of group members living in their own concentrations and in strongly white areas (figure 12).

Therefore the national segregation picture is mixed. More minorities are entering white areas in absolute but not in relative terms. Minorities are leaving their areas for mixed-minority neighbourhoods or wards. However, white British have left these areas in large numbers thus the significant rise in the ethnic minority population has resulted in an expanded set of 'super-diverse' areas where there is limited opportunity for contact with the majority. This may not be problematic insofar as a growing share of these minority areas is multi-minority, since new minorities (Somalis) take up housing vacated by established minorities (Afro-Caribbeans). This signals a dissipation of ethnic concentrations, and thus greater mixing and integration. Whether contact with white British is necessary is an open question, since a mixed-minority area may gravitate to the mainstream culture as its common denominator.

This said, more mixing with the white British majority can improve understanding on both sides: we have seen that white

Figure 12   **Change in minority ethnic groups' neighbourhood type, 2001–11**

■ 70–100% minority, 70–100% own group
▢ 70–100% minority, less than 70% own group
■ 0–20% minority
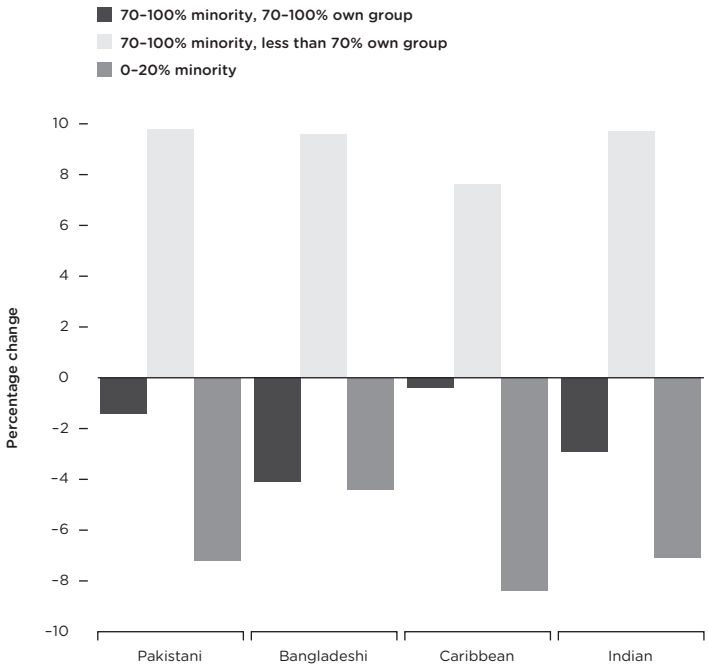
Source: Johnston et al[56]

British who have greater contact with minorities at local level are more tolerant than those who live in predominantly white areas. Moreover, most jobs come through knowing someone, and most of those hiring people for good jobs are from the white majority. A growing population with limited familiarity with majority cultural codes or connection to majority networks may find its occupational mobility reduced. Canadian studies show that immigrants in cities with larger immigrant shares of the population (Toronto, Vancouver) perform less well against the national average than immigrants in smaller, less diverse cities.

In addition, as the Canadian population has become more diverse, immigrant underperformance against the national average has increased, from 85 cents for immigrants per dollar earned by the native-born in 1980 to 63 cents per native-born dollar in 2005.[57]

There is greater ethnic inequality in London than elsewhere: in London, 40.5 per cent of white British adults are professionals but just 25.5 per cent of minorities are. In England and Wales as a whole, 31.3 per cent of white British are professionals as against 23.5 per cent for minorities, a more even picture. Having said this, it appears the gap arises because London's white British are more affluent than their co-ethnics elsewhere.[58]

An optimistic counterview might be that the relative affluence of London's white British, and the dynamism of the city in general, will rub off on London's minority population. The city's state schools, which are on average 'majority minority', perform best in the country. The high proportion of minorities in higher education is another positive sign, though once at university, minorities tend to underperform their white British counterparts.[59] The transition to employment commensurate with qualifications may also be obstructed by discrimination and/or limited white-minority networks, and, for women, traditional gender roles, which curtail labour market participation.

White flight

At the attitudinal level, whites who oppose diversity are significantly more likely to express a preference for a whiter area. Survey experiments such as the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) in the USA find that whites have more exclusive neighbourhood preferences than other minorities. African-Americans prefer a 50–50 mix of co-ethnics and others but whites' preferred neighbourhood is 70–80 per cent white, with few willing to live as a minority. Whites who prefer more homogeneous neighbourhoods are significantly more likely to hold negative opinions of minorities.[60] A replication of this

study in the Netherlands renders a similar verdict, adding that whites holding hostile attitudes towards minorities are significantly more likely to say they would leave an area with a large proportion of minorities.[61] A British replication finds similar results.[62] At the subjective level therefore, the link between negative white attitudes to minorities and the desire to residentially flee diverse areas appears robust and generalisable across several Western nations.

Up to this point, the evidence for white flight seems overwhelming, with those wary of diversity at national level more opposed to it at local level. But what of actual mobility behaviour? The British Household Panel[63] and *Understanding Society* (the UK Household Longitudinal Study; UKHLS)[64] survey is a longitudinal study that has run annually or biannually since 1991. It contains a wide set of questions on internal migration. Responses are geocoded, allowing us to track moves between wards of differing ethnic composition. Figure 13 shows that in a ward where half the population is non-white, two out-movers, one minority and one white British, will choose destinations that diverge by ten points in ethnic makeup. White movers select whiter wards than minority movers, even with controls for individual characteristics such as age, education, class, income, marital and housing status; as well as ward affluence, population density and share of renters. It remains unclear whether this pattern is mainly driven by white or minority preferences.

Everything we have seen seems to confirm that whites are exiting in response to diversity. Yet appearances can be deceiving. The BHPS and UKHLS ask about voting and party support as well as demographic, social and economic characteristics. Occasional questions in the BHPS and UKHLS probe broader feelings toward British nationalism and patriotism: whether the respondent considered British citizenship the world's best, or if Britain had reasons to be ashamed of its history and foreign policy. Other items examine attitudes to homosexuals and cohabitation, levels of interpersonal trust, position on a left–right scale, as well as views on family values and gender relations.

Figure 13 **Predicted ward minority change among inter-ward movers, 1991–2011**
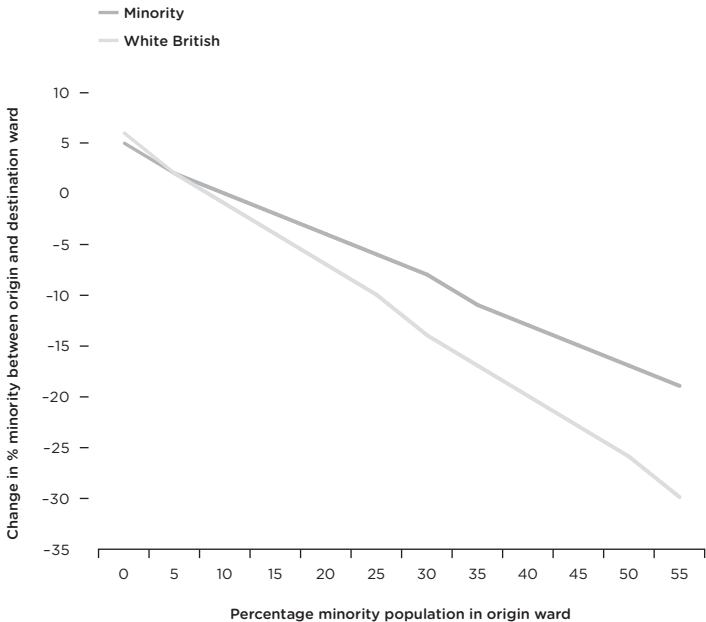
Source: BHPS[65]; UKHLS[66]

Being white British is a clear predictor of moving towards a whiter ward. Yet white British who are Conservative voters do not move to whiter places than white British who vote Labour or Liberal. Those leaving diversity are no more conservative on any attitude dimension than stayers or those entering diverse wards.

To examine this further, we return to our YouGov tracker survey for August 2013. Our survey is unique in asking about people's ethnic tolerance thresholds at local and national levels, as well as their actual local-level mobility history. First we asked: 'Have you moved local council ward to live somewhere new at

Table 2 **Moves towards and away from diversity, white British and minorities, 2013**

	Moved to whiter ward in past 10 yrs	Moved to more diverse ward in past 10 yrs	Sample
Not white British	53%	47%	47
White British	62%	38%	239
Total	60%	40%	286

any time in the past ten years?'; 465 individuals, 28 per cent of white British polled, had done so. Next, we enquired about the ethnic composition of respondents' previous and current ward; 23 per cent said their previous ward was more diverse, 23 per cent said it was about the same, and 37 per cent stated they had moved from a more diverse to a less diverse ward, with the rest unsure. The average white British person in the survey lived in a ward that was 83 per cent white British. Cross-checking responses with the actual ward in which people lived showed that those who said they had moved to a more diverse area lived in wards averaging 70 per cent white British whereas those who claimed to have moved to less diverse wards inhabited wards with a mean white British share of 88 per cent.

Table 2 shows that among those who said they moved to wards with larger or smaller numbers of ethnic minorities, most white British (62 per cent) moved away from diversity to whiter wards while whites of non-British background and non-whites were more evenly distributed between the two flows. This suggests that white British choose whiter areas, which tallies with the evidence presented so far.

But if the white flight theory holds, whites who dislike immigration should be disproportionately leaving diverse areas while those who embrace it remain or move towards less white areas. A glance at the breakdown of white British movers in table 3 refutes this: stayers are more likely to be strongly opposed to immigration (64 per cent) than those 'fleeing' diversity for whiter areas (60 per cent), while fully 54 per cent of white British

Table 3   White British 'flight' and 'gentrification', by attitudes and voting (n = 1,638 white British adults)

	Movers from diversity	Movers to diversity	Stayer
Immigration: increase or same	23%	25%	17%
Immigration: reduce a little	16%	21%	19%
Immigration: reduce a lot	60%	54%	64%
Number of cases	146	89	906
English national identitifier	43%	40%	50%
Conservative Party voter	28%	25%	28%
Number of cases	148	91	927
Discomfort with interracial marriage	21%	14%	23%
Number of cases	139	83	903

Source: YouGov[67]
Note: the number of cases is slightly different for different groups of variables depending on the response rate.

who moved to more diverse wards in the 2000s want immigration reduced a lot.

We asked about respondents' comfort with the idea of interracial marriage, a standard measure of racism. Stayers were more racist than white 'fleers', though white 'gentrifiers' – those moving towards diversity – were more liberal.

There are important differences between those who move to diversity and those who leave it. For example, among whites asked whether they would be comfortable with a minority prime minister, 41 per cent of stayers said no, but so did nearly 40 per cent of those leaving diversity, whereas just 30 per cent of those moving to diversity concurred. Is the difference between 'gentrifiers' moving to diversity and 'white fleers' leaving it significant, or just a function of the fact those who move towards diversity tend to be young single renters? Statistical analysis refutes white flight: in effect, while white British move to whiter areas than minorities, they do so for reasons unrelated to a dislike of diversity.

