“In a multicultural Europe, we need to discover a new modus vivendi...”

ESSAYS ON INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION

Edited by Peter Harrington

DEMOS

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Contents

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Introduction

This century has not so far been kind to multiculturalism. Over the last decade, commentators have jostled to pronounce the policy dead, broken or obsolete. Politicians, meanwhile, talk frequently of 'celebrating our ethnic and cultural diversity' – before adding that we need to 'do more to strengthen our shared values'. Apparently those sticking up for multiculturalism are left, quite literally, in the minority.

At the same time, the debate has become more complex, and more nuanced. New terms like 'cohesion' have emerged to join old ones like integration or assimilation. Inevitably, attitudes are refracted through political events. One of the effects of 7 July 2005 in London, and 9/11, has been to make many conversations about immigration and integration a proxy for doubts about Muslim integration, or even the compatibility of Islam and modernity. This theme is visited by several of the essays in this volume, most directly by Naema Tahir, who looks to the arts as a catalyst for Muslim integration.

But terrorist attacks are not the only source of the rancour that seems now to inject public and private discourse on this topic. Local politics loom larger than ever. Issues such as access to housing and health have raised questions about the balance between the value of open societies and the importance of national redistributive public services. In continental Europe, the trend has been more pronounced. The rise in support for far-right parties has been attributed at least in part to the failure of mainstream politicians to soothe voters' anxieties about immigration. This poses a particular challenge for the Left, which has yet to articulate a convincing alternative to the tougher rhetoric on the Right – precisely the task that Liam Byrne's sets out to address in his essay. What is clear is that alongside legitimate questions about the limits of tolerance, a

caricature of multicultural policies in traditionally liberal and open societies has emerged, and led to much misunderstanding.

It was against this challenging backdrop that Demos and the Dutch Embassy in London joined forces in early 2008, hosting a series of discussions about integration in our two countries. The alliance was particularly appropriate, given that Britain and the Netherlands represent Europe's most totemic experiments in European multiculturalism. The aim was to explore, through comparison and contrast, the complex path both countries have trodden in their quest to accommodate diversity, and the lessons learned along the way. The discussions were structured around the link between integration and different forms of citizen participation – cultural, economic and political – through which integration is often fostered.

We brought together thinkers and writers and politicians, and invited the speakers to contribute to this collection of essays. The conversations generated three dominant themes, which are fleshed out in the essays that follow.

First, there was consensus on the importance of identity as a process rather than an outcome – this was drawn out especially by Paul Schnabel. Secondly, Britain and the Netherlands are as different as they are similar. Although both countries have taken an open and liberal approach to diversity, their histories and minorities are very distinct and, as Catherine Fieschi argues, Britain has adopted a much looser and ad-hoc approach to diversity.

Finally, integration debates have placed heavy emphasis on cultural and economic participation but too little on political representation. For Sunny Hundal, the issue here is as much a general democratic deficit as the lack of minority representation. European governments and institutions, paralysed by a crisis of legitimacy, are losing their nerve and succumbing to the temptation to legislate integration, a reflex critiqued by Gus Casely-Hayford.

But though those governing us have woken up to the need to address rumbling discontent, they have yet to find a language to so without alienating minorities. The fruit of the collaboration which are visible in the essays do not represent, or pretend to

represent, the answers to the complex questions thrown up by the interaction of identity, culture, nationhood and migration. But they do sharpen the questions, and make it clear that even if the language of multiculturalism is under attack, its animating mission remains as vital as ever.

Peter Harrington

No nationalism please, we're British

Catherine Fieschi

Landing in the UK 15 years ago from Canada, a place dominated by a variety of citizenship and national identity debates, I breathed a sigh of relief that no one here was sitting around counting identities on a pin-head. To my foreign eyes there was no debate because Britain seemed self-defining – with unspoken codes, unspoken consonants, unspoken covenants and an unspoken but wilful commitment to living together in what seemed like awkward grace, if not always harmony. For me, the combination of my felt foreignness and the ease, indeed the benevolent amusement, with which others greeted me, were proof of the UK's self-assurance. Britishness was so alive and well, that there was no need for the word.

Beneath the general attitude, I was to discover, lay a distinct combination. Pragmatism, on the one hand – with its corresponding suspicion of enshrined codes, abstract ideologies, and other concoctions that were all deemed too continental (and effete) or too American (and grandiloquent) for the no-nonsense Brits. In the face of Europe in particular, the conspicuous absence of nationalism and the light touch patriotism of the monarchy seemed like a bulwark against the excesses of continental nationalism that led to the disasters of the twentieth century. And on the other hand, a version of liberalism that placed both individuals and communities, rather than nationhood, at its heart.

It is striking to compare the UK with the Netherlands, because we share so much – both open, pragmatic, traditionally cosmopolitan, post-colonial, mercantile societies. Yet our accommodation to difference, our approach to living together – or side by side – is very different.

The multiculturalism adopted in the UK (from the 1990s onwards) was a way of reconciling that pragmatism about living

together in practice rather than in theory, with the UK's striking faith in communities, neighbourhood initiatives and cooperatives (the vibrant civil society that had always been counted upon to provide the societal glue required to live together in a land of unwritten rules). Multiculturalism as it was practiced in the UK was therefore never enshrined as a doctrine, let alone the national ideology that it is in Canada for example, but rather as a set of principles that encouraged the celebration of diversity, dialogue between cultures and a measure of minority protection that built on the various versions of the Race Relations Act and the British Nationality Act of 1948 (and 1981). Above all it was deemed loose enough to do nothing that would rigidify a predominantly ad-hoc system of accommodation to difference. In the Netherlands living together in such a small territory has traditionally been a mix of convention codes and parallel institutions. The strength of the pillars and habit of indigenous segmentation always made for smooth internal accommodation, but more resistance to exogenous accommodation. It is interesting to reflect on the role of codes in each country – implicit in Britain; explicit and enshrined in the consociational system in the Netherlands. A quick way of summing it up might be that the UK dealt with change from without in an ad hoc manner – loose, communal accommodation; whereas the Netherlands, because it had to deal with internal (religious) accommodation, constructed a system that was internally focused, thereby leading – for a long time – to an ignoring of any immigration.

So what went wrong? Given these rather loose arrangements, it is worth asking what concatenation of events accounts for what seems like a reversal of public and government attitudes on these issues. Why has the debate on national identity become so much more prevalent?

For the UK, one obvious answer is the London bombings of 7 July 2005. Whilst 9/11 and 7/7 are often uttered in the same breath (and bear obvious similarities), the 7/7 events have been depicted as a wake up call for the UK. Beyond foreign policy matters, the London bombings (and their aftermath) are seen by some as symptomatic the UK's policies of minority management

and integration. A perception, in fact, of mismanagement – or at the very least *lack* of management – of community relations. The importance of these events is not to be under-estimated. However, it is worth keeping in mind that long before the 7/7 bombings, long before 9/11, the riots in Bradford in 2001 and Birmingham in 2005 and the quiet rise of the far right in certain communities pointed to a growing malaise. A malaise of such proportions that Trevor Philips, then Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, did not hesitate to accuse multiculturalism of allowing the UK to 'sleepwalk into segregation' – and this before the London bombings. Finally, after the Labour government's devolution programme (which saw Scotland and Wales acquire more law-making powers from 1998), the re-emergence of questions concerning what, if anything, holds Britain together might be more understandable. As a Scott himself, Gordon Brown made much (even as Chancellor of the Exchequer) of the Britishness agenda from 2004, and from then on the discussion of a national identity became subsumed under the Britishness debate. Thus since 2004, but more obviously so since 2005, the political landscape in the UK has been dominated by the twin worries of Britishness on the one hand and the role of multiculturalism on the other. For the Netherlands, the rise of Pim Fortuyn's party, his assassination and the subsequent assassination of film-maker Theo van Gogh marked a significant turn in both public opinion and official attitudes. But as chronicled by Ian Buruma in his essay Murder in Amsterdam, the tide had long begun to turn in the Netherlands against the system's incapacity to deal with change imparted from the outside.

