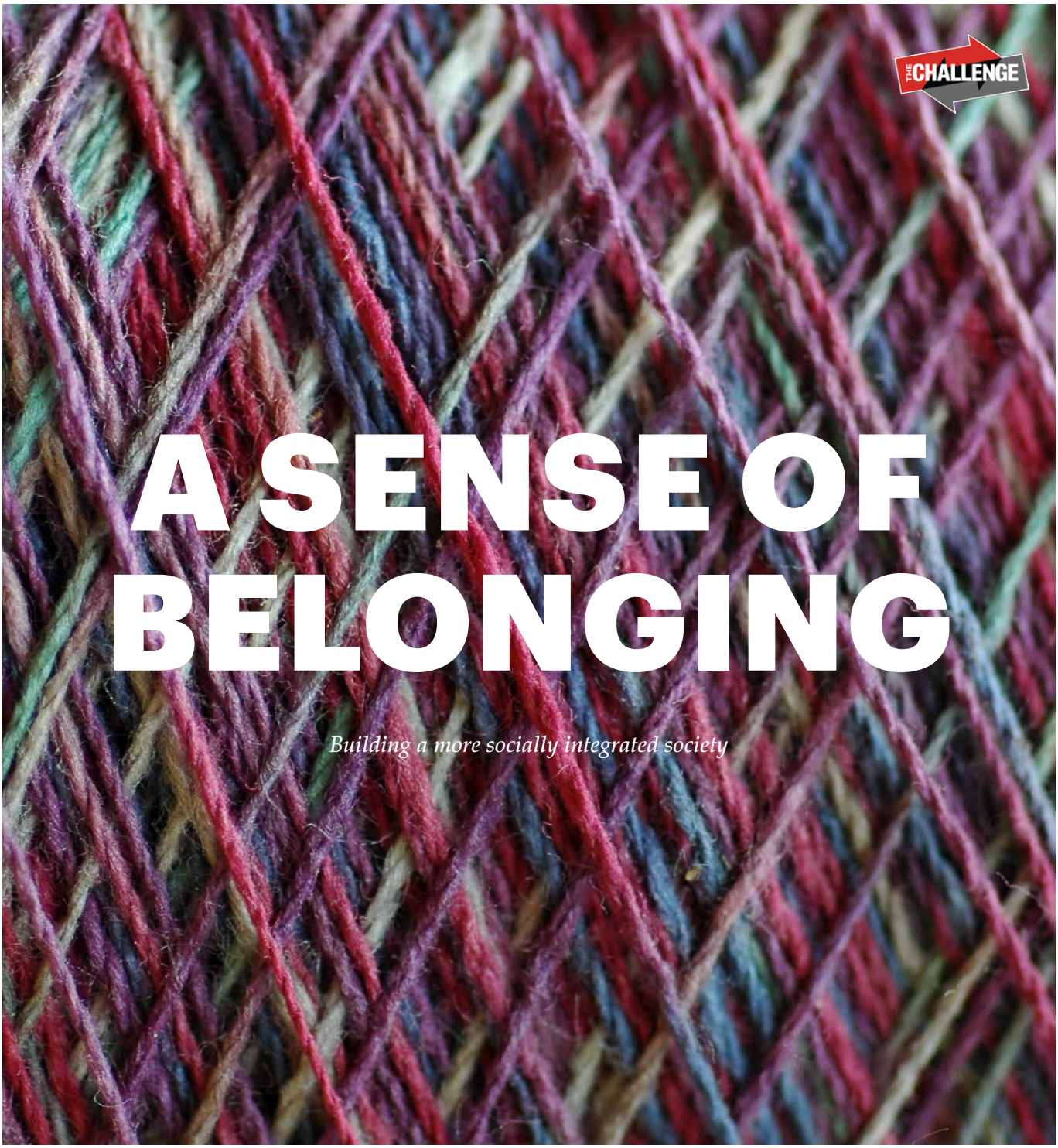



# A SENSE OF BELONGING

*Building a more socially integrated society*

FABIAN SOCIETY

bright blue

# THE CHALLENGE

## THE UK'S LEADING SOCIAL INTEGRATION CHARITY

The Challenge is the UK's leading social integration charity. We design and deliver programmes that bring different people together to develop their confidence and skills in understanding and connecting with others. The Challenge also conducts original research and promotes policy ideas to forge a more integrated Britain.

We believe that, without action to build a more integrated society, the danger will grow that the people of Britain will respond to the complex challenges of the future not by asking 'how can we solve this together?', but 'who can we blame?'

For more information, please visit

**www.the-challenge.org**

@TheChallenge_UK

# A SENSE OF BELONGING

## Building a more socially integrated society

## FOREWORD

By Andrew Harrop and Ryan Shorthouse

*Andrew Harrop is general secretary of the Fabian Society and Ryan Shorthouse is the founder and chief executive of Bright Blue*

Think tanks from the right and left of politics spend a lot of their time arguing with each other. But there is plenty we agree on too, and the need for social mixing and a shared common life is something that people from across politics can sign up to.