There is evidence for white flight, but only at the extremes. When people's tolerance for the share of minorities in their ward

is below 5 per cent, they are much more likely to move to a white area than white movers with higher tolerance thresholds. This is the first proper evidence we see that ties attitudes to behaviour, a true white flight effect. White flight and avoidance are real, but only for white British people with a preference for lily-white areas, a very small share of the population.

How, then, to explain the ethnic gap in where people choose to live? Income gaps are unlikely to provide the answer, as we have netted these out. We therefore surmise that segregation is complex and unconscious. Perhaps whites seek different amenities from minorities (perhaps pubs and nature trails rather than ethnic markets or proximity to a mosque), and these are correlated with a ward's ethnic makeup. Information about the reputation of neighbourhoods is conveyed along social networks which correlate with ethnicity. Ties of friendship and family draw groups towards their own. The UKHLS shows that white British who moved to diverse wards during 2009–12 tended to move away from their parents whereas minorities moving towards diverse wards moved, on average, closer to their parents. As Thomas Schelling remarked, if blacks are Baptists and whites Methodists, the two will be segregated on a Sunday morning even if there is no conscious ethnic avoidance taking place. If rental properties are advertised on church bulletin boards by church members, residential segregation will follow.[68] In our focus groups, when forced to choose between living near their friends and family in a white-minority area or living in a white majority area without close ties, many chose the former.

There is also a possibility that signals from a diverse environment affect whites without them being conscious of this. As behavioural economists argue, people are not rational, they rationalise a story for their actions after emotions and cognitive shortcuts make a 'fast-thinking' decision.[69] The share of white British people in the Citizenship Surveys who say their neighbourhood is an important part of their identity declines steadily as their ward of residence becomes more diverse whereas for minorities there is no effect. In the survey *Understanding Society*, white Britons' sense of belonging to neighbourhood declines in more diverse wards.[70] Other work finds that whites evaluate

neighbourhood 'reputation' differently from minorities even when material properties are identical.[71] An area's trendiness and social capital among whites could be conditioned by how white it is. Though we largely discount the role of conscious opposition to diversity in prompting exit – 'white flight' – we cannot rule out the possibility that the share of minorities exerts a subliminal influence on the decisions of even the most liberal whites.

The upshot is that the claim white flight leads anti-immigrant white residents to select themselves out of diverse neighbourhoods is largely refuted. White flight cannot offer a credible explanation for the finding across all our datasets that members of the ethnic majority are more tolerant of immigration in more diverse areas. Instead, transience, inter-ethnic contact and white habituation to minorities are the key factors.

Retaining the white British in diverse areas

The trend towards white exit from super-diverse areas emerged strongly in our data, as discussed earlier in this section. Can anything be done to slow or reverse this? It is extremely difficult to design ethnically mixed communities and attempts to fast-track integration may bring more problems than they solve. When forced to choose between more integration with disruptive change and less integration without rapid change, our research supports the latter: an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary approach.

There is little agreement on which liberal measures can reduce segregation. The Eisenhower Foundation (2008), reflecting on 40 years of failure to achieve residential and educational integration in America, nicely conveys an ideal that appears difficult to attain in a free society: 'We need to promote the ability of racial minorities to move into white neighborhoods [and] encourage white families to move into minority neighbourhoods.'[72]

One example involves the planned integrated community of Starrett City, in New York. Developed in 1975 in the East New York section of Brooklyn, the community aimed to avert white

flight by maintaining a two-thirds white majority. The measures were generally supported by the black and Hispanic residents of the 153-acre, 46 building site, which housed a population of some 15,000 people. Though socially successful, the courts ultimately ruled the project unconstitutional. The waiting list for Starrett City was 80 per cent African-American, and in 1980 the Reagan administration brought a case against Starrett City for using discriminatory racial quotas. The Supreme Court upheld the ruling, which compelled Starrett City to remove the quotas. In response, Starrett City initially opted to leave units empty rather than alter its racial mix. Eventually it succumbed. Today Starrett City remains almost a quarter white – about average for Brooklyn given its location and class composition – which suggests that white flight, if it took place, occurred only gradually.[73] More recently, attention has focused on another model community, Oak Park, Illinois, whose landlords have used informal discrimination to maintain an unusually integrated community which is around 65 per cent white. Investigators using randomised experiments recently found persistent racial discrimination being practised by landlords in Oak Park.[74] An academic study of the community resignedly remarks,

It can continue to be offensive and remain integrated or it can stop offending and cease being one of the few places in the U.S. where blacks and whites strive to live together in neighborhoods where both groups successfully reside.[75]

In the British context, Cantle laments,

There have been few attempts to promote mixed communities in the UK… great reluctance to intervene and there are genuine concerns that any element of compulsion, along the lines of the bussing of children to schools to enforce mixing, is almost bound to be counterproductive. Given the increasing levels of diversity, it is unlikely that a policy of non-intervention will be sustainable, and it will be necessary to facilitate and incentivise change on an incremental basis.[76]

He adds that measures designed to promote a mix of incomes and economic backgrounds have been deemed more

acceptable, underpinning, for instance, DCLG's Mixed Communities Initiative of 2010. Though ethnicity is correlated with income, such measures cannot prevent the white working class from opting out. Our work shows white working-class people are more likely to leave diverse areas than white professionals and managers, which implies that the question of socioeconomic mix is largely orthogonal to that of ethnic mix. This means any plan to promote integrated communities must move beyond the current materialist focus to consider cultural as well as physical aspects of the built environment.

Our work suggests that a principal challenge in urban Britain is to retain white British residents in diverse areas, especially the working class and those with families. One possibility is to use social housing allocation to promote this aim. But there is a trade-off between the goals of non-discrimination, choice and integration. It is certainly possible for housing officers to use their discretion to attract certain groups and dispel others in pursuit of a desired ethnic mix. This has been extensively used in the Netherlands, which has a larger share of social tenants in its population than Britain, especially in Rotterdam.[77]

In Britain there is reluctance to hand power to local housing officers to make similar judgements. In the past, assessments by housing officers led to discrimination against ethnic minorities, the young and other 'undesirable' groups, hence the push for impartiality and needs-based, rule-driven processes. If anything, policy has stressed choice, to guard against the predicament of individuals being forced to accept a property or go to the back of the queue.[78] Yet an important study found that introducing greater choice for British social housing tenants made segregation worse – it increased the tendency of minorities to select houses in areas of minority concentration.[79] This is because some minority tenants seem to be willing to accept a lower standard of housing in order to be near co-ethnics and family members.[80]

Despite the *laissez-faire* impulses of British policy makers, a 2001 survey found 60 per cent of local authorities in England allocated points for specific target groups (age, class), with only 30 per cent operating purely on the basis of need.[81] If retention

of white British in diverse locales is a goal, points could be allocated on a 'sons and daughters' basis, which would favour those brought up in the area, who are more likely to be white British. Measures designed to open whiter neighbourhoods to minorities should be part of the same suite of policies.

The net effect of such a policy in altering segregation levels should not be overstated since only 17 per cent of people in England and Wales live in social housing. Nonetheless, the proportion in social housing is often higher in urban areas. In London it reaches 25 per cent. London's ethnic minorities disproportionately live in social housing, which is not the case in the rest of the country. Meanwhile London's white British are less likely to move from rental into social housing, and more likely to shift from social into rental housing, than white British else-where.[82] This may reflect the fact that white British are much better off than minorities in London compared with the rest of England, or it may intimate that a needs-based system is contri-buting to white British departure from the city. Thus changes in the social housing sector may make a difference to segregation patterns across London. The use of 'sons and daughters' allocation, if mooted, should be restricted to 'majority minority' authorities, which are unlikely to experience gentrification and must be balanced by measures in whiter areas to encourage minority access.

Zoning is a further policy tool that may alter residence patterns in the private rented and owner-occupied sector. Though densification is viewed by some as an important tool for enabling London to meet its projected housing needs, our research suggests this is likely to increase white-minority segregation. White British demands for space have increased over time, which is why white British have been leaving London and other inner cities for generations. Most of those in our Bromley focus group who had moved from Hackney, Catford and other parts of London spoke of how they felt crowded in the city. 'The population had grown in the area', 'there were too many people', 'the volume of people [was too great]' they said, hence their choice to move out. Minorities and earlier arrivals exhibit a similar if less pronounced pattern.[83]

As we have noted, throughout the country, minority and immigrant increase in an area has been associated with white British decline, especially in crowded urban areas. This holds at city, local authority and ward level. Essentially, displacement occurs because minorities are willing to trade room size and amenities for proximity to co-ethnic networks and employment. Ian Gordon of LSE calculates that 40 per cent of London's population of immigrants from poor countries in the 2000s has been accommodated through an increase in persons per room. This introduces rapid ethnic change in many deprived areas. The Government's under-occupancy penalty (or 'bedroom tax'), which penalises underused space among social housing tenants, is also problematic insofar as it also drives up density. An alternative strategy may be to slow the increase of density in built-up areas, which may help spread minority populations more widely.

The ethnic change that occurred in London and other cities in the 2000s was not white flight but was driven by immigrants and minorities, whose willingness to compromise on space enabled landlords to raise rents and white British homeowners to sell at a premium. Poor value for money discouraged some prospective white British from moving in. Yet in all probability, an absence of minority and immigrant demand would simply have resulted in a resumption of London's pre-1991 population decline. Thus ethnic displacement is caused not by white unease, but rather a fixed housing supply and minorities' willingness to trade space for proximity to co-ethnic networks.

At a time when the Greater London Authority (GLA) is calling for higher density in the capital to meet London's projected population growth,[84] the demands of integration push in the opposite direction. In order to reduce the pace of ethnic change in some urban areas, local authorities could consider tightening planning regulations to reduce the number of lets per dwelling. Tighter planning would help spread ethnic change more widely, and might have slowed white British population loss from London and other urban cores. But a policy of de-densification in diverse local authorities carries significant costs for London. Individuals would need to live

further out and commute to their jobs, friends and ethnic amenities. Local employers may need to pay more or relocate outside the city. Tougher zoning makes it harder for London to house its projected population increase. Yet the benefits of reduced segregation should be weighed against these economic costs.

Urban areas could even consider 'nudge'-style policies to retain white British residents. Nudge in this case largely concerns making changes to the environment in order to address the unconscious drivers of human behaviour.[85] These are entirely untested and it is far from clear they will make a difference. But foremost among these could be looking to maintain a 'British' feel along high streets and in neighbourhoods, even if there is a very diverse population. Nudges could involve retaining pubs, churches and football grounds; flying the Union Jack and George Cross from public buildings; and continuing to celebrate Christmas, St George's Day and other festivities associated with the majority.