Given the UK's multiple constitutive nations, Britishness seemed to be the only possible interpretation of a national identity and it was initially perceived as a loose enough concept (in other words capable of accommodating diversity) to co-exist with an allegiance to multiculturalism. But pushed as it was by officialdom, the conceit succumbed to its own vagueness when its adversaries demanded that it be defined. Asking 'what makes Britain British?' promptly pointed to the dangers of pinning down something as rich and as fluid as a cultural and political

tradition—particularly in a place that has taken pride in avoiding such smoky debates. With survey after survey indicating a decline in the proportion of people who consider themselves British (down from 52 per cent in 1997 to 44 per cent in 2007 according to the British Social Attitudes survey), some saw an alarming decline in the primary allegiance to the nation-state and attendant institutions. One influential thesis that has fuelled much of the government's subsequent policy-making on the topic is David Goodhart's (editor of the monthly *Prospect* magazine of the broad liberal left). In a series of articles in the Guardian newspaper in February 2004 and then subsequently in a 2005 Demos pamphlet entitled *Progressive Nationalism*, Goodhart refers to the loss of solidarity engendered by what he refers to as the 'discomfort of strangers'. The thesis is a simple one – by valuing difference over shared values, we risk undermining the solidarity upon which our welfare states are built and thereby destroying one of the left's major achievements. An exhortation for the left to dip its toe into a debate that it has traditionally shunned and found distasteful, the thesis has gained currency on the liberal left and in policy circles.

Much of the debate in the UK and the Netherlands has been cast as a trade off between the costs and the benefits of openness – economic benefits as potentially undermining solidarity; recognition of cultural diversity as curtailing the possibility of shared liberal values. In an open, liberal economy, it is difficult to make a case for a more closed, less 'laissez-faire' cultural and political solution to diversity. In the UK, while the debate seems to pit proponents of multiculturalism (who argue that we've not had enough 'real' multiculturalism) against fierce Britishness defenders, most people are somewhere in the middle – aware of the trade offs, but resolutely against an assimilationist set of policies, or even a rigid integrationism. For most Brits, multiculturalism and diversity are an unmistakable if difficult part of what it means to be truly British.

The well-researched and much agonised over tension between liberalism and the communitarianism that is often at the heart of multiculturalism is nowhere near resolved. But the conversation

around shared values and the commitment to liberalism has begun. It suggests that both nations know that openness is their defining feature, and growing the kind of political and social resilience to remain so needs to be top of the agenda.

Catherine Fieschi is a writer and academic, and director of Counterpoint.

Nothing new under the sun?

Paul Scheffer

History sheds light on many of the issues surrounding present-day immigration. We often find that the problems faced by Polish and Italian immigrants in early twentieth-century America are present here and now in Europe's major cities. The gap between parents and children, for example, is a classic theme in the history of migration. Furthermore, migrants embarking on their journey have always tended to be poor and relatively uneducated. Nor is there anything new about migrants attaching special significance to their religion. Often the first thing they did in the United States was to build new houses of worship, so that they could retain some link to their country of origin.

Could it be that, essentially, there is nothing new under the sun? No. Old and new migration may have many things in common, but there are also considerable differences. Something genuinely new is taking place.

First of all, while religion has always been a major factor in migration, Islam is a new phenomenon in the Western world. Before very long, there will be 20 million Muslims from migrant families in the countries of the European Union. This is a 'challenge' in every imaginable respect. For the first time, Muslim believers are confronted with the question of how to be a minority in a secular society, and their host countries are searching for ways of dealing with a religion that, outside the Balkans and Turkey, has played little part in the modern history of Europe. This makes the migration of Muslims unprecedented, and there are no guarantees that Islam will find a natural place for itself in the Western world. The controversy about Islam that has erupted since 9/11 does not help.

In areas where Islam is dominant – such as the Arab world – religion, culture, and politics are intertwined. But in modern societies those three domains have grown apart. If Islam aspires

to become a more 'natural' part of European life, it will have to extricate itself from the culture of migrants' countries of origin, if only to prevent specific customs from acquiring a sacred aura and thus being treated as eternal truths.

To become compatible with liberal and secular societies, Islam will have to give up its aim of regulating every aspect of life. There is no need to abandon Islam as a spiritual tradition; the question is how Muslims are to conduct themselves as a religious minority in a democratic environment. Serious reconsideration will eventually be necessary, but for the most part this has not yet taken place. Apostasy is not accepted; those who openly turn their backs on Islam suffer ostracism or worse. Nor does the average Muslim truly accept religious pluralism. All too often, the mosque is a place where other beliefs and believers are condemned.

The arrival of a new religious faith should also prompt host societies to take a fresh look at freedom of religion. Numerous countries have arrangements that are difficult to reconcile with the separation of church and state. Examples include the church tax levied in Germany, the official status of the Church of England, state-funded religious education in the Netherlands, and the crucifixes on display in Italian courts and classrooms. Only by rethinking the relationship between church and state can we respond effectively to the arrival of Islam.

Old and new migration differ in another respect too. There is nothing new about the poverty of most migrants, but the high rates of joblessness among migrant communities in Western Europe are unprecedented. Generous social security systems are part of the reason why many migrants do not have paid work. The conjunction of mass immigration and the welfare state is unique; history provides no comparable examples. The results are plain for all to see. Large groups of migrants have slipped into dependence. A social group that should be dynamic – immigrants have always been survivors, full of initiative – has become the most inert segment of the population.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali has observed that for migrants 'to survive it is not absolutely necessary for them to adapt to Dutch society. The process of modernisation can thus grind to a halt in a welfare

situation, where people on the margins of society go on clinging to values that stand in the way of their own emancipation.' And sure enough, the subsidised isolation of all those migrant families has proven an enormous obstacle – for them, their children and society as a whole. The enterprising spirit of those who left their homes to earn a living in a faraway land has been smothered by a society that tries to protect people from every conceivable risk.

In Amsterdam, for example, sixty percent of Moroccan and Turkish men over forty are jobless or have been branded 'unfit for work' on medical grounds. In a comparative study of first and second-generation migrants in the education system and labour market, the American researcher John Mollenkopf came to the conclusion that in both areas Amsterdam scores considerably lower than New York, where more than ninety percent of first-generation immigrants are in the workforce. Mollenkopf shows that the high degree of inactivity among Turkish and Moroccan migrants has led to 'a polarisation between productive, employed natives and unproductive, unemployed immigrant minorities'. If large-scale migration is justified by the contribution immigrants make to their new society, then long-term unemployment clearly weakens that justification.

It is no coincidence that the welfare state is less developed in traditional countries of immigration such as the United States, where in the 1990s, moreover, initiatives were taken to restrict immigrants' eligibility for public benefits. Europe could take the same approach, but it might be better to interpret the high level of joblessness among migrants as an invitation to ask fundamental questions about our welfare state. Why are so many people – not just immigrants but many others too – being left on the sidelines? Apparently, the welfare state in its current form creates dependence and undermines personal responsibility.

Finally, there is a third major contrast between old and new migration. It is not surprising that first-generation migrants are still consumed by thoughts of their country of origin; this is in the nature of all immigration. Irish-Americans were always deeply engaged with their old country's struggle for independence and later the undeclared civil war in Northern

Ireland. Likewise, German-Americans have remained profoundly affected by the fortunes of their fatherland, and during the First World War their ongoing relationship with Germany had dramatic consequences for them. After the war, they paid a high price for their neutrality. For people known to be of German descent, life became difficult, and many changed their names.

None of this is new. But modern communications technology and greater opportunities for budget travel have made it easier for migrants to maintain ties with their countries of origin. These days, migrant groups are sometimes described as transnational communities, whose members are present in more than one society at once. While in the old days immigration was quite often a final farewell, today it is more like a commute, though more often virtual than physical. Immigration in the age of modern communication is a new phenomenon.

It is often suggested that an inward-looking community is not necessarily a problem; consider the Chinese in Amsterdam, Orthodox Jews in Antwerp, or Sikhs in London. As long as such groups remain fairly small, the motto 'In isolation lies our strength' – preached by Protestant political leaders in the nineteenth-century Netherlands – may apply. But in cities where approximately half the population now consists of migrants and their families, this attitude creates a collection of closed communities, forming an obstacle to a shared democratic culture.

It is well known among historians of migration that the longer a community has been in a country, the more spouses come from outside the group. But will this trend continue in the future or will transnational relationships become more prevalent? The evidence that new migrants have closer ties to their countries of origin is easy to come by: three-quarters of the Dutch-born children of Turkish and Moroccan migrants take a spouse from their parents' country. To a great degree, their parents push or even force them to do so. Marrying within one's own community is not, in itself, unusual, but the large number of transnational unions is. Mixed marriages are the exception – as they once were between religious communities. An increase in intermarriage would be a sign of ethnic détente.