Earlier this month, Dame Louise Casey's report of integration and opportunity re-ignited the debate on social integration between different ethnic groups in Britain. It is right to start by saying there is much to celebrate. People with immigrant backgrounds are now part of every community in Britain; mixed-race relationships are commonplace and accepted; and a number of ethnic minority groups have better education and employment outcomes than the white British average.

But, as the Casey Review explored, there are still many challenges. Her focus was particularly on the isolation and disadvantage experienced by people living in places which have very high concentrations from a single ethnic minority background. Casey's fear is that a minority of immigrants – she highlights certain Muslim women – are today unable to share in the British way of life, which so many other newcomers have both adapted to and helped to shape.

This is an important issue which politicians from all sides have worried about for decades. Such segregation reduces life chances and may sometimes create space for ideas and actions that threaten public safety. Casey's report provides new insights although perhaps fewer answers than are truly needed.

Social integration is about more than race and religion, however. It means bringing together people from all sorts of backgrounds: the old and young; straight and gay; rich and poor; disabled and non-disabled. This truly 'One Nation' agenda is crucial, as the evidence shows, to reducing prejudice and discrimination, and improving opportunities and quality of life. It is particularly important after the recent EU referendum which exposed and aggravated deep social divisions.

This collection of essays, bringing together leading opinion formers and decision makers from different political and professional backgrounds, is we hope the start – alongside the Casey Review – of a major debate on how to enhance social integration in the UK. Deep long-term currents shape our national way of life, but it is amenable to policy too: from housing and planning, to education, criminal justice and initiatives for young people.

Politicians need to ask how their actions can reduce social segregation, increase understanding and foster more than passing contact between people from different backgrounds. This collection of essays contains some initial ideas. We know that stronger and more diverse social networks can generate significant benefits to both individuals and wider society. But this cannot simply be a question of citizenship oaths for a small minority of incomers. We must create an inclusive, modern citizenship for us all. ■

## CONTENTS




Report editors: Kate Murray and Tobias Phibbs (Fabian Society); Laura Round (Bright Blue)

Produced in partnership with The Challenge

# WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT WOMEN

By unlocking the potential of women we can tackle persistent gender and race inequalities, writes **LOUISE CASEY**

*Dame Louise Casey is director general of the Casey Review team at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Her report on social integration was published in December 2016*

I HAVE SPENT THE past year touring the country conducting a review into integration and opportunity in our most isolated communities. Britain is a great nation, with much to be proud of, and in which millions of us from all kinds of backgrounds get on well together. Yet sadly it is not like that for us all. I have heard numerous personal accounts that have brought home to me the disadvantage still being suffered by some people, including those in 'traditional' white working-class communities. But the inequality suffered by so many black and minority ethnic women has really stood out for me and this has been particularly apparent in some Muslim communities I have visited. I think it is time we talked about this in a more open and honest way.

From the outset I want to say that no culture or religion can ever excuse violence and oppression against women, but my review has caused me to reflect on whether we – and I include myself in this as much as anyone – have been as active in promoting opportunity and as vigilant and robust in calling out sexism, taking on patriarchy and standing up to misogyny in some minority communities, as we would have been for white women or girls. Not because we thought that white women were more worthy of help, but because we thought we were less qualified to comment on cultures we didn't understand. To be blunt, I wonder if our abhorrence of racism and fear of being called racist, along with our desire not to cause offence has sometimes got in the way of our feminism.

For example, analysis of 2011 census data produced for my report shows that 44 per cent and 36 per cent of women born in Bangladesh and Pakistan but living in the UK were unable to speak English well or at all, compared to 20 per cent and 13 per cent of Bangladesh and Pakistan-born men. And while 20 per cent of all British Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were economically inactive in 2015, the rate for British Pakistani and Bangladeshi women was nearly three times higher, at 57 per cent. Not only are all those figures too high, they are shockingly gender unequal.

Not enough of us have spoken out against this unfairness and/or supported those Muslim women, many who have been courageously fighting these battles and whose voices have not always been heard.

We should not think that this is a problem that affects only older immigrant women who arrived in Britain 30 or 40 years ago, as 44 per cent of non-UK born Pakistani and Bangladeshi women aged 16 to 24 are currently unemployed or inactive and not in full time education. Some ongoing patterns of inter-cousin marriage and a custom of bringing in

brides from 'back home' have also led to what Demos have described as a "first generation in every generation", where young women are continually arriving into patriarchal Muslim communities with a lack of English, a lack of education and a reliance on their husband for money with a subservience to them in their life choices. This can have knock-on effects in their ability to understand even basic legal rights, to access health or domestic abuse services freely, as well as for their children who may not speak English in the home and are less well prepared for school as a result.