Qualitative evidence implies that a change in symbolism along the high street can lead to white unease, though quantitative data does not exist to substantiate this. Richard Harris noted that one of the highest-rated comments to Mark Easton's BBC article on ethnic change in London states:

Some of the Areas have become very Asian oriented with shops that cater more for Asian people: Halal Butchers, Bangladeshi Bakers, Mosques and Temples, local shops that are dominated by Asian foods and spices, and that cater very little for non-Asian tastes. Is it any wonder the white people move out? People feel like strangers in the town where they were born.[86]

Challenges to these traditions were also mentioned as irritants by several individuals in our Croydon and Lozells focus groups. Yet it is not clear such changes will make a difference: we find no firm evidence that a more 'British' iconography on the high street will strongly affect the willingness of white British to remain. Indeed, some in our Lozells focus group suggested such changes would not prevent further white departure from inner-city Birmingham.

If these steps are taken, they should only occur as part of a broader package, which includes a suite of reverse measures in strongly white areas in order to make minorities feel more comfortable in them: accommodation for ethnic markets and houses of worship, and so forth. In this, as in all integration measures, we would counsel gradualism, as the risks of rapid change often outweigh the benefits of greater inter-ethnic contact. We also reiterate that residential integration has only a modest overall effect on white Britons' views on immigration.

The design of homes may also matter. Mosaic postcode profiling shows that particular ethnic groups tend to prefer certain kinds of architectural styles, favouring driveways and larger house footprints over gardens and hedges, for instance.[87] Victorian, Georgian or other traditional styles, with limits on house footprint and size and a stress on gardens and trees, may better attract and retain white residents in super-diverse areas. On the flipside, an increase in the share of rental properties and homes with extra rooms and driveways in strongly white neighbourhoods could attract minorities to outlying neighbourhoods.

We saw that white British people tend to leave diverse areas when they have children, to a greater extent than minorities at similar income levels. To counter this, more controversial nudges in local schools might include picturing a disproportionate share of white pupils on school brochures, maintaining British traditions such as Christmas alongside the celebrations of other faiths, limiting the presence of foreign languages on school bulletin boards and displays, and avoiding policies that alienate white British parents, such as Halal-only cafeterias. In heavily white areas, the reverse might hold, with minorities and foreign languages disproportionately featured by the school and special arrangements made to accommodate minority traditions. Schools in diverse areas could monitor Mumsnet, Twitter and other social media for damaging rumours or skewed perceptions and act to counteract these with accurate data about a school's performance and ethnic composition. Again, however, it is unclear whether these actions will do much to stem the exodus of white families from diverse areas or attract minorities to heavily white places.

5 Voice II: far-right voting

In chapter 3 we considered one aspect of the white British 'voice' response to ethnic change: immigration attitudes. In this chapter we examine a second and more radical dimension: voting for anti-immigration parties. Opposition to immigration strongly shapes voting patterns for the right-wing populist UKIP or far-right BNP. Thus voting trends reflect many of the same drivers as immigration opinion. We find both to be affected by the pace of local ethnic change and the isolation of white British residents from minorities.

The tripling of support for the far right from the mid-1980s from about 5 per cent to 15 per cent in several West European societies took many observers by surprise.[88] Britain, with its first-past-the-post electoral system, which discourages single-issue parties and its history of anti-fascism, was once viewed as immune to the charms of the far right. This thinking has eroded with the success of parties trading in the electoral currency of opposition to immigration. In 2006 the BNP won 55 local councils and in 2009 a poll discovered 22 per cent of respondents would 'seriously consider' voting BNP.[89] The post-2009 demise of the BNP due to internal conflict does not obviate the point: though specific far right movements rise and fall with their leaders, the level of BNP support is indicative of a level of demand considerably higher than in previous periods of far right activity in Britain. Though alienation with established political elites and deskilling among male blue-collar workers also contribute to far-right support, immigration is the main issue for these parties.

A relative academic consensus is that cultural concerns or grievances over perceived ethnic 'unfairness' in jobs, housing and welfare loom larger than individual self-interest when it comes to predicting support for the far right[90] and this has been

confirmed in analyses of BNP and UKIP.[91] In our focus groups, local white British people were widely perceived to have a legitimate prior claim on services, though few claimed that immigrants should go to the back of the queue. One woman in our Sutton Coldfield (Birmingham exurban area) focus group related a story of a friend in partnership with a Lithuanian woman. 'Before [she] even left [Lithuania] there was a council flat in Litchfield waiting for them. They moved straight into the council flat. And they're on benefits.' A younger man in our Lozells (inner Birmingham) focus group said that immigrants were 'getting priority [in housing]. [I] wound up staying at my Dad's, they didn't care about me.' Another Lozells man opined, 'I was homeless for five years... I was interviewed by a Somalian man... and I got refused, and I thought, "How's that right?"'

This said, voting for the BNP diverges from anti-immigration support in two important ways. First, the BNP's unsavoury reputation as a street-based movement with fascist roots deters many respectable voters who otherwise endorse its platform. The BNP therefore only attracts voters whose class and gender position insulate them from the sting of anti-BNP norms.[92] This favours working-class men, especially in the masculine subculture of the manual trades, where support for the BNP may not carry the automatic social sanction it does in other spheres. The class and occupation profile shows up clearly in analyses of BNP support.[93]

Local ethnic dynamics loom large for far-right voting just as they do with immigration opinion.[94] We see this in the GLA elections of 2008. White, close-knit wards – those above the London average of 60 per cent white, especially if over 80 per cent – were more likely to support the BNP. Wards which experienced substantial white 'inflight' – many more whites moving in than out – were generally less supportive of the BNP, reflecting the prophylactic effect of transience on far-right support.[95] Areas where minorities increased fastest over the previous decade were more likely to support the BNP. For instance, Barking and Dagenham, a BNP stronghold in the 2000s, was 81 per cent white British and just 15 per cent minority in 2001. In the ensuing decade it lost over 40,000 white British

Figure 14 **BNP vote in the 2008 GLA elections**

Weakest support   Stronger support
Weaker support   Strongest support
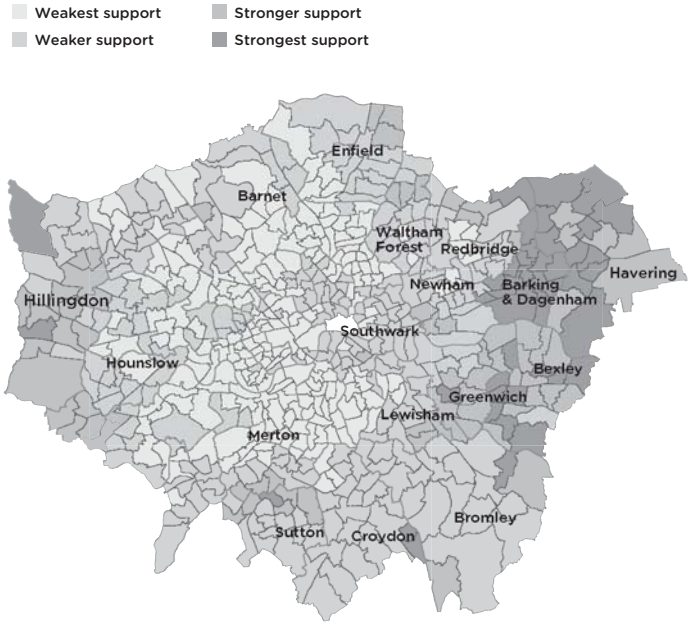
Source: Harris[96]

residents and gained over 60,000 minorities, reducing the white British share to 49.5 per cent. This foregrounds the distinction between levels and changes in diversity at the local level. The former dampens anti-immigration feeling while the latter elevates it.

    Figure 14 shows where BNP support was concentrated in the 2008 GLA election. Darker-shaded areas have above average BNP first preference vote share while lighter wards recorded a below-average BNP vote. The first point to note is that London is a diverse city, but contains white working-class zones, especially in its eastern sections encompassing local authorities such as Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Bromley, and along its western and southern extremities.

The map reveals our familiar pattern of white hostility being aroused in whiter sections of diverse urban areas (such as London). As with immigration opinion, there is repeated evidence for a disjuncture between contextual effects at small and large-scale geographies. Several survey-based studies of the BNP find support to be positively correlated with diversity at the local authority level while at ward level, with populations approximately a tenth as large as in local authorities, high levels of minority presence have a neutral or negative effect on BNP support. In neighbourhoods above a threshold of 25 per cent minorities, researchers find individuals less likely to vote BNP, whereas those living in homogeneous neighbourhoods with few immigrants are more likely to support the party.[97] Others point to the combination of homogeneity-within-diversity: heavily white British wards nested in diverse and changing local authorities appear to offer fertile ground for the far right.[98] The 'halo effect' whereby white opposition to immigration is strongest in homogeneous areas ringing diverse cities is consonant with this analysis.[99]

As diversity spreads, the front line of far-right support moves further out from the centre. The National Front performed best in East London in the 1970s, while the BNP now polls well in Barking or Essex, further out – so too in Antwerp where the Vlaams Belang has retreated from the urban core to the whiter ring beyond. A high share of minorities in the local authority, a low share in the ward, and rapid increases in ward minority share all predict increased white BNP support, just as they predict white hostility to immigration.

The context for UKIP support, 2009–13

What of UKIP, which has quickly emerged as the most prominent challenger to the two-party dominance of UK politics? The longitudinal survey *Understanding Society* captures approximately 500 UKIP unique voters and supporters in three waves since 2009.[100] We also look at BNP and UKIP local council election results, whose millions of votes furnish a much larger sample of far-right votes for analysis.

Figure 15 **UKIP 2012 local election vote and Englishness of white British electorate**
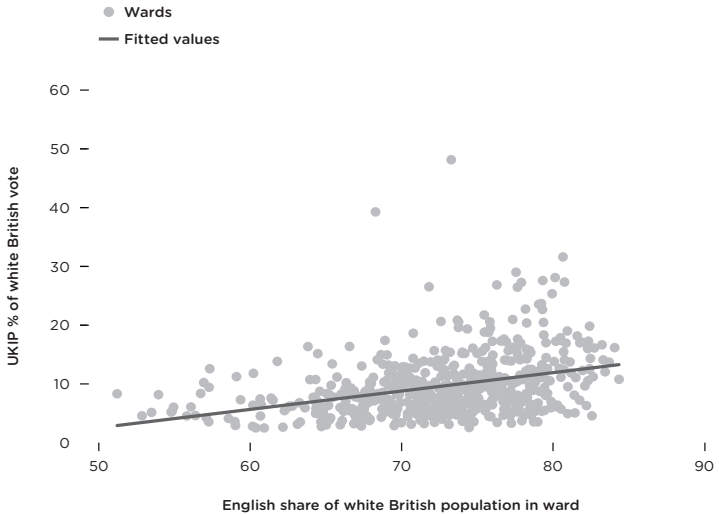
Source: Data from ONS, Census 2011, accessed via nomis.web.co.uk

Let us turn first to the local election data. We have to be careful because results are affected not only by parties' popularity but by where the parties decide to field candidates, which is often constrained by the availability of local resources and experience. Focusing only on wards where UKIP ran candidates, those where it did well tend to be more rural, with older non-university-educated populations. These wards tend to be located in local authorities where a disproportionate share of the ethnic majority identifies as English rather than British, as shown in figure 15. In the *Understanding Society* data, English identity was also an outstanding predictor of UKIP voting alongside old age and non-university education. This accords with other survey findings.[101]

Matt Goodwin and Rob Ford's rigorous new book on the party characterises UKIP voters as the 'left behind' – old, white,

poorly educated males – who dislike immigration and Europe and are being eclipsed by the new electorate.[102] While we concur with the importance of these variables, our view is that pro-immigration professionals comprise at most 15–20 per cent of the vote. Turning the bottle around, the 'left behind' population – non-university (75 per cent of the population), anti-immigration (80–85 per cent), non-professional (75 per cent) – is easily the majority. If UKIP truly was their first port of call, Nigel Farage would be on his way to Number 10. In fact, UKIP faces considerable barriers in reaching 'left behind' voters. These are similar to impediments which kept the populist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland out of power for almost three decades although it routinely trounced the ruling Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) in European contests: the UUP had built up a fund of brand loyalty and local connections with traditionalist voters. This protected the UUP vote despite the party's perceived 'liberalism' on power-sharing, which alienated many Unionists.[103] The idea that the DUP, like UKIP, was not a 'respectable' choice also played a role.