With all these changes in the context of migration – the coming of Islam as a new European religion, the rise of the welfare state and the increase in cross-border communication – the integration process will no longer necessarily conform neatly to the old pattern of three generations at most. Some commentators have begun speaking of 'the one-and-a-half generation' to make the sluggish nature of this process more vivid. The Dutch government's leading advisory body shares this sceptical view: 'It is questionable whether the cycle will culminate in a third and subsequent generations that are fully assimilated into society if the second generation has not made sufficient progress.'

But even if the integration process is completed in three generations, we are talking about a span of fifty to sixty years. That may not be a long period in the history books, but it can certainly determine the course of a human life. This makes it less obvious that integration is mainly a matter of time. Patience and resignation, therefore, are ill-advised. Europe needs to urgently seek a new *modus vivendi*.

Paul Scheffer is a Dutch author and academic.

Learning to let go

Augustus Casely-Hayford

One of London's cultural highlights of 2007 was undoubtedly Doris Salcedo's Shibboleth at Tate Modern; an 167 metre long crack that extended the length of the Turbine Hall. Just before it was unveiled Salcedo said that it was a work that was intended to shift perceptions of the world we live in, to remind us that the scale and significance of the gallery's architecture is undermined by a past of discrimination and tension between peoples that sits beneath the surface of modernity; 'Shibboleth represents borders, the experience of segregation, … so this piece is a negative space.'

Whilst I stood looking at it for the first time, I thought how strange that even as we slip into recession, after fifteen years of growth, as a nation Britain is wealthier and healthier than ever before. The British have a lot to feel proud and optimistic about; our language is the international language of the arts and commerce, and like our history it ties us into an international narrative more profoundly than any other nation on earth. Yet, we seem to be manifesting the sociological dysfunction of a country under siege and in depression; a rise in our perception of anti-social behaviour, an actual rise in reported racist attacks and a growth in our distrust of foreigners. The last time that the far-right were able to double their vote in a local election was in 1931 at the height of a huge global downturn.

This has happened whilst the Government has found it necessary to propose British values classes for children, British culture tests for naturalising immigrants and it is looking increasingly likely that we will soon all be carrying identity cards encoded with bio-metrics to prove our Britishness whenever we are asked. Almost without public debate we have begun to change the relationship between culture and nationhood, between patriotism and citizenship. If we do not actively

subscribe to the new Britishness, some legislation, some policy or ambient pressure will seek us out and ask us why. If the early twenty-first century politics is characterised as the left having won the argument on social politics and the right for economic, the participation and integration debate is one of the areas in which the old ideological tensions still has the potential to polarise and inspire deep passion. The current Labour Government has tried to forge policy on participation and integration to build social cohesion, to create terms for an acceptable level of integration that are mediated by the state with sanctions for those who resist.

Government asking questions about Britishness has made it acceptable for others to begin to express views that they might have otherwise kept for themselves. Martin Amis has made a number of recent critical observations about Muslims and Islam that would have once provoked a tempering reaction from ministers, but barely caused a stir among the mainstream British intelligentsia. Rod Liddle, once a producer of 'Today' (Britain's most important radio news programme,) can today quite happily write, 'Islamophobia, count me in' knowing that there would be little backlash.

The flip-side of forcing young people to consider the value of Britishness in an atmosphere of ambient hostility to certain kinds of diversity, is that our national cultural institutions have been forced to open out and reconsider their programmes and staff in the context of the new sociology. As a minority ethnic curator, I have witnessed positive changes in our national museum and gallery sector, in the area of inclusion, during the last few years that I thought would have been inconceivable five years ago – but none of them go nearly far enough. We still structurally exclude particular people and yet we expect them to willingly sign up to our national narrative.

We are forging a narrow conduit of inclusivity with little tenable or reasonable explanation. We are not like the Dutch or the Benelux nations who have argued more convincingly that their sense of nationhood is under threat from European homogenisation. The size of the British population, the ubiquity of the English language and the huge conglomerated cultural

impact of British artists should enable us to demonstrate huge cultural confidence, rather than the concerning habit that we are developing of trying to legislate patriotism and cultural confidence into the national consciousness. As a nation Britain needs to let go; we must accept that in trying to narrow, shape and legislate our sense of Britishness and cultural inclusion we are creating a counter-creative atmosphere that is de facto exclusive.

Britain, led by our government, is developing a taste for trying to control and build super-cultural narratives; we are starting to talk about *excellence, cultural standards, The Arts, Britishness* as though it was possible to curate or control value or content in national culture. That might have been conceivable in the 1950s, but the relationship between culture and nationhood has changed. The British cultural sector of the twenty-first century will have to work with communities, with its population to earn their participation.

The fluidity of contemporary identity and the dynamism of the cultural space in the digital age means that British citizens, living in the British Isles, can choose to affiliate themselves to cultural communities on the other side of the earth in meaningful ways. As modern nation states we have to work with that proclivity, giving people the flexible spaces to renegotiate new senses of themselves within our borders, or we will be overwhelmed by the change in the way that individuals consider identity. The discrete power of the individual can be conglomerated in ways that do not involve government, corporate finance or multi-nationals. We now, almost individually, have the power to create our own international platforms (as Al Qaeda have shown) that can defy or even devastate the most powerful cultures. It is a further erosion of established notions of modernity; there is no longer a single narrative into which to integrate, one interface through which to do it, no single belief system with which we must comply or participate, no single frame through which we read the world, no space in which we all feel a need to participate, in so many issues no absolute dualism of good and evil, no East and West, no Left and Right - but instead a complex sea of changing and

intersecting sociologies that collide and collapse into each other. Individuals may choose to participate in debate at their own level of negotiation; permission to engage, or rules of engagement can no longer be meaningfully mediated by the state or a narrow channel of organisations. There is a larger and more complex framework of engagement that no single agency can control.

We cannot curate or legislate participation, as nations once did. Today we have to earn our citizen's aspiration for cultural engagement. There has been an inversion of power within social relationships, today governments must negotiate alliances with individuals - we can no longer simply demand loyalty and expect participation. It is government and its funding and cultural agencies that need to think about how they can be creative and flexible about building a dynamic interface to accommodate people's sense of nationhood. In the new cultural landscape we have to sell our fluid and dynamic liberal nation into an open market, not just of nations, but of loose ideas and loyalties. We cannot afford to limit, to contain our sense of nation in an introspective conservative vision, we must open up and embrace again what Britain has traditionally been known for, a place where homeless narratives find accommodation. Britishness, if it is a set of values, must be negotiated through its citizens, not laid down from on high. If our nation is known for anything, it is a history of creative open and inventive engagement based on negotiation – we must not forget that under the new pressures that have accompanied the new millennium.

It is in this philosophical space of learning to let go, to not to control, but to facilitate, that this younger generation of digital revolutionaries feels comfortable. The arts sector must build a new expectation and do it in an atmosphere of liberal participation and open creativity. And perhaps Governments need to find the humility needed to build spaces for participation that are driven by a sense of facilitation and discussion; building political and cultural *Facebooks*, spaces where ideology and identity are not imposed, but coalesce as conglomerations of nascent opinion.

Augustus Casely Hayford is a British curator and cultural strategist.

Immigration and identity

Paul Schnabel

Dutch history is one of mass migration. In the past forty years, however, immigration has occurred on a scale far beyond anything previously seen in Holland. Since World War II, the proportion of non-Western ethnic minority residents in the Dutch population – defined as those who have at least one parent born in a non-Western country – has surged from just over 1 per cent to more than 10 per cent today. This growth is particularly noticeable in the four largest Dutch cities; in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, for instance, non-Western ethnic minority residents now make up more than one third of the population and more than half of the youth.

Identity has now become a topic of national debate as never before. Majorities in all ethnic groups now believe that the average ethnic minority resident isn't doing enough to integrate. Ironically, the Dutch have only become aware of their distinctive national character as a result of an influx of immigrants from other countries and cultures. Dutch people's fear of losing their own identity as a country, a nation and a people has triggered a strong desire to test the loyalty of anyone whose parents are not Dutch. Twenty per cent of the Dutch population profess to being in favour of such testing. This is a new phenomenon. Until the turn of the century, proposals to devise a ceremony for people granted Dutch citizenship, with elements like a mayor's speech, playing the national anthem, raising the flag or presenting a symbolic gift have always been shot down as totally useless – or even as typically American frivolities. Yet symbolic gestures of Dutch citizenship are now routinely performed, and obtaining Dutch citizenship is no longer a pushover the way it once was. Candidates must now show at least a basic knowledge of Dutch and pass a civic integration course that also covers Dutch history and government.