I fear that we have been too afraid to talk about a lot of this, along with other issues of violence and abuse including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called 'honour'-based crimes, or the worrying prevalence of male-dominated 'Biraderi' (meaning brotherhood) politics that has taken a hold in some councils and parts of our political parties and system. Because such abuses hold minority ethnic, cultural or religious associations, we walk on eggshells. We look hard for things that might excuse such behaviours and harms – including the possibility that regressive practices might grow in some communities as a defensive reaction to hostile and discriminatory behaviour. We worry about lacking the understanding and confidence necessary to confront such problems and are not comfortable doing so unless laws are clearly contravened. It is more straightforward to condemn criminal acts but more difficult to challenge or act on behaviours that fall into 'grey' areas along this spectrum – where one person's arranged marriage is another's forced marriage; where one person's loving relationship is another's coercive control; or where one person's religious conservatism is another's homophobia. We need an honest debate in society about this spectrum.

Those of us who regard ourselves as progressives rightly don't want to be racist and hold back from calling out wrongdoing for what it is.

But the *best case* explanation for what happened in Rotherham is a lesson here too. By failing to confront known child sexual exploitation because the majority of perpetrators were Pakistani-heritage men, for fear of upsetting race relations in the town, the council and police only made things worse. Race relations actually deteriorated even before the far right sought to exploit them. And of course it was young women and girls who suffered from the most appalling abuse.

© Matthew G / Flickr

So we have to be honest about abuse, discrimination and disadvantage wherever it occurs. If we wouldn't stand for it with white women, we shouldn't stand for it with any women. And I hope that the next wave of our fight for women's equality is one that reaches far into all communities and not just those that we are most comfortable criticising.

> We have to be honest about abuse, discrimination and disadvantage wherever it occurs. If we wouldn't stand for it with white women, we shouldn't stand for it with any women

Of course I recognise that support for vital English classes and domestic abuse services has been cut in recent years. I hope this can now be redressed. And I want to stress that feminists and those who have campaigned for women's equality and against racism and discrimination down the years are not the enemy here. They are, in so many ways, heroes who deserve our gratitude and respect.

We have made so much progress on race and gender equality, although we still have a long way to go on both. Indeed, the principle of equality – fought for by the suffragettes; the 'Made in Dagenham' girls, Barbara Castle and the MPs who pushed through the Equal Pay and Race Relations Acts; and more recently those who campaigned for all-women shortlists or, the Conservatives' A list, maternity and paternity rights, laws against FGM and forced marriage, the Equalities Act and equal marriage to name but a few achievements - helps define our sense of common British values.

And in that sense it can help with integration too. Because by uniting around our common values in a way that allows for and celebrates our differences but also guarantees our fundamental rights, we can start to provide a route map through the difficulties as well as the opportunities of our increasingly diverse nation. And, by unlocking the potential of all women, we can tackle both the gender and race inequalities that still persist in this country and that all progressives, of whatever political persuasion, should want to end. ■

# THE TIES THAT BIND

We are facing a crisis of social solidarity. To tackle it, we must make rebuilding community a truly national, cross-party mission, writes **CHUKA UMUNNA**

*Chuka Umunna is the Labour MP for Streatham and chair of the all-party parliamentary group on social integration*

2016 will go down in the history books as a year in which western democracy shifted on its axis. Clashes of ideas between the left and right are as relevant to the future of Britain as ever but, increasingly, it is the fault line between what have been characterised as 'small l liberals' and 'anti-PC populists', or those in favour of open versus closed societies, that gives shape to our political landscape.

Looking back now, the events of the last year – Brexit, the ascent of Trump, fall of Renzi and emergence of resurgent right-wing populism – shouldn't have come as such a surprise. Teddy Roosevelt once said that 'fellow-feeling' – or the ability to recognise how much we have in common – is the most important element of any effort at the 'betterment of social and civic conditions', but it seems that, more and more, we see less and less of ourselves in one another.

Across the western world, the development of an educated, outward-looking, cosmopolitan class – as much a cultural mindset as an economic reality – has generated a sense of bemusement and estrangement amongst people for whom a love of country and tradition is an obvious virtue. In Britain, the 2015 General Election should have been a wake-up call to the growing and pernicious political and cultural divisions brewing beneath the surface of our national life. For the first time, different parties won in each of the UK's four constituent nations, giving the impression of a kingdom coming apart at the seams, and new political dividing lines found expression in the electoral choices of old and young, urban and rural and working and middle-class Britons.