Cluster analysis of UKIP voters from *Understanding Society* shows that while one part of its base is indeed poorer than average, another is relatively well off, rural and living in Tory-dominated wards. A further segment consists of socially average but ideologically motivated voters. Taking two random individuals, if we have to bet on which one is the UKIP voter, we are far better off asking them if they are Eurosceptic than if they oppose immigration.[104] Immigration matters for UKIP's rise, but less so than for the BNP. This said, UKIP's future success will depend on whether the party is able to convince voters that its European agenda really matters when it comes to reducing the ethnic change voters care more about.

UKIP's base is outstandingly Eurosceptic, older and rural. Compared with the average white British voter, UKIP supporters are more likely to be homeowners, less likely to be unemployed, and live in areas with little poverty. Unlike the BNP, UKIP supporters do not live in places that have undergone rapid ethnic change. Indeed, they reside in whiter-than-average local authorities and wards. Whereas the BNP thrived in wards

Figure 16   **UKIP vote and ethnic shift in local elections, 2010–12**
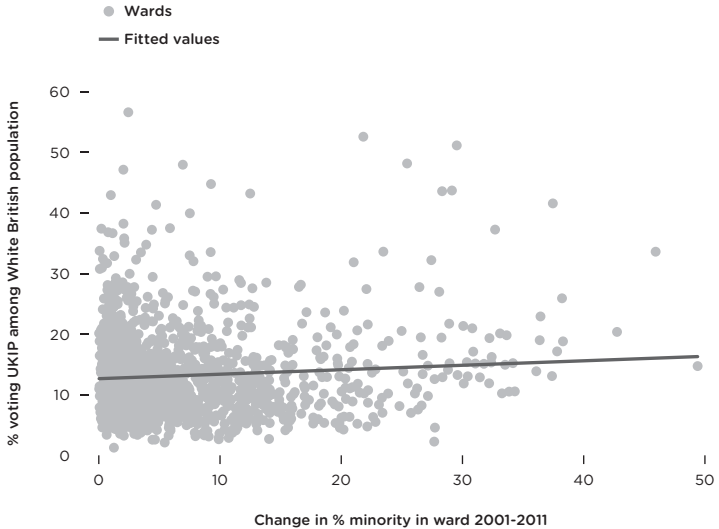
Source: Calculated from election data from Plymouth Elections Centre[106] and ONS Census 2011

threatened by actual increases in diversity, UKIP supporters are more likely to have experienced minority Britain in the abstract: as a news item, second-hand report or through a car window in a city centre.

Figures 16 and 17 show the relationship between the UKIP or BNP share of the vote in local council elections from 2010 to 2012, on the vertical axis, and the novelty and pace of ethnic minority growth on the horizontal. Dots represent electoral wards and the local authority in which the ward is situated is labelled.[105] Notice how much steeper the line is in figure 17 than in figure 16, and how dots position more tightly around it; this shows that BNP's support is stimulated by local ethnic shifts to a far greater degree than UKIP's. This may have altered somewhat since 2012 since UKIP has made inroads into the Old Labour

Figure 17 **BNP vote and ethnic shift in local elections, 2010–12**
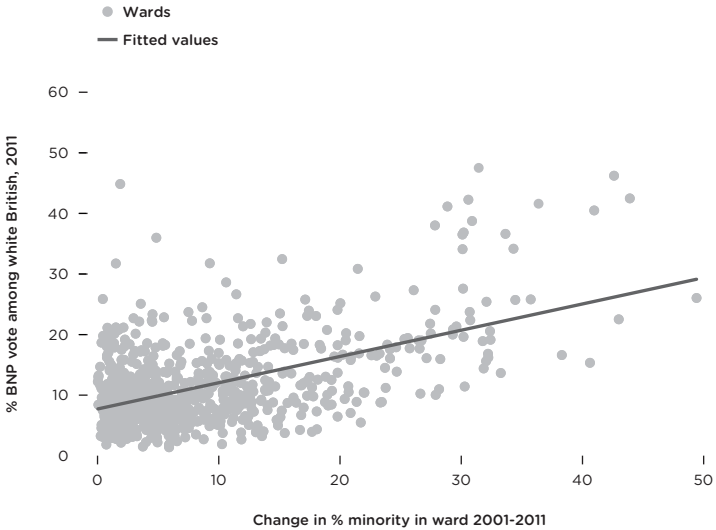
Source: Calculated from election data from Plymouth Elections Centre Data[107] and ONS, Census 2011

working-class vote in the North during 2013 and 2014 by stressing immigration more than other aspects of EU membership.

Having considered opposition to immigration and far-right voting, we find a series of common threads. At the individual level, professionals, managers and degree holders are more supportive of current levels of immigration – though a majority remain opposed – and unlikely to vote for far-right parties. Young people are somewhat less opposed to immigration than older generations. Transient contexts characterised by a high proportion of singles and renters are inhospitable for far-right parties, with renters and singles less opposed to immigration than homeowners, married couples and long-term residents.

Locales with a low historic level of ethnic minorities, but which experienced rapid ethnic change in the 2000s – such as Barking and Dagenham – are more likely to support the far right and oppose immigration. Members of the ethnic majority living in relatively homogeneous wards nested in diverse local authorities and metropolitan areas – in sections of Burnley or Bradford – are also more likely to exhibit a threat response. These findings speak to our emphasis on moderating the pace of local ethnic change wherever possible and seeking to gradually increase residential integration.

6   Accommodation

We argued that ethnic boundary shifts and assimilation tend to dissipate tensions built up through ethno-demographic shifts. The history of such accommodation is plain to see if we consider the Irish and Jewish presence in English wards. These historic immigrant groups are not associated with elevated ethnic English anti-immigration views or far-right voting. The absorption of both groups into the white British is also striking. Nandi and Platt, using *Understanding Society*, find that though 86 per cent of the British population define themselves as white British, just 71 per cent have four British-born grandparents, suggesting many have assimilated into the majority in recent generations.[108] Over three-quarters of those who give their religion as Jewish marked white British as their ethnicity on the Census in 2011, providing further evidence.[109] In *Understanding Society*, of 716 individuals with an Irish mother, 402 identified as white British and just 275 as Irish. Of 687 with an Irish father, 383 called themselves white British and only 284 Irish. In both cases we witness the assimilation of a majority of the second generation into the ethnic majority. This is strongly age-graded with young people of Irish parentage more likely to report themselves as white British while older generations remain nearly as Irish as their parents.[110]

There is impressive evidence that other groups, too, have drawn closer to the ethnic majority: 571 individuals enumerated in the 2011 ONS Longitudinal Study, a 1 per cent sample of the Census, had listed their parents' birthplace as 'Mediterranean Commonwealth' in 1971. Among these largely Turkish and Greek Cypriot-origin individuals, 46 per cent considered themselves members of the dominant white British group by 2011. The share of individuals who reported their ethnicity as something other than white British in 2001 but considered themselves to be white British in 2011, less those that changed the other way, was 7 per

Figure 18   **The ethnic composition of England and Wales by age group, 2011**

- White British
- Minority
- White other
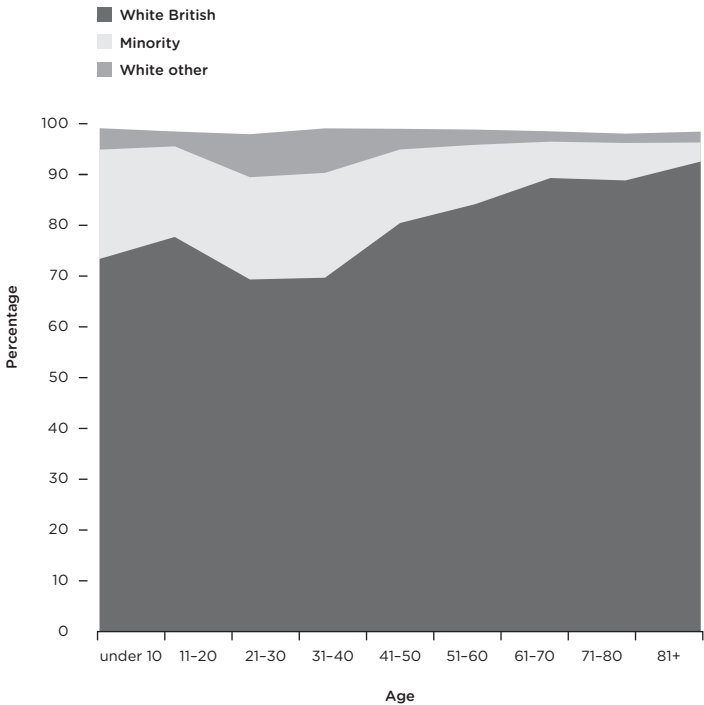
Source: ONS, Census 2011

cent for White Other and 6 per cent for the Irish. Among minorities and those of mixed race, flows largely cancelled each other out.[111] The white British are a larger share of the under-20 population than those aged 20 to 40 (figure 18). This partly reflects the young adult age profile of East European immigrants, but also the powerful effects of their assimilation. Since the White Other category is one of the fastest-growing in England, we should expect a continued flow of assimilation into the white British group – especially in the youngest age cohorts.

How has integration affected white attitudes to immigration? Our modelling shows that the greater the share of recent (post-2000) immigrants in the European or minority population, the stronger the opposition to immigration. The share of post-2000 East European immigrants is strongly linked to higher opposition to immigration. On the other hand, a higher level of established East Europeans in the local population reduces opposition to immigration. For minorities, a larger share reduces opposition to immigration, regardless of whether minorities are native or foreign-born. Where European and non-white immigrants diverge is in the second generation. White immigrants' children are accepted more readily into the majority: our work shows that increases in the native-born minority population is associated with anti-immigration feeling whereas this is not true for growth in the British-born 'White Other' – European – population. Minority acculturation does not seem to matter very much for the majority. Our statistical analyses show that the share of local non-white minorities who are UK or foreign-born, speak English or a foreign tongue as their first language, are employed homeowners or unemployed council tenants, or hold British or foreign passports has no significant effect on white British attitudes to immigration or their propensity to vote BNP or UKIP. Whereas there is a big gap in the way white British approach Europeans who are recent immigrants (post-2000) and established Europeans, the distinction is less pronounced between immigrant minorities and native-born minorities. This suggests acceptance is more protracted for the children of minorities than Europeans.