The Dutch population of Surinamese and Indonesian origin is arguably the most integrated into Dutch society. Thirty years on, the serious adaptation issues they had at first, including high rates of crime, drug use and unemployment, have largely been resolved or have dissipated. The Antillean population broadly breaks down into two categories: a group of largely well educated Antilleans who completed higher education degrees in the Netherlands and thereafter settled in the country; and a lesser-skilled group with a poorer knowledge of Dutch, which still experiences a high incidence of crime. In 2006, about 40 per cent of the residents of Surinamese descent and one third of those of Antillean descent reported that they felt 'Dutch' first and foremost. Similar percentages felt both Dutch and part of their own group. A majority of second-generation Surinamese and Antilleans felt primarily Dutch.

The Turkish and Moroccan migrant population, perhaps in part because it has resulted from a more recent population movement, has a more fraught recent history in the Netherlands. Rapid structural changes in the Dutch economy post 1973 made redundant unskilled workers with a poor command of Dutch, including the majority of Moroccan and Turkish migrants, who came to rely heavily on unemployment or disability benefits. Improper use of the national disability scheme in particular was politically condoned and became so widespread that Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, speaking in the early 1990s, described the Netherlands as a 'sick' country with almost one million disability recipients for a working population of six million.

In these Turkish and Moroccan communities, only one in seven or eight people reported feeling primarily Dutch. Almost half of the Moroccans and nearly 60 per cent of the Turks felt a primary affinity to their own group. This is in sharp contrast to second-generation Turks and Moroccans: less than one third of individuals in this category express a primary identification with Turkey or Morroco. Younger and better educated members of this population felt comparatively weak ties to their parents' country of origin, as did residents of neighbourhoods with lower concentrations of a single ethnic minority. Yet tellingly,

people in the Turkish and Moroccan communities were more likely than Surinamese or Antilleans to associate mainly with people from their own groups in leisure time. A majority of Muslim immigrants' descendants also consider Islam their primary loyalty.

The Netherlands is now home to about 900,000 Muslims and nearly 500 mosques. The Dutch integration debate has become strongly coloured by fears of violent Islamist terrorism, as well as a fear of growing self-censorship in cultural and social life. In reality, of course, there is little to suggest that extremism and terrorism can count on much support from Dutch Muslims. Muslims fear violence from Islamist militants just about as strongly as other groups do. If anything, half of the Dutch population, equally distributed over ethnic groups, fear that violence will erupt against Dutch Muslims themselves.

Yet the emphasis has nonetheless shifted away from social problems to the often difficult process of integrating immigrants into Dutch society. Although those issues still remain, they are decreasingly seen as a responsibility of government, and far more as demands made by society and government on the newcomers themselves.

This in itself represents a sea change. In January 1999, at the New Year meeting of Forum, a Dutch organisation for multicultural cooperation, I gave a talk on 'The Multicultural Illusion'. My thesis was that the integration of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands was not going well. There were too many people that didn't speak Dutch after years of residence, too many school drop-outs, too many unemployed people, too many young offenders, too many women shut up in their homes. My recommendation was to pursue highly proactive integration policies, and basically to demand that people integrate or even assimilate. I argued that newcomers to Dutch society could be reasonably be expected to endorse the Dutch constitution and the values and principles enshrined in it. Dutch citizenship should not be granted too easily, and the awarding of the Dutch passport should become a festive occasion chaired by the mayor.

In my lecture, I distinguished between an A-culture, a B-culture and a C-culture. A-culture stands for the non-negotiable

values and principles of a democratic society. B-culture refers to the self-regulation of behaviour and expectations, as performed at school or work. C-culture denotes the private family setting, where there's a wide degree of freedom to organise life according to one's own wishes, as long as that doesn't fundamentally undermine the values of the A-culture. I was well aware that what Dutch people would normally regard as typical C-culture issues were valued by many Muslims as an A-culture, and that this presents them with a problem. To put it differently, their rules of conduct for everyday life, their specific male-female relations, their family honour and other such values make up the very core of their existence – and are seen as non-negotiable values and principles. The dividing line between religion and daily life is virtually absent for them, just as their personal identity derives primarily from being a Muslim and not primarily from their nationality or ethnicity.

At the time, my lecture elicited mostly negative reactions. Critics deemed it unacceptable to demand or expect cultural compromise from newcomers, let alone force them to change or adapt. Migrants should, the argument went, be free to preserve their own identity to the fullest extent possible, on the assumption they would become eventually come to resemble Dutch people.

Only a year later, the prominent social-democrat Paul Scheffer published a fiery essay in the leading national newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* entitled 'The Multicultural Drama'. The message it contained followed approximately the same lines as my argument. This time, a dramatic swing in public opinion followed, and the gloves came off. Statements now routinely made in Dutch public life, media, and political debate would provoke outrage in the United States for example. Clearly, Dutch Muslims find the terms of this debate extremely hurtful and offensive. It certainly does little to persuade them to integrate more fully into Dutch society. However, based on displays of sexism, or intolerance of homosexuality, I am not altogether convinced of an overall willingness on the part of the Dutch Muslim population to tolerate behaviour they are not used to seeing at home.

The point is that the Dutch increasingly perceive a wide, menacing gap between some minority groups and the values that are dear to Dutch society – values like equality and equity, tolerance, fairness and hard work. Dutch people are coming to understand their own identity through a reverse mirror image of the things they dislike in the behaviours and attitudes of the newcomers.

The notion of identity is perhaps an obstacle to understanding the present situation. 'Identity' implies the existence of clear boundaries and a fixed set of traits. In practice, the issue is more one of *identification,* of recognising yourself to a certain extent as part of a particular group, or more than one group. This is a much more fluid and dynamic process than identity. It allows for changing preferences and for a range of loyalties which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, or even conflicting. A primary loyalty to Islam is not problematic unless it coexists with a rejection of Dutch society and a willingness to use violence to force others to accept a Muslim identity. Only isolated individuals and very small groups have so far fit this description.

Although it is not yet widely recognised, Dutch ethnic minorities are fast becoming more and more Dutch, as well as more and more modern or Westernised. However difficult the second generation may find it to feel at home in Dutch society, very few people in that generation feel truly at home in their parents' country of origin either. They are accustomed to the Dutch way of life, and they speak Dutch better than their parents' language. We have all passed the point of no return.

In due time, I believe we will see three diverging paths of development among people in ethnic minorities. The best educated and socially most successful group will become firmly integrated into Dutch society and will even assimilate to a large extent. A second group will be fully integrated at school and at work, but at home they will continue to adhere to traditions from the old country. The third group is already the source of greatest concern: people who do not succeed in finding their way in Dutch society, and who at some point abandon all desire to do so. They withdraw into a sort of 'underclass' with people from

their own ethnic group and in their own neighbourhoods. Resentment and radicalism can then fuse together with dangerous consequences.

The insecure feelings people currently have about Dutch national identity constitute one of the most interesting and significant developments for the Netherlands in this opening decade of the twenty-first century. The Dutch rejected the European Constitution in a referendum, prompting the government to later oppose the official adoption of European symbols like the EU flag or the European anthem. Domestically, 'modern conservative' parties with a strong national orientation are gaining rapidly in the polls, and the Dutch media consistently headlines the downsides of multicultural society – the threat of aggressive Islamism, the four-to-sixfold higher crime rates of Moroccan and Antillean youths as compared to non-minority youths, the emergence of 'non-white' schools and the high dropout rates, the greater dependency on benefits, the oppression of women and the negative attitudes to homosexuality.

All of this is symptomatic of an increasingly anxious guard over Dutch national identity. While Dutch people express a preference for a caring society based on mutual solidarity – as opposed to what they see as an individualistic, achievement-driven, 'American' society – they evidently wish to confine that solidarity to their own national group. Tellingly, ethnic Dutch people are statistically the least likely to socialise outside of their own ethnic group; half of them reported having no leisure-time contacts whatsoever with ethnic minority people, while as many as 90 per cent reported associating predominantly with their own ethnic group. The picture which emerges is one which I would describe as hard on the outside, soft on the inside – warm and caring for those who belong, cold-hearted and unapproachable for those who are outside and must stay there.