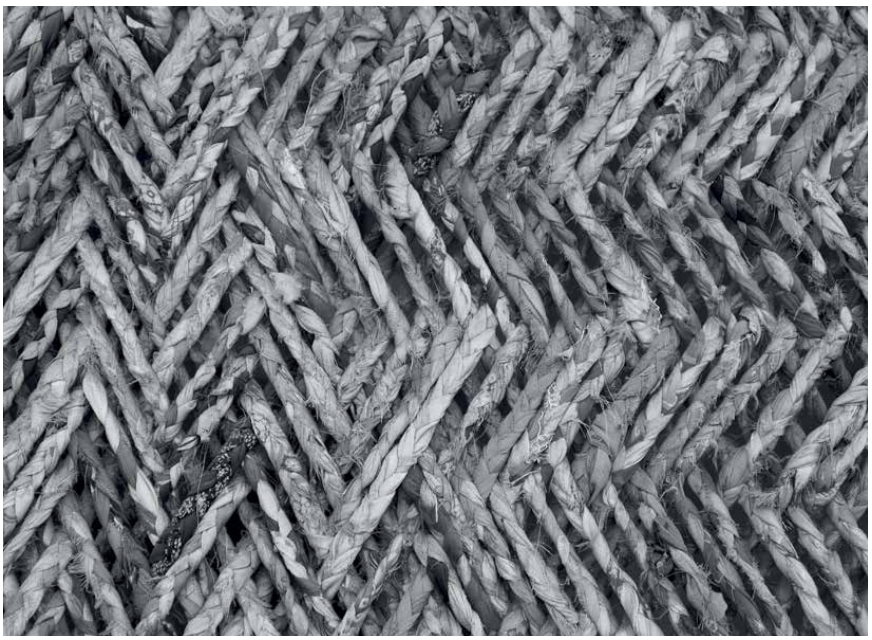
Even a decade ago, Tony Blair – then in his final years as prime minister – argued that the debate over whether our society should embrace or build defences against global markets and mobility had superseded the left-right divide as the principal fracture in our politics. Looking back now, it is clear that the government which he led made mistakes in attempting to navigate this rift. Too often, as in the case of the decision to open up the UK labour market to the former Eastern Bloc countries seven years before most other EU member states, New Labour fell back on the ideological assumption that immigration is inherently good. As a result, ministers failed to offer communities the support they required to successfully manage – and to come together in the wake of – demographic and cultural change. This political paradigm shift, however, arguably has its antecedents not in the age of Blair and Brown but in social developments which took root during the premierships of Attlee, Macmillan and Wilson.

## Diverse but divided

Throughout the lifetime of the baby boomer generation, Britain has become brilliantly diverse and our lives have become less uniform in a number of ways. We have gone from being an overwhelmingly white nation to one where 14 per cent of the population is made up of ethnic minority Britons and where many of our cities, towns and villages are home to people of every colour and creed. Over the same period, the rapid expansion of the middle-class and social and scientific advances have created new opportunities for people to chart their own path in life and enabled many more of us to lead more fulfilling lives.

The world has got better, life more interesting and rich, but change takes its toll and new challenges to our social solidarity have emerged.

What it means to be a family has changed. We're living longer and having children later in life – trends which should



© Meena Kadri / Flickr

be celebrated, but which are putting strain on our health and social care services and redefining the ways in which different generations relate to one another.

All the while, the strong social ties which once held working-class communities together have been eroded as people have moved away from towns and neighbourhoods occupied by generations of their family before them and the traditional industries around which these communities were organised have declined. Now, as we grapple with the effects of rising inequality, automation and economic insecurity, many Britons feel abandoned to a broken future devoid of both economic and social capital. Moreover, the rise of gated communities and the decline of common civic institutions (such as the organised church, community social clubs and political parties) mean that many of us simply have no idea how the other half lives.

These trends have, then, resulted in a Britain which is at once more diverse and less integrated. In 2014, the independent Social Integration Commission found that, even where people live in neighbourhoods which are diverse by ethnicity and income, they're significantly more likely to interact with people from similar backgrounds to them than those from different walks of life.

Social divisions sap our communities of trust – increasing anxiety, prejudice and the fear of crime, restricting social mobility and augmenting the sense that there is more which divides than that which binds us together. The result is a self-perpetuating cycle of fragmentation which fuels feelings of difference and dislocation and makes it all too easy for people to pin the challenges facing our country on 'the other'.

There are some very practical steps we can take at a local level to support communities and foster integration. When I visited Boston in Lincolnshire, one woman said to me that she wanted to talk to her neighbour and build a friendship with her, but she had to wait for her neighbour's children to come home to translate because her neighbour didn't speak English. However, local authorities have had their funding cut for English language services and are not able to provide the scale and depth of services needed.

Another resident told me that they were made to feel unsafe with young Eastern European men drinking on their street at night. However, as our conversation went on another local resident said that the only reason people drank on the streets was because of private sector landlords who only allowed tenants access to their room at certain times of day. During the rest of the day someone else would be sleeping in the same bed, and communal spaces in larger properties had been converted into another bedroom to maximise rent. A local community issue creating division and fear was actually due to exploitation in the private rental sector showing that the right reforms to tackle rogue landlords can have a positive impact on the whole community.

In order to drain our politics of the venom of blame and recrimination, we must build a more socially integrated society. This will mean seriously engaging with the vital task of managing change and crafting a politics which speaks to the concerns of both globalists and patriots.

### A multiculturalism that works

More than any other issue, immigration has been the fulcrum around which political debate has revolved over the last few years. At times, this conversation can seem hopelessly, irreconcilably polarised – with one group of voices claiming that Britain is full and that it's time to pull up the drawbridge, and another that multiculturalism is a great British success story and that it's only a fundamentally backwards minority who are concerned about change.