In some of our analyses, a larger local proportion of Afro-Caribbeans – a highly intermarried minority group – is associated with lower BNP support while Muslim groups bring out a more hostile response. Some work has uncovered a significant association between a higher mixed-race component among minorities and reduced support for the BNP.[112] It must nevertheless be emphasised that these findings are sporadic rather than consistent: in most studies the mixed and Caribbean share of minorities in a ward does not reduce opposition to immigration or far-right voting over and above the effect of

minority share. Visibility seems to matter more and skin colour or religion may form a 'counter-entropic' boundary that endures in spite of minority cultural integration.[113]

Let us return to the overall model shown in figure 2. We saw that ethnic change stimulates ethnic nationalism – and by extension opposition to immigration – while individualism, integration and cultural liberalism reduce it. We claim that the doubling of minority population over 2001–11, driven in large measure by natural increase, was as important as European immigration in driving white British discontent. The greater propensity for European migrants to assimilate into the majority might even suggest UKIP's strategy of opposing European immigration to favour skilled migrants from elsewhere could backfire.[114]

Habituation

The presence of more minorities in a ward inclines local whites to be more tolerant of immigration. Partly this is due to contact: inter-ethnic mixing and having friends of a different race. Nonetheless, this only accounts for around half the positive local minority effect on white attitudes. The remainder may stem from a perception that minorities 'belong' in an area. For instance, the share of minorities in a ward in 1991 is almost as important as the share of minorities in 2011 in accounting for current white attitudes to immigration. A large share of post-2000 East European or non-white immigrants is linked to greater local opposition to immigration but sentiment is more pro-immigration in areas with higher levels of established (pre-2000) immigrants. For example, few would contest the notion that Afro-Caribbeans belong in Brixton.

Here it seems a 'tradition' of minority presence may be as important as contact with minorities in softening attitudes. Thus minorities and immigrants are increasingly considered legitimate the longer they live in a locale. If change tails off, attitudes no longer remain hostile: an increase in minorities in a ward between 2001 and 2011 predicts increased white opposition but the increase in minorities for the previous decade, 1991–2001,

does not. So the shock of ethnic change seems to fade after a decade. Habituation of white British people to East Europeans and minorities in their locale has the potential to reduce hostility to immigration. This echoes a recent longitudinal study in Germany, which found that whites without ties to minorities became more tolerant merely by being immersed in a diverse environment.[115] This said, it is also the case a rapid increase in the local-level share of ethnic minorities enhances white opposition to immigration and buoys support for the far right in the near term. Wards which are currently very white may grow hostile if substantial ethnic shifts take place. Since upwards of 80 per cent of English wards are over 90 per cent white we may expect more turbulence ahead should ethnic change advance as unevenly as in the 2000s.

Habituation also occurs with age. Older individuals are attached to memories of a whiter locale and nation than young people – and they measure the present against a different 'golden age'. This helps explain why older age is a consistent predictor of UKIP voting at aggregate and individual levels, and is associated with opposition to immigration in many surveys.[116] Young people, even in white locales, express less hostility to immigration than older generations in the same community. The young have more friends with members of other ethnic groups and generally mix more across ethnic lines. In our statistical analyses, age is second only to the share of minorities in the locale in predicting a white person's likelihood of mixing with other ethnic groups.

Young whites tend to mix more than older whites regardless of residential segregation since schools, public spaces and recreation offer alternative networks through which contact takes place. Conversely, co-located individuals from different backgrounds may have little contact when they are positioned in parallel social networks. This emerges from our focus groups with whites who live in diverse areas such as Lozells in Birmingham and Croydon in London, many of whom reported few deep social connections with minorities.

A sense that youth were more tolerant than older people was routinely often expressed in our focus groups. 'That [young]

generation is going to grow up better than us,' said one Croydon respondent. In Lozells, a respondent said the young 'grow up thinking it [diversity] is normal'. Others noted that their young children did not notice race. In surveys, youth tend to be more tolerant of immigration than their predecessors. Yet we should not hold overly rosy perceptions of youth opinion. In our analysis, once we control for contact, urbanity and education, the young are no more likely than older people to support current levels of immigration. In our Lozells and Croydon focus groups, several remarked that in diverse local secondary schools friendship groups tended to form along ethnic lines.

The fact attitudes to immigration have tended to remain relatively negative in Britain for decades suggests one's point in the life cycle may be more important than one's generation for determining views on immigration. Among respondents there was a sense that tolerance was only partly generational, and that this could dissipate with age as individuals encounter adversity. A younger Lozells man agreed that youth are 'more tolerant 'cos they're brought up around it' but added 'as you get older you... see for yourself what's going on' and grow more sceptical. A Lozells woman admitted that when she entered college all were tolerant of diversity and when one is young 'you don't have any hate in you'. However, as she has got older, her views have grown more negative on immigration.

This would seem to be borne out in data on immigration by generation which shows the 1960s-era baby boomers experiencing a shift in later life towards more negative attitudes. The anti-immigration views of Who frontman Roger Daltrey exemplifies this, a far cry from the racial liberalism of 'My Generation'. Generation X (born 1966–79) and Millennials (1980–2000) exhibit a more tolerant trend, but it is difficult to extrapolate from this towards a more tolerant future.[117] For instance, positive attitudes to European integration and the propensity to feel more European than national prevail more among younger people. Europhilia was expected to increase as new generations displaced older ones in the population.[118] Yet in the period since 1991, the Eurobarometer surveys studied by Inglehart in the 1980s reveal a steady decline in pro-

Europeanism, implying that certain attitudes grow more conservative as people age. A recent paper which tracks British voters over two decades shows they tend to become more conservative as they age, suggesting an ageing population will bring more conservative voting patterns in its wake.[119]

Box 1   **The English case in comparative and historical perspective**

It is important to step back from current debates to look at patterns over decades and centuries rather than the typical political timeframe of months or election cycles. The USA has the longest modern experience with mass immigration, offering a useful window on contemporary Britain. Opposition to immigration in America has generally varied in response to the volume and cultural character of inflows. The greater the cultural distance from the Anglo-Protestant core, and the larger the volume, the stronger the reaction. American opposition to immigration waxed in the 1850s with the post-famine Irish Catholic influx, from the 1890s to the 1920s as Catholics continued to grow while southern and eastern European arrivals surged, and again from the mid-1960s with Hispanic and Asian immigration. It waned in the quarter century after 1860 and from 1924 to 1965.[120] Anti-Catholicism in America began to decline from the mid-1920s and anti-Semitism from the 1930s. Both processes persisted but were finally laid to rest in the 1960s, when inter-faith marriage took off and inequalities between white ethnic groups largely disappeared.[121]

Scotland similarly reveals how demographic change stimulates the response of a dominant group. Migration from Catholic Ireland to Scotland began in earnest in the late nineteenth century and crested before the First World War. The demographic momentum of a relatively poor, fertile, Catholic community persisted into the middle decades of the twentieth century (figure 19). One measure of Protestant response is the growth of the Scottish Orange Order.

In 1923, the Church of Scotland's Church and Nation committee issued its notorious report entitled 'The menace of

Figure 19 **Catholic share and female Orange Order membership, Scotland, 1855–2001**

― **% Catholic**

▲ **Female Orange members**
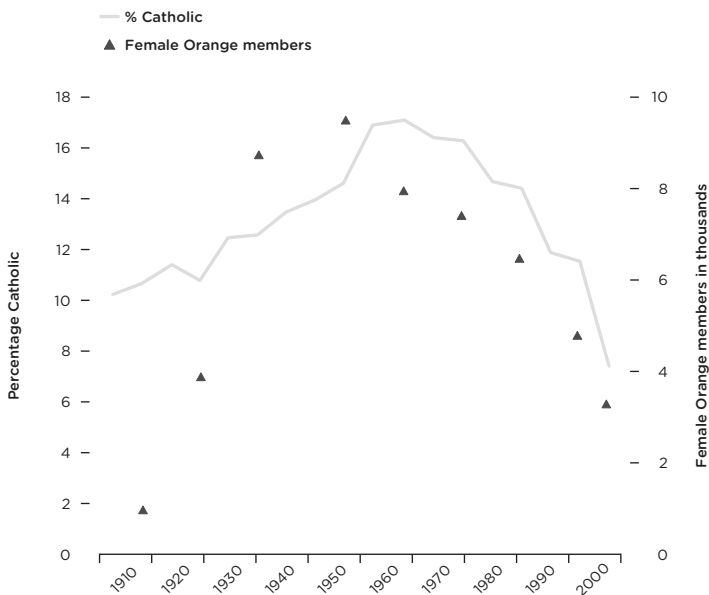
Source: Hechter 1976,[122] ONS Census 1971–2001; authors' data on Orange Order

the Irish race to our Scottish nationality'. Scottish novelist John Buchan at Parliament in November 1932 warned, 'We are losing some of the best of our race stock by migration and their place is being taken by those whom whatever their merits, are not Scottish.'[123] In the early 1930s, two anti-Catholic movements, John Cormack's Edinburgh-based Protestant Action and Alexander Ratcliffe's Glasgow-centred Scottish Protestant League, garnered the support of as much as a third of Protestants in their respective cities. Attempts to curb Irish immigration were pursued without success at Westminster by the Kirk and sympathetic Scottish MPs into the late 1930s. The

Second World War confirmed Scots' Catholic loyalty, as it had done for Irish Americans in the Civil War and did for American Jews in the Second World War. Yet as late as 1952, the Church of Scotland's Church and Nation committee condemned Irish Catholics for displacing the 'native Scots population' from industrial Scotland and derided them as a 'compact community largely of alien origin'.[124]

Nevertheless, changes were afoot. Minimal immigration, declining fertility and secularisation slowed and then reversed Catholic growth after 1945. Improved education and upward mobility eroded racial stereotypes. The rise of inter-faith outreach and ecumenism within the Church of Scotland in the 1970s chipped away at prejudice from within. Gradually, the Scoto–Irish ceased to be perceived as threatening outsiders. One indicator of a decline in anti-Catholicism is the change in female Orange Order membership in Scotland, since the Order's powerful female wing long counted more members than the men in the early to mid-twentieth century. Figure 19 shows there was a peak in 1951, with rapid decline thereafter, broadly following the path of Scottish Catholic decline in the wake of secularisation. This speaks to a waning of anti-Catholicism since opposition to Irish Catholics was a factor in the Order's rise in Scotland between the wars, though membership was also connected with Irish Protestant immigrants and their descendants.[125]

In the Central Belt where Catholics clustered, the rule was one of growing accommodation. A 2004 study discovered that among married Scots Catholics aged 65–74, nearly all had Catholic spouses. Among married couples in the 25–34 age bracket, half of Catholics had married out.[126] *Sectarianism persisted in ritualised form at 'Old Firm' football matches pitting the 'Catholic' Glasgow Celtic against their 'Protestant' rival, Rangers, but not in the social structure.*[127] *This reflects similar trends in the USA where the 'triple melting pot' – in which inter-ethnic marriage remained confined to separate Catholic, Protestant and Jewish spheres – was breached in the 1960s.*[128] *On both sides of the Atlantic, anti-immigration sentiment, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism declined to*

historic lows as reduced ethnic change interacted with the spirit of 1960s liberal individualism. Here we find all elements depicted in figure 2 working in tandem to reduce majority nationalism: slower ethnic change, integration, individualism and elite-driven cultural liberalism.