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Time to listen

Ahmed Aboutaleb

First, let us consider the facts. Europe is changing demographically, and rapidly too. The northern part of Europe is ageing. Women are having children later. And the average family unit is small. Europe must therefore make the best possible use of its own labour potential. But it also needs extra workers from beyond its borders in order to maintain the size of the working population.

From a Google Earth perspective you would see large population flows. Flows of people on the move to meet a demand for labour, flows of 'fresh troops' to keep the economy growing. This new mass migration is taking place in stages, but striking examples are everywhere. I recently heard someone complaining about the difficulty of renovating a property in Poland. It was apparently almost impossible to find electricians and carpenters. This was because they were all hard at work in the Netherlands. So the person concerned was now trying to recruit Chinese workers to a carry out the job in Poland.

Now let's consider the emotions. The governments of European countries think they can solve labour shortages by migration. But newcomers are not always welcomed with open arms in Europe. Many European citizens view immigration as one of the most important issues (in other words, one of the most important threats) facing them. Over half of Europe's citizens fear that immigrants will take their jobs. Or threaten their culture. This fear is strongest among those with low income jobs. The reality is that the facts and the emotions create a paradox for policymakers. From a macro perspective, any society has a pressing need for new workers. Europe is also making this possible by its open border policy for, say, the new EU member states. But from the perspective of the street, neighbourhood or

town, there is a growing aversion to newcomers. The message we are getting from citizens is 'Stop!'

Politicians often find it difficult to deal with paradoxes and they have found this paradox, of welcome on the one hand and resistance on the other, particularly challenging. The fact that immigration and integration cause feelings of discontent, particularly when they take place rapidly, has been insufficiently recognised by policymakers in the Netherlands over a long period. Meanwhile, the intellectual elite in the Netherlands are still inclined to try to put these fears in perspective. But this is the wrong reflex. It is an equally wrong reflex to encourage feelings of discontent. Or to tell people that everything will be better if immigration is stopped. In my view there is a relatively untried middle way between ignoring and encouraging feelings of discontent. To outline this option more clearly, let me first take you to the source of much discontent.

In the Netherlands people with relatively low income jobs are more negative about integration and cultural diversity than people with a higher education. People fear for their jobs and their sense of identity. Manufacturing jobs are disappearing to low wage countries. And this is costing many jobs, particularly those of low-skilled workers. They face a multitude of problems. The homes in which they live are too small. The neighbourhoods in which they live are becoming more run down. And it is precisely in these neighbourhoods that the new immigrants are settling.

At the same time we Dutch people are earning good money through international trade. In that respect globalisation is not turning out so badly for us. We make money on the import and transit of goods from China and India. And we are also making money from worldwide exports. Overall, the Netherlands profits from globalisation, and on paper the account of the Dutch economy looks healthy. But in practice the profits are reaped by one group of people and the losses suffered by another, and here lies the real problem.

With this in mind, we should be honest with people: Globalisation does have its drawbacks. Cultural diversity does sometimes lead to friction between cultures. Your concerns about

preserving your own job and home are legitimate. We see your problems and feel your pain. And we believe that this pain and these concerns belong on the political agenda. But we must together seek to strike a new balance.

Recognition that it takes time for immigrants to climb the social ladder is not an alibi for doing nothing in the hope that things will change in time. Political management of this process is important. But the extent of integration can be measured not only by looking at specific indicators such as participation in education and employment. It is also about whether newcomers are prepared to immerse themselves in the Dutch language, culture, history and values. In addition, new Dutch citizens can be expected to show respect for the rule of law. But this does not mean that they must burn all their boats behind them and that there is no scope for expressing their own cultural identity, speaking the language of their country of origin or practising their own religion. This would be unreasonable and contrary to the international conventions on the rights of minorities. The Dutch government is trying to bridge this gap between understanding and changing. We have to shoulder the heavy burden of speaking honestly and calmly about the predominant feelings of discontent. And, where possible, we must come up with solutions.

But this is easier said than done. After all, politicians are good with money. We can always find money for the demolition of buildings, the laying out of a park or the holding of a neighbourhood party. But politicians tend not to know what to do when it comes to dealing with the feelings of citizens, or with the tensions between neighbours in a street or block of flats. Citizens want their feelings to be shared and their problems to be recognised. And it is in this *recognition* of the reality, the feelings of discontent and the frictions and tensions in confined areas that the solution to the paradox can be found – provided that this recognition also leads to adequate, visible measures that produce tangible results.

I am not advocating that we should reject the multicultural society – an attitude that has recently started to become politically correct in the Netherlands. Nor am I suggesting that

we should embrace the multicultural society unconditionally – an attitude that has become just as politically correct in some other countries. Instead, I am in favour of measures that will ensure that immigrants no longer feel victimised, and measures that will end the indifference of the indigenous Dutch population.

Naturally, these measures must always be within the limits of the Constitution. Regardless of whether the country – in my case the Netherlands – is your country of origin or your country of arrival. The diversity of cultures and lifestyles is as large or as small as is possible within the constraints of the rule of law. A husband who beats his wife and invokes his own cultural mores in justification acts unacceptably. After all, such acts are contrary to the rule of law in the Netherlands and the rule of law and the Constitution are not negotiable.

For the Dutch labour market the conclusion must be that new foreign workers from outside the EU is not a good solution for the problems we face. Stimulating the inactive workforce, 1.3 million people, must be our first concern. We have to draw lessons from the 1960s and 1970s. There is one exception: the specific shortages of knowledge workers. We also have to understand that knowledge workers will not come to the Netherlands as long as the climate towards immigrants is negative. Otherwise, they will prefer the US or another country.

What is needed is a new type of effort to be made by politicians. We must hear and feel the pain and concerns caused by immigration. And we must have the political courage to put this pain and these concerns on our political agenda. And work to tackle them. In this way we can also end the polemical dispute with the political populists. And make a start on taking seriously the important feelings of broad sections of society.

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A Muslim Woody Allen?

Naema Tahir

For both the UK and the Netherlands, integration has been the watchword to define the national approach to immigration and inclusion. Yet integration is arguably a difficult thing to understand, let alone achieve, for many immigrants who must become part of the group. Until the newcomer is fully integrated, he or she is considered inferior to the inhabitants of the host country and may feel they need to rid themselves of any cultural ties which prevent them from being accepted as fully Western, or European. Some succeed in this. But the many who don't become frustrated, resentful of the implicit pressure to deny their backgrounds before they are recognised and accepted as part of that society.

When national identities clash within one person, one consequence can be to seek solace in a 'confessional identity'. Religion allows a migrant to at least feel part of a group, immediately at home, perhaps even 'one of the chosen'. In turn, this sense of acceptance and belonging creates a basis for opposition to a society which demands that the migrant do away with his or her cultural and religious affiliation. As European countries have come to learn, the resulting social exclusion and isolation have profound consequences for social cohesion and, in the most extreme cases, can lead to the devastation and tragedy seen in Madrid and London.

The problem with integration is that it means different things to different people. To the first-generation migrant who works hard, abides by the law and pays taxes it is what they are already *doing,* rather than a question of identity. For the second-generation migrant, integration stands for a complex bundle of dilemmas about self and identity which religion, as we have seen, sometimes promises to resolve. For the native inhabitants, meanwhile, it can mean both – or a generalised expectation to be

'more like us' which, when pressed, yields little in the way of specific criteria. Perhaps the time has come to admit that a perfectly integrated population of immigrants is a myth. The migrant cannot simply *become* fully Western, if being Western would mean being British, Dutch, German, any more than a person can swap their mother-tongue. But for countries like the UK and Netherlands, uneasy with strict republican notions of citizenship, what is the alternative aim if not integration?

One way to begin would be to emphasise *participation* rather than *integration*. By fostering a greater involvement in society, participation means that at the most basic level the newcomer gains a piece of the pie. If they desire more, the automatic realisation is that this desire will be met with higher demands – such as the perfection of language skills, additional schooling or training, and the acquiring of more refined social skills which facilitate participation in circles outside of their original group of affinity. Moreover, participation prevents one from hiding behind the curtains of culture or religion, or clinging on to them, for the participating migrant is not required or forced to distance themselves from their very background, roots or identity. As religion remains important for many people in today's societies, like cultural ties, allowing space for those ties means the migrant will perform daily activities in a more relaxed manner in the society he has chosen to live in. Not as a Muslim, not as a Turk, not as foreigner, but as a pupil, a student, a business partner, a colleague or a consumer. Whereas integration is an absolute requirement, and henceforth results in a strong focus on religious and cultural identities, the result of participation is that one considers the Other an equal participant in society. Each individual then gains knowledge of, enters into relationships with and has mutual respect for the Other. The migrant is not inferior, but equal. Through participation the migrant does not have to become someone. He already is – namely a participant, a person able to share and compete with others on the basis of quality, merit and humanity, rather than a label.