As ever, the truth is neither black nor white but exists in shades of grey. It is not contradictory to at once recognise the dynamism and vibrancy which immigration has infused into our communities and cultural life and the fact that rapid demographic and cultural change can put real pressure on public services and undermine people's sense of security and belonging within their communities. Indeed, any effort at grappling with the forces of globalisation and forging a settlement which works for everyone in our society must begin with an acknowledgement that immigration can undermine the ties that bind - but that it doesn't have to.

I believe that it is possible to craft a middle way between the laissez-faire multiculturalism favoured by successive British governments and the assimilationist politics of the French burkini ban, building a meaningful integration programme which would enable Britons of all backgrounds to both accept and look beyond our differences.

Developing meaningful solutions to build a multiculturalism that works and bring our divided nation back together will, however, require each of us to strive to understand the world from a different perspective. We must, in other words, close neither our borders nor our ears to the voices of those who are anxious about immigration.

## To live together meaningfully

We cannot afford to fall into the trap of superimposing our own concerns onto those who feel left behind by change in their communities, as we have too often in the past.

Of course people are more likely to cast around for someone to blame when inequality is rampant, school places, houses and jobs are harder to come by, but this isn't the whole story. In fact, in order to learn the lessons of the Brexit referendum, we must recognise that many people cast their ballot in favour of leaving the EU in full knowledge that they were voting against their own material interests. This trend has been correctly interpreted by many as a rejection of the economic status-quo, but it must also serve as a reminder to the political class that there is more to life than gross domestic product. In the same spirit, we must acknowledge that unease over immigration is rooted as much in issues of identity and attachment as in concerns over the jobs market or public services.

Politics must, ultimately, speak to the issues where people find meaning in their lives. Those who dismiss unease over immigration as simply racism or purely anger at the economic and social order are equally guilty of missing a shared desire to live together with our neighbours in a meaningful way, fostering tolerance and respect – such as the lady in Boston who wanted to get to know her neighbour; or another gentleman who welcomed new Polish delis and shops which had rejuvenated the High Street, but didn't feel welcome enough to shop in those businesses.

Especially – but not only – during periods of insecurity and turbulence, human beings are hardwired to seek out the comfort and safety of the tribe and group loyalties. Viewed through the lens of social psychology rather than ideology or economic determinism, assertions of attachment to country and community are neither throwbacks to a bygone era nor expressions of xenophobia, but rather of a vital and deeply modern sort of solidarity.

As those of us who believe in open societies have been repeatedly reminded this year, political movements which attempt to suppress or circumvent the felt need for solidarity and community have a limited shelf life. The task before politicians of all ideological persuasions seeking to piece our country back together is to enable and inspire the development of group identities which unify rather than fragment society in all its diversity.

## Shared identities, shared lives

The most powerful form of group identity – patriotism – isn't especially comfortable territory for politicians and activists of the left and liberal centre, who feel the weight of past injustices keenly and have spent much of the last half century practising an emancipatory form of identity politics. As the rise of civic nationalism in Scotland demonstrates, however, patriotism needn't be exclusionary or nationalistic. To draw on an analogy which the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has deployed powerfully, you love your spouse not because you think they are better than other people, but because you love them as an individual.

We on the left must get over our queasiness at displays of national pride and stop giving the impression that we believe transnational entities such as the European Union to be somehow morally superior to nation states. Patriotic symbols such as the Cross of St George have been hijacked by the siren voices of the far right only because we let them be. If we are to forge a more integrated society and breathe new life into the One Nation tradition which has animated British politics for over a century, we must harness the power of patriotism to accentuate our essential sameness and build bonds of trust between Britons of all backgrounds in every corner of our country.

> Our national conversation on the new patriotism must stretch beyond the debating halls of Westminster and unfold in our schools, streets, pubs and places of worship

Englishness, much like Scottishness, is deeply felt – there's no denying it's a more emotional connection than Britishness. We English are bound together by historical and cultural ties – we exist in the national consciousness as an imagined, but in no way imaginary, community. Now, we must develop a 21st century, pluralistic and inclusive idea of Englishness marrying a real and deep sense of national kinship with genuine comfort with our place in Great Britain, Europe and the wider world.

This is, of course, easier said than done. At a time in which people feel very far removed from political power, proposals for an English parliament and greater regional devolution are worthy of serious consideration, but we should be wary of answering questions which go to the heart of how people feel about England with constitutional quick fixes. More than ever before – in an age characterised by mistrust of elites and shaped more by peer-to-peer technology than by the peerage – what it means to be English will be crowd-sourced rather than imposed from above by politicians.

All ideas of national kinship are formed through both the heritage left to us by past generations and the everyday shared customs and common experiences which help us to recognise something of ourselves in one another; and the most powerful shared identities are almost always moulded in the fire of collective endeavour. It follows that, not only must our national conversation on the new patriotism stretch beyond the debating halls of Westminster, it must extend past our newspapers and Facebook feeds and unfold in our schools, streets, pubs and places of worship – in the places where people from different walks of life still come together and lead shared lives.