All told, we find there is a persistent link between ethnic change and opposition to immigration, with anti-immigration sentiment waning as ethnic difference fades. This occurs because of lower immigration, reduced minority fertility and assimilation. The expansion of ethnic majority boundaries is also important. Before 1960, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) were hegemonic in the USA. One of the reasons the series Mad Men appears so anachronistic is that the WASP power elite,[129] *represented in the show by the Sterling Cooper ad agency, has now admitted, and mixed with, Jews and Catholics. Since the 1960s, all non-Hispanic whites are included in the 'Anglo' dominant group. This process is somewhat mysterious, but began on the level of popular culture as Protestants, Catholics and Jews began consuming similar – and sometimes racist – cultural productions such as the blackface act of Jewish-American Al Jolson. Religious taboos fell while intermarriage between white Protestants, Catholics and Jews dramatically increased.*[130]

The decline of anti-Catholic sentiment in the northwest of England followed a similar chronology to that of Scotland.[131] *Thus relatively Catholic Liverpool and Lancashire overwhelmingly identified as English rather than British in the 2011 Census. In Scotland, a similar if belated process is taking place, and there is rising Catholic support for Scottish nationalism and the Scottish National Party (SNP). This reflects an expansion of the definition of the dominant group in England and Scotland since the 1950s. In this sense, developments in Britain broadly parallel those in North America.*

Finally, minorities also gain legitimacy in the eyes of the majority the longer they live in a nation. New generations grew up in the twentieth century with the understanding that Catholics and Jews, even if not quite 'us', were part of the

> *furniture in the nation's living room rather than a wholly alien*
> *element. Their participation in the shared experience of war*
> *helped solidify their position as part of the national 'we' even if*
> *they were not yet considered part of the ethnic majority 'we'.*

## Ethnic change and accommodation in contemporary England

The vicissitudes of the English experience with racial minorities can be understood through a similar framework as those of Scotland and the USA in the twentieth century (see box 1). In 1970, following two decades of relatively high immigration from non-traditional 'New Commonwealth' sources, 90 per cent of the public favoured a reduced intake. As inflows ebbed over the following quarter century and immigrants integrated, opposition declined to 65 per cent. When numbers began to rise in 1997, opposition to immigration increased once again. By 2003, it had climbed back to 75 per cent. In 2000, immigration ranked eleventh among the electorate's priorities but by June 2005, even before the July 7 London bombings, it had risen to first place.[132] Data from a recent Ipsos MORI report, reproduced in figure 20, show just how aligned net migration and concern about migration have been since the 1990s.[133] The polynomial curves of both trends are 70–80 per cent correlated.

Today, despite a sluggish economy, immigration ranks first or second among the public's priorities.

The correspondence between politics and demography is mediated by how it is framed by the media and politicians, but the role of noisy supply-side factors such as the tabloid media or political mavericks is often overstated. In short, demand matters: ethnic population shifts affect identity, even if this effect may be delayed or catalysed by politico-economic triggers.

Changes in social definitions as to who is 'inside' and 'outside' the ethnic core tend to emerge gradually until they reach a tipping point when boundaries can suddenly breach, as occurred when Catholics and Jews became part of the white majority in the USA in the 1960s. Once this happens, widespread anxieties such as anti-Catholicism may rapidly dissipate and

Figure 20 **How the importance of race relations and immigration to Britons relates to UK net international migration, 1992 to Feb 2013**
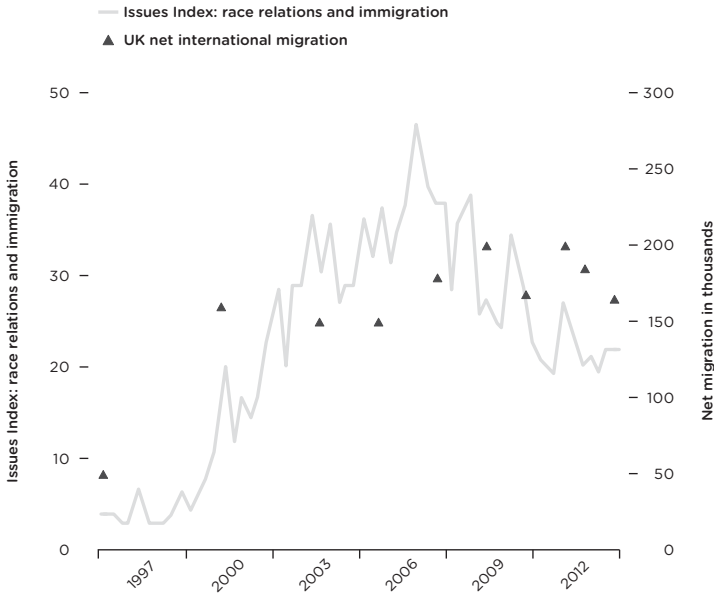
Source: Duffy and Frere-Smith;[134] Issues Index question: 'What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?'; Issues Index base: representative sample of *c* 1,000 British adults age 18+ each month, interviewed face-to-face in home; Home Office statistics based on 'Year ending'

appear archaic. Catholics and Jews were the target of considerable sectarian and anti-immigrant hostility in parts of England until the 1950s and 1960s. Today, many ethnically English people consider those with Scottish (Cameron), Irish (Callaghan), Jewish (Mandelson) or other European ancestry to be part of the English ethnic majority. Even the BNP accepts Irish Catholics while the English Defence League (EDL), whose former leader Tommy Robinson is of Irish descent, embraces

Jews. Indeed, a prominent EDL organiser in Luton said he knew few local EDL members who were not of Irish ancestry.

Acceptance into the ethnic majority is now largely a matter of accent and racial appearance: Iain Duncan Smith (1/8 Japanese) and Boris Johnson (1/8 Turkish) are in, but Jessica Ennis, who is half Afro-Caribbean is, despite surname, accent and religion, distinguished as 'mixed race' rather than white English. One study found that those of mixed race in Britain sometimes identify, and are identified as, white, and other times as non-white. Negative events such as incarceration increase the likelihood of identifying as non-white, while positive events incline an individual towards the majority, white identity.[135] American and Brazilian studies show that how one dresses affects racial classification, as does zone of residence, with those of mixed race living in white areas more likely to identify as white.[136]

The fact that around three-quarters of those of mixed Afro-Caribbean and white background marry whites, and two-thirds of white-Asian mixed people do likewise, is telling.[137] It is doubtful that people with just one-quarter or one-eighth non-white ancestry will be distinguished as anything other than white English. Notice there are two processes at work here: boundary expansion to include formerly excluded groups like Irish Catholics, and assimilation through intermarriage resulting in the progressive absorption of outgroup individuals over generations. The Huguenots who arrived in the seventeenth century have been absorbed as has most of England's pre-1948 black population. Traces are visible only in surnames such as Gascoigne or Fletcher, or in family histories such as that of Cedric Barber, a white descendant of Samuel Johnson's freed slave Francis Barber.[138]

It is not clear that deliberate public policies greatly alter the course of assimilation or expand the scope of people's attachments. Consider, for example, that inter-ethnic marriage patterns are identical in 'multicultural' Canada and 'melting pot' America when one controls for the size and origin of ethnic minorities. Chinese are more numerous in Canada hence their intermarriage rate is lower there than in the USA; for blacks the

picture is reversed.[139] The melting of boundaries often occurs in a fit of absence of mind, in defiance of government policy, for reasons internal to both majority and minorities. The '100 per cent' Americanism assimilation crusade of the early twentieth century included ceremonies where people walked into a pot in ethnic dress and came out the other side dressed like Yankee Doodle. Yet this crusade coincided with the formation of a patchwork of ethnic neighbourhoods in many cities. The rise of ideological multiculturalism and ethnic revivalism in the 1960s occurred just as white ethnics ceased acting multiculturally – intermarrying with Protestants, moving to the suburbs and otherwise losing their culture.[140]

Likewise, in Britain, public policy played little part in the assimilation of the Irish. Irish Catholics came to be accepted because sectarianism ceased to resonate with the bulk of Scottish and English people while Ireland became an economic success, raising Irish status. More recently, official exhortations for people in Britain to think of their national identity in non-ethnic terms have only marginally blurred the boundary between majority and minority. Integration policies should focus on removing illiberal barriers to interaction – such as combining school catchments and addressing extreme ethnic isolation. Yet in a free society, trendsetters and everyday social interaction tend to set the pace of intermarriage and the location of ethnic boundaries. More important for policy makers is to monitor the pace of integration, assimilation and changes in the definition of the ethnic majority as this provides some indication of how much immigration society can comfortably absorb at a given point in time. In this respect, Demos' new Mapping Integration project represents an important step.[141]

England vs London?: the risk of Balkanisation

The continued flow of minorities from their areas of concentration towards super-diverse spots such as Newham may be sufficient to integrate minorities into a common British matrix. Certainly it appears to be the case that minority school

performance in diverse London is above the national average.[142] Some argue that proximity to co-ethnics confers informational, economic and psychological advantages on members of minority groups.[143] In the USA, the immigrant-descended 'white ethnics' in the cities of the northeast and upper mid-west experienced rapid upward mobility during the twentieth century. Their proximity to the economic dynamism of large specialised central business districts arguably facilitated their rise, as Malcolm Gladwell recounts with respect to Jewish lawyers in New York who rose from humble backgrounds. Having been shut out of 'white shoe' WASP establishment firms, they gravitated to the soon-to-be profitable mergers and acquisitions business, one of the few avenues open to them.[144]

On this view, contact with the white majority may not be necessary for social mobility and it matters little if London becomes 'majority minority'. In the USA, the white Protestant (WASP) majority comprised but a small minority of large northern cities – perhaps as little as 5–10 per cent in New York. The diverse immigrant-stock majority, largely consisting of white ethnics such as Jews, Irish or Italians, managed to achieve upward mobility despite limited contact with WASPs.[145]

One possibility is that London's minorities will achieve economic success, but the city's 'foreign' character will alienate the rest of the country – as was once true of New York and the urban northeast of the USA. London and other major cities may drift apart politically and socially from the rest of England. In the USA, the 'foreignness' of its large northeastern cities by the late nineteenth century led to a political rift with the rest of America, creating cleavages which persisted into the 1970s, with immigrant-stock voters favouring the Democrats while old-stock voters outside the cities voted Republican.[146] Social reformer Laurence Gronlund attacked America's 'overgrown cities' as early as 1884, which he insisted 'may fairly be compared to a man whose belly is steadily increasing in bulk, out of all proportion to the body, and whose legs are constantly growing thinner'.[147] Republican Congressman Edward C Little expressed this alienation well when he intoned to rapturous applause in

1920 that 'it is not best for America that her councils be dominated by semicivilized foreign colonies in Boston, New York [and] Chicago'.[148]

In America, white ethnics derided as 'beaten members of beaten breeds' by sociologist Edward A Ross in 1904 came to be included inside the circle of membership of the ethnic majority some 60 years later. In the process, the northern cities began to appear less 'foreign' to the Anglo-Protestant majority. This thawed the nation's divides somewhat, symbolised by the Catholic John F Kennedy's election in 1960. Today, the descendants of white Catholic immigrants tend to be suburban Republicans while Hispanics and blacks underpin Democratic majorities in the cities. Curiously, the political divisions thrown up by early waves of immigration have remained, even as older ethnic groups pass across the political boundary to the Republicans as they suburbanise. Perhaps one day British Bangladeshis in Surrey will vote Tory in response to a London being transformed by fresh waves of African immigration.