But relieving social isolation through participation is not enough, as is slowly being recognised by the current Dutch government. Neither are the festivals, and cooking classes and

oriental dance workshops recently proposed as means to foster social cohesion. There persists a feeling of being better merely for belonging to the group or collective identity. A culture is therefore needed which does away with feelings of superiority of one group towards the other. A culture is needed where diversity and knowledge, even intellectualism, are recognised but also demanded from the other. Here, I believe arts play a vital role, maybe even more so when politics are polarised, and being a Muslim has become a burden even for Muslims. How? Well, how about the encouragement of a 'Muslim Woody Allen?'

Let me explain. When Muhammad Ali celebrated his birthday I reflected on what he represents as a sports icon. He rose to world fame for his boxing skill, and the unforgettable *Rumble in the Jungle*. An American citizen born as Cassius Clay, he converted to Islam and took the name of the Prophet. That same Muhammad Ali once cheerfully took a bite of a hamburger for a TV commercial. Seeing this as a Muslim child I was confused, quite indignant in fact, but he aroused my curiosity. How could someone called Muhammad feast on unclean meat? It had the same effect on me as when Omar Sharif kissed Barbara Streisand in the film *Funny Girl*, also in the 1970s. A Muslim kissing a non-Muslim? These were powerful images that alerted me to the porous boundaries of my Muslim identity. Suddenly, being a Muslim was not separated off from the world around me. Muslims were and are just people.

The power of art, and I am including advertisements in this category for now, in our consumer society, is that it creates a bond. Art transcends identities. Art forces you to look, to react. In our mass-communication age, such invitations lie at almost every street corner. Art is for everyone, theist or non-theist, purchaser or viewer, carnivore or vegetarian. Real art transcends the mediocrity that religious and political fundamentalists dictate in the form of templates and precepts, which insecure people with poor taste will always clamour for. An experience of art leads people to place themselves in perspective, it teaches them to see themselves as people, and is essential for nurturing respect and understanding between communities. It can break through the moaning rhetoric of 'us and them' like nothing else.

Last year, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* was launched in Canada, a TV series in which you can laugh along with Canadian Muslims – their awkwardness, cultural dilemmas and burden of suspicion and mistrust in the eyes of the mainstream. This is an important step, but it does not go far enough. What we need next is a Muslim Woody Allen, someone with the power and audacity to make Muslims able to laugh at themselves, to take a long, hard look at their own foibles and hypocrisies. Allen's genius was to satirise his own immigrant Jewish stereotype by embracing it to its furthest extent. In doing so he helped Jewish-Americans re-colonise that stereotype and cultural identity with emancipatory results. It is now the turn of the Muslims. Who will expose their humanity, and show them the difference between bigotry and holiness? An entertainer like this is long overdue.

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The challenge for the left

Liam Byrne MP

In the UK, we now operate in a political market where the number of voters who naturally associate themselves with one political party or another is below 50 per cent of the electorate for the first time. As parties and policies have converged on the hallowed 'centre-ground', so voters have found it harder to see clear contrast between them. But the debate about social cohesion is one arena where there is a distinct difference between the right and left in the UK, and which I believe is one that Labour can fight and win. My argument is based on the need to renew Britain's *shared standards*, and our association with them, as the key to social cohesion.

This debate is probably only just getting started, but I think the demand for reform that strengthens and reinforces a shared sense of what we have in common is likely to become more important, not less. And Labour will not have the pitch to itself. Around the world, neo-conservatives are on this war-path already. Their answers are not answers we will like much. And what is more, they are wrong.

In any debating contest, the right has deep intellectual traditions on which to draw. What we call community, de Tocqueville called 'association'. Marvelling at the strength of the fledging US republic and the safeguard 'association' provided against the tyranny of the majority, de Tocqueville argued:

In the United States, associations aim to promote public safety, business, industry, morality, and religion. There is nothing the human will despairs of attaining through the free action of the combined will of associations.[1]

Today, the Tories are arguing again that 'liberty needs fraternity'. It was an argument they last made a decade ago. Back in the mid-1990s, conservative thinkers argued that the bonds of

association were essentially the product of tradition – or a willing submission to what is socially established – which becomes a norm and a guide for others, until modified by further social interaction. But the Tories' problem has not changed. Their problem is not de Tocqueville, it is Edmund Burke. It was Burke who argued for the needs of something to transmit that tradition down the generations on the basis that 'the ends of such a [revered] partnership [such as the state] cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are to be born'.[2] Hence the need for 'traditional institutions' to keep the flame alive.

This is why we now hear from David Cameron the echoes of the American neo-cons and a new defence of 'traditional institutions' (starting with the nuclear family). And here we see the challenge for Labour. In the Tories' hands, a defence of shared standards becomes a defence of traditional institutions. And this almost immediately becomes an attack on active government. Thus, in the US today, the neo-conservative right has coopted de Tocqueville's analysis as the basis of an attack on the modern welfare state, claiming that efforts to seek social justice have left societies worse off than before because they either required massive state intervention that disrupted organic social relations. This is the basis for Cameron's scepticism about the efficacy of state action, and emphasis on exhortation rather than instruction.

This 'new gloss on an old philosophy' is the Achilles' heel of the contemporary right. When the world is moving on apace, a puritanical reliance on traditional institutions is frankly difficult in a world when 'traditional institutions are under pressure from changes that are not 'revolutionary' in the sense of a violent overthrow of an ancient regime, but which are socially and economically driven, and extremely rapid.

If we believe that tradition is like a 'price' set by social interaction in the marketplace, we must at least acknowledge that the speed of social interaction today and the breadth of today's 'social market' is so wide that the price movements are likely to be extremely volatile. And what are we supposed to do exactly

when public trust in traditional institutions is fast evaporating? Or when some traditional institutions – like the nuclear family – do not accommodate the 40 per cent of today's children born outside marriage? Are somehow those parents, or those children, to be excluded from our equation?

So what is Labour's alternative? Labour has always been a bit vague about what shared standards mean – how we express them and translate those standards into a political agenda and a programme of reform. When Labour talks about shared standards, we typically use the language of 'community' rather than any description of the values or habits or standards that pin that community together. So although the idea of community has always been a feature of our politics it is perhaps among the less well-defined elements. As Bernard Crick suggested, as a feature of the socialist world-view, community is 'the most rhetorical, potent, but least defined of values'.

It has, however, rather a lot of history. If we survey Anthony Crosland's original 12-point check-list of the Labour Party's intellectual antecedents, we can see ideas of community,

mutuality and cooperation in at least seven of them. Rightly sceptical of the purist cooperative ideal epitomised by Robert Owen, Crosland nevertheless argued that if we step back and try to summarise the five key recurring themes in socialist thinking, then surely one of them must be the promotion of clearer 'social organisation and… motives by means'.

To this tradition, New Labour has brought a consistent if loosely defined sense of what shared standards mean, together with a sense of how those standards need translating into a policy agenda for stronger communities. On the ground floor of New Labour, as it were, Neil Kinnock, put it thus: 'We want a state where the collective contribution of the community is used to advance individual freedom.' In turn, Kinnock found his echo in the Labour Party's 1997 manifesto: 'We are a broad-based movement for progress and justice… Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities.'

This kind of thinking was of course something Tony Blair talked about a lot. In 1993 he said: 'The founding principle, the

guiding principle of the Labour Party is the belief in community and society. It's the notion that for individuals to advance you require a strong and fair community behind you.' A modern view of community, therefore, saw the existence of a 'strong and cohesive society, essential to the fulfilment of individual aspiration and progress'.

In office, Labour has developed two policy responses to this agenda. First is the emphasis on community politics. Labour's notion of community is a way of expressing fellowship, or a sense of belonging to one another in a society, but 'the community' can never really be idealised as some kind of homogenous entity. Community must mean more than simply a common bond between individuals… a socialist definition must include a dimension of empowerment and control over people's collective destiny. Community must be given expression by forms of collective decision-making.