It follows, too, that we need more of these places. After all, research shows that when people from different ethnicities, social backgrounds and ages meet and mix, trust grows and communities flourish. That's why I believe that we must make rebuilding community a truly national, cross-party mission – driving change from the centre through adapting our schools and public services to better bring people together and establishing new national institutions to promote social integration; whilst also empowering cities, towns, local authorities and communities to create new spaces in which neighbours can come together.

## Rebuilding our common life

I believe that we are facing nothing less than a crisis of social solidarity, but I also know that our differences needn't divide us. Through developing a meaningful politics of social integration, we can craft a story of national renewal which draws upon and reinforces that which we have in common rather than that which divides us, and build a more empathetic, united and resilient country. ■

# STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

We are a more diverse society, and a more divided one – but that can change, argues **SUELLA FERNANDES**

What does the face of 21st century Britain look like? Are we a people at ease with ourselves, united by a strong sense of British values, transcending race, class and age? Or, in the aftermath of an historic test of how we see our country's place in the world, is talk of a divided nation justified?

Tolerance, openness, compassion and fairness define Britain but whether we are united is less clear. In many parts of the country, a 'tale of two cities' persists, with communities living parallel lives, rarely brushing up against each other, and experiencing dramatically divergent life chances. This self-imposed segregation weakens the fabric of our society and has an impact on the economy too.

We are becoming a more diverse society. In the next 10 to 15 years, the proportion of the UK's population who are either under 18 or over 60 years old is projected to rise from 42 to 47 per cent. The proportion of British residents who are members of a minority ethnic group will rise from 16 per cent in mid-2012 to around 38 per cent by 2050. And based on the trends of the last 40 years, the income gap between the richest and poorest members of society will widen.

When we look at this growing diversity, and think about the integration we need, it is vital for us to talk frankly. Otherwise, latent malaise and frustration about divisions will be exploited by far-right populists. That's why it is important to recognise the cultural impact of fast-paced immigration – an annual average of 248,000 between 2011 and 2015 compared with an annual average of 37,000 between 1991 and 1995.

When the Social Integration Commission looked at social integration in Britain today, it found that highly diverse areas were not necessarily integrated. For example, whilst London is more *diverse* than the rest of the country and Londoners, it is less *integrated*. Londoners' actual social groups are in fact the least likely to properly reflect the age, income and ethnic mix of the city around them.

The commission also found that employed professionals had fewer social interactions with those who are unemployed than would be expected if there was no social segregation. This raises significant questions about how social integration may affect access to work when around 40 per cent of jobs are found through personal contacts

So what's the way forward? First we need to define what we mean by social integration. When can an immigrant be seen as 'integrated' into British society? What are the key indicators showing that people have adapted to life in the UK? This will help targeting of resources and measuring progress.

Second, since a common language is fundamental for integration, we need to put more stress on language fluency must be required more robustly. Worryingly, census figures for 2011 showed that just under 800,000 people living in the UK had no command of English. The problem is most acute among women: 60 per cent of those living in England and Wales but unable to speak the national tongue are female. Those who do not speak English cannot learn, work or engage with wider society and ghettos spring up. We need better ESOL, targeted at rural areas and low-skilled workers and we need to assess ability better.

Third, integration policy needs to respond to all types of migration, including short-term EU and student migration. Work to support integration needs to be mainstreamed into all policy areas. Housing and planning policy, for example, should take greater account of increasing interaction within new communities by mixing housing type and prioritising community spaces for collective activities.

Fourth, we need greater focus on bringing diverse groups of people together. Sports, volunteering, and certain faith groups create that sense of teamwork, combating isolation. Street parties and national celebrations also work. The National Citizen Service and The Challenge have been remarkable at building meaningful camaraderie between young people from unrelated walks of life. Scaling these projects up and extending their principles to adults and new arrivals should be explored.

© Iain and Sarah / Flickr

Finally, the Controlling Migration Fund (a strong successor of the Migration Impacts Fund) aims to help communities experiencing high and unexpected volumes of immigration to ease pressures on services and to pay for additional immigration enforcement. This needs to explicitly deal with the issue of integration of migrants – not simply manage their effect on public services.

Over the last 50 years Britain has become more broad-minded, equitable and open. The experience of migrants to this country in the 1960s, such as those of my father, bear no comparison to those of new migrants in the 2000s, or even myself, born and educated in the UK. However, we now face a new era of striking the right balance between permissiveness and respect; a challenge that needs all Britons, not in spite of our differences but because of what we share, to embrace. ■

*Suella Fernandes is the Conservative MP for Fareham and a member of the all-party parliamentary group on social integration*

# LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Fifteen years after his influential work on community cohesion, **TED CANTLE** says we need a new, national and positive story of living together with difference and a pro-active strategy of integration in communities, schools and workplaces

*Professor Ted Cantle CBE is founder of the iCoCo Foundation which promotes interculturalism and community cohesion. In 2001 he wrote the Cantle report on community cohesion following riots in northern towns and cities*

It would be good to give integration a try. There are currently no policy objectives, no performance targets and certainly no strategy or vision, to build an integrated society. This has been the case since the birth of our modern, post-war multicultural society. Of course, there have been many fine words extolling the benefits of integration and from the outset, with the race relations legislation in the 1960s, there has been a statutory duty to promote 'good relations'. But like all the other fine words, this was never developed and, apart from the community cohesion programme introduced in 2001 and all but abandoned by the coalition government in 2010, there has been nothing resembling a strategy or programme. The very recent Casey Review of Integration and Opportunity provides an opportunity to redress this.