The foregoing suggests political cultures assimilate new groups while the old battle lines remain. Yet diversity did produce new political divisions in the USA: between 1840 and 1900 the cities became solidly Democratic while northeastern Republicanism was dealt a fatal blow. In Britain, today's ethnic change could sharpen the rift between city and countryside, London and the rest, in a manner reminiscent of America's red–blue divide. What seems to be occurring in London is akin to what took place in the *fin de siècle* northeastern USA. That is, though London is already a liberal city, it is becoming less hospitable for the Tories except in wealthy wards where west Europeans or North Americans are major immigrant groups.[149]

Whether the assimilation process can encompass those of non-white ancestry remains an open question in Britain, as in America. Likewise, the full absorption of those of non-European origin into London's professional class is not inevitable. Only time will tell if ethnic change results in a deeper political divide between London and the rest, or between urban and exurban England, akin to the polarisation present in contemporary America. Much will depend on the success of integration, which

depends in part on how quickly residential segregation declines over the coming decades. If the children and grandchildren of diverse Londoners are largely accepted as part of the ethnic majority, alienation between London and the rest of the country will be muted. Should such blending fail to take place, a more balkanised England, akin to 1920s America, could emerge.

7 Conclusions and policy recommendations

The principal policy spheres where we make recommendations are in refugee dispersal, housing, immigration and national identity.

Refugee and social tenant dispersal

We do not recommend that the Home Office disperse large numbers of refugees or local authorities relocate social housing tenants from diverse areas to homogeneously white areas with low population turnover. Generally speaking, attitudes to immigration harden as the ethnic composition of the population shifts, and soften with habituation and assimilation. Avoiding rapid shifts in people's cultural environment should be a policy goal. In this respect, dispersing refugees to heavily white areas with little prior experience of immigration is a recipe for discontent. It introduces disruption into the lives of refugees while engendering unease from white British residents unfamiliar with ethnic diversity.

When East African Asians arrived in Britain in 1971, they were sent to locations such as rural Wales, which were entirely unsuited to the desires of either refugees or hosts and led to a subsequent return to the cities. Though policy now takes prior experience of diversity into account, it remains the case that too many refugees are being dispersed to inappropriately homogeneous or close-knit areas.[150] Little wonder that in a study of white British attitudes to immigration based on Citizenship Survey data that examined opinion in 12 geographic clusters, the authors found that residents of the 'asylum dispersal area' cluster – places such as Bolton, Swansea, Portsmouth and Rotherham – expressed the highest levels of hostility: 67 per cent of residents of such zones wanted immigration reduced 'a lot'.[151]

House building

Earlier we noted that rapid ethnic change is associated with greater white hostility to immigration. Given projected increases in London's population of 1–5 million to 2050 and the need for up to 50,000 new homes per year in the greater London area,[152] there is a pressing question of where and what should be built. Cultural considerations are utterly absent from the housing debate, which is a serious oversight: these impacts should be factored into decisions alongside cost and other factors. Minorities are likely to be disproportionately represented among those taking up residence in newly built homes in Greater London as they are younger, upwardly mobile, may place less value on period homes, and have greater housing needs than others. Densification may reinforce segregation while greenfield expansion could introduce rapid ethnic shifts. Our research leads us to warn against development that radically alters the ethnic makeup of existing areas. We therefore recommend that the DCLG endorses the garden cities and self-build schemes, which help insulate existing communities from rapid ethnic change while providing similar levels of housing. We also recommend that building takes place in dispersed fashion where possible, avoiding large-scale development around existing communities which could result in major ethnic shifts and social tensions.

Sharp shifts in local ethnic composition caused by new housing development tend to increase white British threat levels. If these are viewed as being pushed by a planning inspectorate from on high, the policies may prove toxic. Indeed, they could further alienate the white British population from immigration and the political elite.[153] One woman in our Croydon focus group identified new housing with immigrants: 'In these new builds that go up... so many have to be for immigrants, or [those] on benefits.' A recent report by Alex Morton recommends expanding self-build, with half the places allocated to existing residents and half to those largely drawn from the local authority.[154] Right to Build is a sound idea insofar as it focuses on the housing needs of existing residents. It also limits the potential for rapid ethnic shifts while accommodating a gentle rise in diversity. Even in heavily white British communities, minorities, being younger, are likely to have

greater housing need and take up a disproportionate number of new places. The local authority will tend to be somewhat more diverse than homogeneous communities; this, too, will offer an outlet for gradual ethnic dispersion. Self-build thereby ensures growth while calibrating the pace of ethnic change to local conditions. Such considerations should not stand in the way of building the housing London needs, but authorities should try to mitigate the effects the best they can.

Transient areas and those with some experience of diversity are able to absorb higher levels of diversity than close-knit, homogeneous places. This also needs to be taken into consideration when planning new housing. Garden cities should form a central pillar of new housing development as they ensure a mix of population from the start, without a memory of former ethnic homogeneity, while diverting rapid change away from long-term residents of existing communities.

Immigration

Reducing immigration will reduce ethnic change, but not as much as one might think. A shift from European to global immigration, as mooted by UKIP, may well have the opposite effect in the long term because the second generation of European immigrants has a faster rate of assimilation and acceptance. As noted, much of the momentum behind minority growth has to do with natural increase and the younger age structure of minority groups compared with the white British. The children of European immigrants often become white British through assimilation whereas non-Europeans tend only to become part of the ethnic majority through the slower process of intermarriage. From this point of view, UKIP's policy of replacing European inflows with skilled non-Europeans could exacerbate rather than ease the concerns of its voting base.[155]

Britishness revisited?: national identity policy

Official versions of national identity, each entailing a distinct approach to incorporating minorities, have varied considerably

in Britain. Under Tony Blair's Labour Government, the initial symbolic emphasis was on a mild multiculturalism, which lauded British diversity.[156] Following a hostile popular response to the Parekh report into the future of multiethnic Britain,[157] as well as the upheavals of the 2001 Mill Town riots, rhetoric shifted away from multiculturalism towards British civic nationalism. Gordon Brown, Jack Straw and David Blunkett were the most prominent Labour politicians calling for a new British civic nationalism, but many in their party concurred. In the media, centrist writers such as David Goodhart and Ted Cantle echoed this call for integration over difference.[158] Meanwhile, the rising BNP challenged multiculturalists and civic nationalists in seeking an ethnic British nation reserved for its 'indigenous people', a category which for them now included the Irish, though arguably not the Jewish people.

The current consensus favours civic nationalism. Multiculturalism and ethnic nationalism are frowned upon though they appeal to many. The debate within civic nationalism in turn swings between a pro-immigration wing, represented by figures such as Trevor Phillips, who believe in the power of Britain to win the affections of large numbers of newcomers, and immigration sceptics such as David Goodhart, who are more doubtful about the pace of integration. A related pole of debate pits those advocating 'thick' conceptions of Britishness against those who defend but a 'thin' minimum. David Miller is one who calls for a 'thicker' national identity in which citizens agree on a deep set of symbols and memories even at the risk of offending those who do not identify with contested episodes such as the rise of the British Empire.[159] Others – Gordon Brown's 'British Values' comes to mind – call for commitment to a thin, inoffensive set of common threads. In the extreme, thinning the content of nationalism leads to an approach akin to Jürgen Habermas' constitutional patriotism, in which ties between citizens are pared down to a common attachment to the abstract principles contained in legal documents. The latter dovetails with multiculturalism and is broadly rejected by most politicians and commentators.

But why cannot Britishness take on both thick and thin forms to answer to the needs of different individuals? One could

query whether any one-size-fits-all, state-driven model of identity is appropriate today. We have argued elsewhere that people approach the nation from different ethnic, social, ideological and geographic angles.[160] These are lenses through which individuals glimpse the nation's identity – its past, present and future. A white Briton in a market town will see the country as seamlessly connected to her English ethnicity; a mixed-race suburbanite may view it as a melting pot, a futuristic nation-in-the-making. Neither can readily identify with multiculturalism. On the other hand, a Somali immigrant in Streatham or Scot from Dundee might see Britain as a civic outer layer to their identity. For them Britain is a multicultural taste whose flavour comes from its parts, even if irreducibly British symbols such as the monarchy and NHS also exist.

If national identity is a complex system that emerges from the interactions of individuals, associations and a fragmented media rather than being delivered by the state, official versions of national identity are bound to be frustrated. Instead, we need to contemplate a world where the nation can be multicultural, civic and ethnic, all at once; a world where politicians recognise the legitimacy of competing dreams. For instance, a prime minister might praise the mix of cultures in London one moment, the magic of integration and intermarriage the next, and still comment favourably, as did John Major, on the settled continuity of England's villages and green suburbs. Each message will be eagerly received by those tuned to its frequency and ignored by others. People generally hear what they want to hear, and all form attachments to the whole in their own way.

Political parties thrive on this selectivity, adopting a 'franchise' form of organisation which mobilises groups with widely differing views behind a common aim.[161] Consider Muslim traditionalists in East London and trade unionists in Lancashire. They overlook their differences to coalesce behind Labour's anti-Tory message. In Northern Ireland, the 'constructive ambiguity' of the Good Friday Agreement permitted each side to convince themselves the Agreement was in their communal interest.[162] Some aspects of Britishness are non-negotiable: women's rights, freedom of expression and other

basic liberties. So long as these are sacrosanct, politicians can remain elusive about the essence of national identity, validating wide differences in the way the nation is perceived. People can form attachments to as many different Englands or Britains as they wish. This makes it easier for them to commit to the whole so the process becomes less forced and unnatural. A top-down approach seeking to instil a defined set of characteristics, by contrast, flattens and alienates minorities who wish to maintain their culture and white British who view their English ethnicity and their nation as organically connected. The sense that ethnically English people have been forced to deny their collective memory to make way for an abstract, milquetoast Britishness accounts, in part, for their current angst.

A future for English ethnicity?