Second, Labour has consistently presented the notion that membership of a community comes with certain responsibilities. Society is a two-way street. This argument agitates fiercely for the idea that alongside rights sit reciprocal responsibilities. Citizens have to consider their duty and obligations towards establishing and maintaining a good society. Thus Alan Whitehead argues that the state has not one but two jobs: 'on both sides of the community equation: encouraging the individual to take responsibility within his or her community… and making available… the basic wherewithal to make this happen'. Or as Tony Blair put it: 'A modern notion of citizenship gives rights but demands obligations, shows respect but wants it back, grants opportunity but insists on responsibility.' So, ideas of shared standards, mutual obligation and community are important to Labour traditionally and New Labour more recently. Therefore we now have a political choice about how to take shared standards forward in our national life.

The right offers us a return to traditional institutions. The left offers us, potentially, a way to take traditional, mutual standards and apply them to the challenges of the future. This is not to argue for a second that traditional families and traditional institutions do not require – indeed demand – support. But let

us not kid ourselves that such an agenda will be sufficient. It will not. And this is not a challenge that we confront for the first time. We have been here before.

As Robert Putnam argues, in the years after the industrial revolution we confronted huge industrial change, widespread immigration and large-scale social upheaval, and the result was an explosion in civic energy:

For all their difficulties, errors and misdeeds of the progressive era, its leaders and their immediate forebears in the late nineteenth century correctly diagnosed the problem of social capital or civic engagement deficit. It must have been tempting in 1890 to say 'life was much nicer back in the village. Everybody back to the farm'. They resisted that temptation to reverse the tide, choosing instead the harder but surer path of social innovation.[3]

We too in Britain corralled a similar civic effort at around the same time. In late nineteenth-century Britain, as our cities grew, with bigger and bigger waves of migration from the countryside, we cut a new social and cultural fabric for ourselves that spanned civic and cultural life.

Take Birmingham, where my constituency of Hodge Hill is located. As the city grew, a new generation of politicians like Chamberlain extolled a new civic gospel that delivered new services – like gas, water and arts – and created a new city. From 1879 philanthropists like the Cadburys pioneered, in Bournville, new designs for communities. Political movements – like the National Education League, headquartered in the city – were founded to conduct national campaigns for new goods like free education. In 1902 the Birmingham district labour representation council brought together a huge constellation of working class organisations: the Birmingham Trades Council, the Labour Church, the Social Democratic Federation, the National Women's League, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the National Amalgamated Societies of Brass Workers and the Furnishing Trades, the Britannia Metal Workers Association and the Aston Manor Labour Association.

In civic life, too, we invented things: Aston Villa FC was founded in 1874, Birmingham City a year later, and within two

decades Warwickshire County Cricket Club entered first-class cricket. In 1889 the Boys' Brigade was started, followed by the Birmingham Association of Boy Scouts in 1909. By 1914 Asa Briggs estimates some 19,000 young people were attached to youth bodies. The Girls' Union was founded in 1919; the Birmingham Federation of Boys' Clubs started in 1928.

We live in a country where we are quite capable of organising our way through change. If Labour is to continue to argue for an agenda that sets out a stronger sense of personal empowerment through the sustained force of strong communities, we will have to address the need to reinforce the standards that pin our national community in Britain together. Citizenship reform is perhaps the key front on which many of the advances can be made. David Blunkett among others has argued consistently that 'we need a shared and common set of values as well as an understood and respected set of rules enforceable by law' and for citizenship reform in a way that underlines the concept 'not as something to be possessed, but as shared membership of a political community… as Aristotle put it, a "mode of life"'.

Some on the left, too, will of course find this a difficult argument – but often for the right reasons. It is absolutely critical for the left is that while we strengthen a framework of common rules, we stand up for the right to be different. Empowerment, after all, means little without this.

But the prospect of a challenge from the right, akin to that we have seen in America and Europe, should provide a new urgency to Labour's thinking about what shared standards we think are important, and how we shape a progressive political agenda around them. The prize is important; buy-in to shared standards is the *sine qua non* of the kind of cooperation and reciprocity in politics we believe is the foundation stone of social progress.

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Notes

1 De Tocqueville, A, *Democracy in America* (London: Penguin, 2003).

2 Burke, E, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [1790]).

3 Putnam, RD, *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American community* (New York: Touchstone, 2000).

Integration through political renewal

Sunny Hundal

Any debate around religion, integration and political participation in Britain today cannot take place outside the context of recent events in the UK. Let us go back nearly three years to 7 July 2005 when four men blew themselves up in London in the name of revenge for the British invasion of Iraq.

Like everyone, I was shocked by 7/7. But I was also shocked by the sorts of public debates and discussions that subsequently took place. I went to various talks and debates on the future of religion, race relations and multiculturalism in Britain, and voraciously consumed newspaper commentary. Most of all I was struck by a polarisation between 'community leaders' and the old left on one side, and conservative and 'muscular liberals' on the other. New and more progressive voices from minority communities failed to get heard. This was partly because the old community leaders had been organised for a while, and partly because politicians and the media assumed that the community leaders accurately represented the minority groups they apparently led.

Having begun to write frequently on the subject, in 2006 I was involved with group of writers, journalists, thinkers, activists challenging the state of race relations in Britain. The New Generation Network, as we called ourselves, stated first and foremost that this system of self-appointed community leaders can hurt those who it should be protecting. We wanted to reject all forms of prejudice, including from within minority communities, and re-affirm our commitment to free speech. But we also wanted to challenge the assumptions about political representation which characterised the government's response, and which I believe still lies at the heart of the integration debate today.

The threat of terrorism still remains in Britain. But we also face other, more entrenched challenges that threaten social

cohesion. On the economic front globalisation, increased labour migration and job insecurity – especially for the working classes – are putting strain on the bonds of association traditionally built though our work and where we live. Politically we face mass voter apathy and slow government response to local issues such as immigration. In the social sphere there is uncertainty about Britain's place in the world, and the increase in racial and cultural diversity that, as Robert Putnam argues, can also lead to a breakdown in social capital and sense of community. But to me these are challenges that present an opportunity – the chance to shape the future of British identity and to renew our commitment and approach to democracy and diversity. The question is how.

First, we must distinguish between 'state' and 'lived' multiculturalism. At first glance, multiculturalism has little to do with political participation on an everyday level. It is a question of culture, norms and lifestyle. On the other hand, if the state groups its citizens only on the basis of their religious or racial identity and treats them accordingly this leads to problems, as seen in the issue of 'representation' by community leaders.

While lived multiculturalism broadly works, state-sanctioned multiculturalism eventually hinders political participation. It does so because race or religion becomes excessively politicised. A vivid illustration of this was provided this year in the furore over the Archbishop of Canterbury's remarks on shari'a law in Britain.

In his now notorious speech, the Archbishop questioned how conflicts would be resolved when secular civil law came into conflict with religious law. He wasn't calling for shari'a law to be introduced, but drawing attention to the fact that it already exists in this country. For decades, individuals have been able to call on third parties to arbitrate on their behalf – whether by shari'a or the Jewish Beth Din. What followed was a hysterical response from all quarters which merely served to muddy the issue. The media cried religious insurrection. Politicians, never far behind, proclaimed there can only be one law in the land, without acknowledging that this was a debate about civil law, not criminal law, and that the same rules did not apply.

On the other side, Muslim community leaders condemned the media outrage without accepting why shari'a has such negative connotations. There is little or no real consensus among British Muslims on how shari'a should be implemented, and thus it stands little chance of being propelled into British law. And yet, this debate was never had.

Like this episode, the debate around integration is a straw man and likely to lead us nowhere because it has never defined what 'British values' are and what sort of lifestyle people are supposed to integrate into. The government cannot legally force anyone to change their lifestyle, culture or usage of language. The Ahmeds, Patels and Singhs simply want to get on with their lives and are more likely to feel that talk of integration is an attempt to interfere.

Instead, we should promote and work for social cohesion. We need to ensure people can communicate in English with each other, that they feel a sense of belonging and civic identity, that human rights for all are respected and fought for. A focus on social cohesion puts the onus on everyone to challenge inequality and prejudice rather than the current muddle which effectively says non-white people need to fit into an undefined set of 'British values'. We need to allow people to follow whatever lifestyle they want, within the law, and yet feel part of this country.