## What is integration?

Integration is not a simple concept and has been defined in a number of ways. In the past, it has been equated with notions of assimilation in which different groups lose their cultural heritage or distinctiveness. Generally speaking, assimilation has been advanced by those on the right, whereas those on the left have resisted any move in that direction and as a result have tended to be wary of any integration policy.

> We have to consider the pace of change and recognise that both migrants and host communities will need much more support to come to terms with the changes they see around them

We have thus often lost sight of a more pragmatic approach – to find ways of what we might call 'living together' – in which we share a sense of belonging; develop our personal intercultural confidence and religious literacy; and become comfortable with difference and plurality.

We have to recognise that integration is also closely tied to notions of identity and loss – nowhere was this more clear than in the Brexit debate in which the mantra of 'give us back our country' resonated with so many. Our challenge now is to develop a language which supports the idea of people absorbing new and different layers of identity without having to forsake their own heritage.

In the current circumstances, a particular focus must be placed on the position of Muslim communities who have become outsiders in the eyes of many. We also have to consider the current pace of change and recognise that both migrants and host communities will need much more support to come to terms with the changes that they see around them. This may well mean debating difficult subjects openly, rather than shying away from them as we have tended to do in the past.

Integration cannot be left to chance, as though it will somehow naturally develop

– whilst there are clearly now more diverse areas, there is also evidence that polarisation has increased in some areas and in relation to some groups. The physical changes in our communities, schools and workplaces tend to mirror our attitudes and are similarly divided: according to recent Pew Research Centre polling, roughly one third of UK citizens believe that diversity has improved the country, one third take the opposite view and the remainder have not made up their mind. This provides a large target for those who peddle fear and hate.

Perhaps the most important starting point is not some new initiative or intervention in our communities, but rather developing a new and positive narrative about 'living together'. There is little by way of a positive story to tell to either minority or majority communities. There is no narrative which champions a diverse and mixed society, nor the benefits of pluralism and the development of a cosmopolitan worldview. By contrast, there are plenty of negative messages about 'Islamification', immigration, and the alleged undermining of British values and 'Britishness'. Rather than providing a new vision, politicians have had to be reminded by the European Human Rights Commission of the need to avoid "divisive language" and consider the impact "on [the] national mood of their words and policies".

But a new and positive narrative to address difference can be forged at a number of levels – national, city and neighbourhood. The recent appointment of a deputy mayor of London for social integration and the development of an 'integration city' programme is a start. Such an approach would be more effective if it worked by facilitating everyday activities rather than as a top-down campaign.

## Integration initiatives

There are a number of integration – and desegregation – initiatives which must be developed together.

The education sector offers the greatest opportunities for providing young people with the skills and experience to further integration and to live successfully in an increasingly diverse and globalised world. Indeed, they will need such skills to compete in the future job market. Every opportunity should be taken to build critical thinking and resilience by introducing key contemporary issues into all areas of the school community. This should include tackling the 'dangerous conversations' which are often avoided in schools, partly because teachers lack the confidence and training and partly because of the fear of upsetting some part of the school's community.

However, at present too many of our schools have become more segregated than the areas which they serve, with increasingly segmented populations based on faith, ethnicity and social class – the very opposite of the government's objective of "building a shared community where children of many faiths and backgrounds learn not just with each other, but from each other too". Schools must develop a mixed intake in which students interact with each other and develop friendships across boundaries.

It is of course the case that some workplaces are richly diverse and the NHS particularly stands out in this regard (although not in every area or level of seniority). However, there are many businesses that are very monocultural and make little attempt to broaden their recruitment. This is especially true of employers that target new migrants and even more so where labour providers are used to recruit the workforce. Many parts of the food picking, packing and processing industry are deeply segregated, often built around separate language and/or ethnic groups.

However, segregation is also found in some of the businesses that have been established for decades where the labour force has been continually replenished by a particular community or communities. Employers need to do far more to promote equal opportunities and positive action to ensure that their workforces represent the communities and customers they serve.

Housing policy is another crucial area; people have to live in the same vicinity in order to encounter each other in shops, parks, sports centres and on the streets, and even this level of proximity has been found to reduce prejudice. Over time, this form of meeting becomes more meaningful as friendships form through regular contact, especially where facilities are shared, schools are integrated, or people meet as neighbours.

Social housing has generally been provided on the basis of need and is therefore generally more integrated than other forms of housing. The private rented sector has become part of the inner city revolving door for new arrivals, while encouraging more owner-occupied housing among newcomers has never been considered as an integration policy objective.