We recommend an official approach to national identity that simultaneously validates ethnic, civic and multicultural visions. Within society, however, the task of propounding a positive sense of Englishness remains. Those who consider the topic tend to stress civic conceptions of England in response to Scottish assertiveness.[163] Yet an English Parliament, St George's Day or the English football team cannot fully address the concerns that prompt many ethnically English people to oppose immigration and support parties such as UKIP or the BNP. People may articulate their malaise as a crisis of *national* identity but it is a mistake to think civic Englishness is the antidote. What underlies white disorientation is a deeper fear over the loss of a community of people who share an *ethnically* English perspective on the nation. We must therefore engage with thorny questions which underlie majority disquiet: what does it mean to be white British in an increasingly diverse society? Is there a place for those who feel British through their ancestry and memories?

In short, those of white British ethnicity must see a future for their ethnic group, not just the political nation. Many accept it is unrealistic to expect ethnic minorities to abandon their ethnicity as a condition of integration. Many British Sikhs or Afro-Caribbeans, for example, hope their group will persist in

Britain into the future, even if they integrate into a common British identity. Likewise, many of English ancestry may not wish to subsume their ethnicity into a purely political identity: they view their political Britishness through an ethnically English lens, and both identities remain important even if for some they seem to blend together seamlessly. This means many will want a nation in which English ethnicity is not destined for the scrapheap of history. Multiculturalism has tended to overlook the role of majorities, though some multicultural theorists, notably Tariq Modood, now recognise this.[164] British civic nationalists, however, continue to take the view that English ethnicity should be sidelined in favour of a British or English civic national project. While ethnic nationalism should certainly be condemned, a non-intrusive multiple nationalism in which English ethnicity remains vibrant is a legitimate goal.

We live in a world of jet planes where one part of the world is ageing and wealthy while the other is youthful and poor, so immigration is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. What is urgently needed therefore is a positive view of English ethnicity in an age of migration: how today's Englishmen and women should think about themselves and their descendants. One possible solution is liberal ethnicity – a form of ethnic identity which absorbs outsiders through intermarriage while retaining a relatively fixed set of myths and symbols.[165]

People whom we currently define as 'mixed race' are projected to be the largest group in England by the end of this century.[166] History is replete with mixed-background nationalist figures such as the half-Spanish Irish nationalist Eamon De Valera, mixed-race black American intellectual WEB Du Bois or part-Indonesian Geert Wilders in the Netherlands. In other societies, the loss of particular traits, such as the Irish or Welsh language, ignited a more self-conscious project of identity.[167] Therefore if history is a guide, England's mixed-race group will probably identify with their English rather than non-English lineage as they grow in numbers and confidence. The idea that a more inclusive English ethnic group, along with their traditions and memories, can endure as the majority could offer many white British a greater sense of comfort, optimism and

continuity. It offers an important identity choice to mixed-race individuals and to minorities who believe their children or grandchildren are likely to blend into the majority group.[168] In the USA, the noted immigration historian John Higham remarked that immigration worries waxed and waned in step with the majority's confidence in its ability to assimilate newcomers. So long as the ethnic majority accepts minorities as fully equal and legitimate members of the British nation, a more optimistic majority ethnicity should improve ethnic relations in the country. This is not a project the Government can or should embrace – as an arbiter of justice it must remain neutral. Yet it is a communal vision that individuals, groups and media outlets in civil society could endorse. Many white British, mixed-race people and assimilation-minded minorities might embrace it. As long as this ethnic majority respects the rights of minorities it could prove an engine of integration, helping alleviate popular anxieties in an age of mass mobility.

Glossary

Civic nationalism Political theory that national identity is important, but nations should be defined inclusively, in political or ideological rather than ethnic or cultural terms. Historically associated with the Enlightenment concept of nationality.

Complexity theory A theory that large-scale patterns such as nations emerge from below rather than being orchestrated from above. Machines can be turned off by flicking a single switch but a complex system such as a forest cannot be destroyed by eliminating any single part. Like a flock of birds, individuals in a society need not possess a common vision of the whole for the entity to cohere and act as a unit.

Constructive ambiguity The idea that politicians should be imprecise about particular policies or narratives in order that competing actors can each read a policy in a way favourable to them. Frequently used in relation to peace agreements such as the Good Friday Agreement where protagonists held diametrically opposed views on many policy issues.

Contact theory Theory that contact between ethnic groups leads to more positive attitudes towards an outgroup. A leading exponent of the theory is social psychologist Gordon Allport.

Ethnic change A form of political demography in which certain ethnic groups increase their share of the population while others decrease their share. This can occur even if both groups are growing or declining in absolute terms. Ethnic change is affected by immigration, emigration, birth and death rates, and age structure.

Ethnic English Those who believe their ancestors have lived in England for centuries – the white British population of England, less those who identify as Scots, Welsh, Cornish or Irish. The ethnic English comprise approximately 73 per cent of England's population.

Ethnic group A community whose members believe themselves to be descended from the same ancestors; who are associated with a loosely defined 'homeland'; and who possess one or more differentiating aspects of common culture such as language, skin colour or religion.

Ethnic nationalism View that nations are defined by their ethnic essence as a community of shared ancestry, culture and folk memories. Historically associated with the Romantic concept of nationality.

Garden cities Policy focusing on building new self-sufficient communities rather than building housing developments around existing communities.

Index of dissimilarity A measure of segregation. Denotes the extent to which two groups are evenly distributed across sub-units of a territory. Not generally affected by group size. A small group such as the Jews could have a low index of isolation and a high index of dissimilarity because even though they are concentrated in certain areas, they are too small to predominate demographically in such areas.

Index of isolation A measure of segregation. Quantifies how much residential exposure a typical member of one group has with members of other group(s) in a particular unit. This is affected by group size so a large group such as the white British tend to be more isolated from other groups than Sikhs in almost every ward even if white British are evenly distributed in particular areas; they have a low index of dissimilarity.

Local authority A geographical census division with a population typically ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 people.

Middle layer super output area (MSOA) A geographical census division with a population ranging from 5,000 to 15,000 people, averaging 7,700 in England and Wales.

Multiculturalism A political theory which holds that the identity of a state stems from its ethnic and national components rather than the whole, and that these should enjoy cultural recognition and at least some political rights.

Nation A community of territory and memory with at least some political aspirations.

Political demography The politics of population change.

Self-build Policy in which local residents rather than developers are granted permission to build homes.

State A set of institutions, possessing a monopoly on the use of force in a clearly-demarcated territory.

Threat theory Theory that contact between ethnic groups leads to more negative attitudes towards an outgroup. A leading exponent of the theory is political scientist Robert Putnam.

Ward A geographical census division with a population typically ranging from 1,000 to 20,000 people, averaging 6,600 in England and Wales.

White nationalism A form of ethnic nationalism which holds that a European 'white' phenotype is a key communal tradition and boundary symbol.

Appendix: Methodology

Findings are based on quantitative analysis of several large datasets, including the Citizenship Surveys, *Understanding Society* (the UK Household Longitudinal Study; UKHLS), British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), ONS Longitudinal Study (ONS LS),[169] the 2011 ONS Census and local government election results from the University of Plymouth. We also commissioned a specially designed YouGov tracking survey, with helpful assistance from Joe Twyman at YouGov, and undertook four focus groups, two in greater Birmingham and two in greater London.

Quantitative analysis

We use multilevel analysis of survey data, a modelling technique that nests individuals within geographic units, to see how the characteristics of geographic units affect individual responses. For instance, we examine how individuals' views on immigration or their party support is affected by living in diverse wards or local authorities. Our main sources for attitudes to immigration are four waves of the Citizenship Surveys for 2007–11, sponsored by the Home Office and DCLG. The surveys also ask about inter-ethnic friendship and mixing as well as perceptions of community.

A number of the datasets we use are also longitudinal, tracking the same individuals over time. This is true for the ONS Longitudinal Study, the BHPS and UKHLS. This is extremely important when identifying the characteristics of people who move from diverse to relatively white areas, and vice-versa. The ONS Longitudinal Study is a 1 per cent sample of the Census of England and Wales for each wave since 1971. It thus contains some hundreds of thousands of respondents in each wave but

does not ask questions about attitudes or voting behaviour. The BHPS ran annually from 1991 to 2008, with a sample size of around 10,000 per wave. Its successor is the UKHLS, which connects to the BHPS sample, but adds many others to reach a total of 40,000 people per wave. Though a smaller sample than ONS Longitudinal Study, it contains a richer set of attitudinal questions, including items on party support. The first three waves of UKHLS contain approximately 1,000 UKIP and BNP supporters.

We commissioned a series of questions on a YouGov tracker poll of August 2013, which combined questions on people's history of moving with their views on immigration, race and politics. We acknowledge the input and support of Joe Twyman of YouGov. This furnished a sample of 1,900 individuals, including some 1,600 white British respondents. It enabled us to bridge the gap between existing datasets, which tend to either focus on mobility or immigration attitudes, but not both.

In addition, we performed ecological analysis of 2010, 2011 and 2012 local government results, kindly shared by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher of the University of Plymouth, against 2011 Census data. This enabled us to examine a much larger sample of UKIP and BNP voters than was possible in surveys.

Focus groups

In order to get beneath the quantitative data to the meanings people attach to survey responses, we commissioned four focus groups, two in greater London and two in greater Birmingham. We sought to hold focus groups in diverse and non-diverse wards within diverse metropolitan areas to try to weigh the relative importance of contact, habituation and fear effects on majority immigration opinion. This led us to focus on the Croydon–Bromley boundary in South London, holding a focus group in each location. In Birmingham we chose diverse Lozells and homogeneous Sutton Coldfield as our locations. Participants were screened to focus only on non-university-

educated white British individuals. Claudia Wood organised the focus groups and led one. Ian Wybron led two and Jonathan Birdwell conducted another. At the focus groups, we also conducted short surveys designed to match to existing datasets. We probed questions of exit, voice and accommodation, attempting to gauge the interconnections between white working-class mobility, opinion and voting behaviour in ethnically disparate contexts.

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Opposition to immigration in England and Wales, at around 80 per cent, is high by both international and historical standards – it regularly tops surveys as the political issue respondents are most concerned about. It is partly this concern which explains the success of parties like UKIP, and the BNP before them. While opposition cuts across ethnic lines, levels are highest among the white British majority. But what is driving this opposition, how else does it manifest itself and what can be done to remedy it?

To find out, *Changing Places* takes as its subject the white British majority, seeking to understand their attitudes and motivations as regards immigration, integration and ethnic diversity. Drawing on original quantitative analysis of several large datasets, including the Citizenship Surveys, *Understanding Society*, the British Household Panel Survey, the ONS Longitudinal Study and the 2011 Census, it investigates attitudes, residency patterns and voting behaviour to build up a picture of the white British response to ethnic change.

The report includes a number of findings: chief among them being that white British opposition to immigration is lower in locales with more minorities and immigrants; and that while white British people have left diverse areas, this is not due to discomfort or even racism on their behalf. It then draws on these findings to make recommendations on planning, housing and refugee dispersal, with the end of building a more integrated society.

Eric Kaufmann is Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. Dr Gareth Harris is a Research Associate at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University