Many attribute the rise of Muslim extremism in Britain to a sense of identity conflict amongst young Muslims themselves. Policies have been crafted out of this analysis, such as the plan to roll out a programme developed by the Bradford Council of Mosques of citizenship classes aimed at religious schools, or Madrassas. But the identity crisis does not affect ethnic minorities alone. A recent poll by BBC Asian Network radio found that more Sikhs defined themselves as British than whites themselves. And when Sir Keith Ajegbo published his report on citizenship in schools he pointed out that the problem didn't just afflict pupils of minority backgrounds – white teenagers also felt marginalised and disenfranchised from the political system. This disenfranchisement is one of the key reasons why an increasing number of people feel less British; they don't feel as if they have a stake in the country's national institutions. Voting amongst 18-

24 year olds is at an historic low and political apathy at an all time high. But perhaps most importantly, Britons increasingly feel less British because they are unsure of what the label stands for anymore.

Gordon Brown's initial attempts to lead the Britishness debate started with questions on what it meant to be British. At first, everything from jam on toast to football, queuing and morning tea were cited, before ministers realised the difficulty in uniting us around individual tastes and lifestyles. Talk then shifted to 'values' instead. We were told that being British meant certain values such as fairness, tolerance and respect for the rule of law. There has also been the increasing tendency to mention national institutions such as the Parliament and Britain's long and stable political history.

But there are problems with this approach too. It is difficult to tie these values to specific situations or institutions in the way that the 'American dream' is tied closely to its materialistic capitalist philosophy. Neither are they exclusively British values and as such it's difficult to show what separates Britain from other countries. How successful is Gordon Brown likely to be in equating fairness and tolerance to the Parliament when an increasing number of Britain's are politically apathetic and bored of apparently archaic and remote political processes?

Advocates of 'British values' have struggled to make any real progress, but the bigger challenge is that the emphasis on 'values' inevitably paints ethnic minorities as the problem. The result is depressingly predictable, as minorities become defensive and feel they are being singled out. Many first generation Muslim, Hindu and Sikh immigrants would argue that their conservative values were the norm when they first came to this country – why should they have to change just because others have? Their reluctance to join the debate has primarily been due to a feeling that the discussion about values is designed to exclude them; that their own values are not appreciated.

If the Britishness project is to succeed, a discussion of British values must fulfil certain criteria. It cannot alienate minority groups, it must offer something more tangible tied uniquely to British history and it must be a forward looking process with the

aim of including all Britons. To do this, advocates of Britishness should make the distinction between 'political values' and 'cultural/social values', so people can unite around the former but maintain their differences over the latter. In this context political values mean a liberal democracy, freedom of speech and expression, secularism, civil liberties and a constitution. Social or cultural values mean religious belief; conservative or liberal leanings; attitudes to homosexuality, euthanasia, abortion and so forth. This framework would do away with much confusion – Gordon Brown could stop obfuscating with words such as fairness and tolerance, and put forward a case for strengthening our commitment to civil liberties, secularism, freedom of speech and a constitutional settlement.

It is important to be clear on why we need this separation. Political values are tangible. They are about empowering citizens and can thus become a source of pride, and they provide the framework where social values can be debated and fought over. They also remain broadly static over time. Social values, on the other hand, almost certainly change over time. Our attitudes towards homosexuality, abortion and racism, to take a few, have transformed over the last thirty years.

Many would rightly argue that such political rights are already enshrined in the Human Rights Act and other statutes. But that ignores the fact that Britons have generally failed to take ownership of these political rights in the way that Americans and French revere their political institutions. So while they have adopted political values as a proud badge that links them to nationhood, we do not share such feelings.

At the same time, a majority are disengaged from the political process and even more urgent than forging a renewed sense of community is the need to unify our civic and political identity. This is more than just supporting the principles of freedom of speech and habeas corpus. It means conceiving identity and inclusion as a process, not an outcome, and empowering all Britons, not just ethnic minorities, to play a greater role in British political and civic life.

Sunny Hundal is a British commentator and blogger.

Biographies

Ahmed Aboutaleb was born in 1961 in Beni Sidel, Morocco. He moved to the Netherlands in 1976, and holds dual-citizenship. In 1998 he became Director of the FORUM Institute for Multicultural Development in the Netherlands. In 2004 he was appointed Alderman for Work and Income, Education, Youth, Diversity, and Urban Policy in Amsterdam's municipal executive. He was appointed State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment in the current Dutch coalition cabinet in February 2007. In October 2008 it became known that he would be nominated as the next mayor of Rotterdam, at the recommendation of its city council.

Liam Byrne is Minister for the Cabinet Office and MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill. Liam has written widely about public service reform, economic development, shared values and creating fair chances. His publications include the textbook, Local Government Transformed, Information Age Government, Cities of Enterprise, Britain in 2020, Reinventing Government Again (with Phil Collins), Why Labour Won, A Common Place and A More United Kingdom.

Gus Casely-Hayford is a curator and advisor on arts policy in the UK. Previously he was Executive Director of Arts Strategy at the Arts Council England and director of inIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts). Dr Casely-Hayford has written and curated widely, including collaborations with Nelson Mandela. In 2005 he was programme director of Africa '05, a landmark exposition of African culture across London. He lectures on world art at Sotheby's, Goldsmiths and University of Westminster, and is a consultant for organisations such as the United Nations, the Arts Council and the BBC.

Catherine Fieschi is director of Counterpoint, the think-tank of the British Council, and a Senior Demos Associate. She was Director of Demos from 2006 to 2008. Catherine holds a PhD in Political Science from McGill University in Canada. Before joining Demos, she was Director of the Centre for the Study of European Governance at the University of Nottingham. She is a regular commentator on far right politics both in the UK and the rest of Europe. Catherine is a contributing editor for Prospect Magazine, she is co-editor of the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, and the author of *In the Shadow of Democracy*, a study of populism in Europe.

Sunny Hundal is a British Asian journalist who has contributed to the Financial Times, The Inpendent and currently writes regularly for the Guardian. He is known for writing on issues of religion, race and ethincitiy and is a commentator on the politics of asian regions. He is an oponent of the labour government and has singled out Gordon Brown's counter-terrorism legislation for criticism. Hundal is also one of the founding members of the think tank New Generation Network, which calls for a new agenda for ways of addressing issues of race and faith in Britain.

Paul Scheffer began his career as a correspondent in Paris and Warsaw and is now Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. In 2000, he published a controversial article, "Het multiculturele drama" (The Multicultural Drama) in the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper arguing that an ethnic underclass has grown up that is becoming alienated from society with alarming speed. In 2007, he published *The Unsettled Land* (*Het land van aankomst*), in which he describes how this article and the debate unleashed by it has changed his life and explains how much the recent immigration forces the Dutch society to face new issues.

Paul Schnabel was born in 1948, in Bergen op Zoom. He is a Dutch sociologist and in 2006 became the director of *Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau,* (Social and cultural planning office of the Netherlands), a social science research unit and social policy

advisory of the Dutch cabinet. He is also a columnist to the leading Dutch newspapers *NRC-Handelsblad* and *Het Financieele Dagblad*, and a member of the supervisory board of Schell Netherlands. He was listed in 2006 by *De Volkskrant* among the top 10 of the most influential people in the Netherlands.

Naema Tahir is a human rights lawyer, novelist and newspaper columnist. She was born in London to a Pakistani immigrant family. After graduating with a degree in Law from Leiden University she worked as a legal officer in the Dutch government. In 2003 she was selected as a permanent member of the Council of Europe, where she worked as a legal officer and was appointed to Council's Equal Opportunities Board. She took leave from the Council in 2006 to concentrate on writing. She is the author of three books: *A Muslim Woman Unveils*, *Prized Possession* and *Lonelinesses*.

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In the winter of 2007, Demos and the Embassy of the Netherlands in London came together to hold a series of landmark debates about integration and to share Dutch and British experiences of multiculturalism. Both countries are known for their tolerance and their economic and social liberalism. But in both countries questions are being raised about the limits of tolerance in liberal and largely secular societies.

The seminars considered integration through its link to different forms of participation – political, economic and cultural – bringing together leading thinkers and politicians in these fields from both countries. They tackled deep and challenging questions about the role of the individual, of the state, and of communities in fostering participation, and interrogated the meaning of integration itself

This is a collection of short essays by contributors to those seminars, a mixture of writers, academics and politicians from Britain and the Netherlands, which open a window onto the current debate in the two countries and seek to set out where next in the multicultural drama.

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