And whilst the state is reluctant to regulate the faith sector it might be expected to ensure that young people are provided with a plurality of views about faith and non-faith beliefs, with the emphasis on free choice at adulthood. A recent Woolf Institute report pointed out that this is not the case at present and recommended a clear and statutory underpinning.

Finally, much more can be done at an informal level through the social and cultural sector, with only modest financial support. For example, English language classes need not be formal or costly; 'buddy' systems could be used to help people learn about both the English language and the local culture, in the process developing new friendships and dispelling some of the fear of new arrivals.

We have to recognise that both minority and majority communities in deeply segregated areas are likely to express the biggest resistance to integration. This is partly to do with fear of the loss of identity and economic pressures may play a role too. But it is also a reflection of the lack of opportunity to experience diversity. In terms of priorities, then, the most deeply segregated areas will need the most investment in building opportunities to engage with others and come to terms with difference. ■

© Catrin Austin / Flickr

# CREATING SPACES FOR A COMMON LIFE

We need new institutions to bridge the growing divides between us, says **JON YATES**

*Jon Yates is external affairs and operations director at The Challenge*

This has been a year of division. Brexit. Trump. Le Pen. And yet one thing united us all. Whichever side you stood on – remain, leave, Clinton, Trump, there was a common lament: "I want my country back".

In 2016, it wasn't the past that was a foreign country. It was the present.

This sense of not recognising our own country is everywhere. But like all sudden revolutions, it is the result of years of slow underlying change. And in this case, there are two moving tectonic plates beneath us: the growth of difference – that unchecked divides us – and the loss of a 'common life' to connect us back together.

## The growth of difference

Our countries are increasingly diverse. Not just by ethnicity, but by age and income as well. By 2050, almost 40 per cent of all Britons will be non-white. Fifteen years sooner, almost 50 per cent will be children or pensioners – with half a century of life experience apart. Meanwhile we are likely to continue to see an increasing difference in life experience and income between skilled and unskilled Britons.

This growth of difference is here to stay – driven by forces of technological innovation as irreversible as King Canute found the sea.

The challenge this growth of difference presents is the human tendency to split off with people who remind us of ourselves: our age, our education, our ethnicity, our income. Psychologists have a word for this bias – they call it 'homophily'; the rest of us have a childhood phrase: 'birds of a feather stick together'. This bias, though minor, is visible across our society: from the banal (students with glasses are more likely to sit next to each other in the lunch hall) to the serious (people will spend more to access a catchment area where the school more closely represents their ethnic group).

> The previous common life based on churches, trade unions and membership groups is in severe decline

This bias made sense in the prehistoric savannah – where the man who looked different was likely to be the enemy. Unevolved, it has become a tendency to split, to divide, to segregate.

Successful human societies have always had a way to keep homophily in check – a set of institutions that brought different people together; we call it here the common life. Unfortunately that too is changing.

## The loss of the common life

All successful human societies had a common life that connected them. Successful nomadic tribes used rites of passage that young men and women from all families would take part in together; pre-industrial villages and towns used festivals, religious services and courts to connect their citizens; successful industrial cities in the early 19th century relied on fast-growing churches, trade unions and new membership groups – the Scouts, Guides, friendly societies, Rotarians.

However, each change – from nomadic tribe to village, from village to city – disrupted the previous common life. Rites

of passage did not fit with village life; the local parish and village courts did not fit the industrial city.

The same is true today. The previous common life based on churches, trade unions and membership groups is in severe decline. These institutions no longer fit our new post-industrial society

We are now starting to live with the consequences: an increased polarisation of politics, low trust of others, a rise in loneliness (especially amongst the elderly), growing inequalities in access and in connections to the job market, and a lack of common space to integrate new migrants into.

As a result, many of us live in a country full of difference, hidden from view by our own bubble full of similarity. Is it any wonder then, that when we look outside our bubble, our country sometimes feels foreign to us?

## Rebuilding

We should not despair. Instead, it is time to act – to build the new common life to replace the old. Some principles will guide our path.

First, we need to take the building of a common life seriously. The Victorians relied on charities to lead the charge on education and healthcare. They did not complete the job. The same is true of building a common life to achieve social integration. The government must lead, with vision and investment.

Second, we should focus on moments of transition. Starting school, becoming a young adult, starting your first job, settling in a new area, becoming a parent, retraining or retiring – it is during these moments of transition that we most want a new support group around us and when our identities are most in flux and open to new alliances.

Third, we must ensure these moments of common life are intense and significant enough to create a shared identity. The tribes' rites of passage were once in a lifetime challenges. The modern version cannot just be about be different ethnic groups visiting the same coffee shop or walking down the same streets. The focus on moments of transition will help: citizens training or retraining together, experiencing being a parent together or considering retirement together will bring its own intensity. But we must look to use other methods that have always created shared identity – sport, music and art.

Finally, we must put excellent marketing and design front and centre. In designing the common life we are up against a crowded market place for people's time. We must design institutions that are more attractive than the competition and appeal to people from all walks of life. We will need an approach that is led by government but unleashes the ingenuity of the private sector. We should ask how to best incentivise the private sector to build common life institutions that we desperately need.

We know that these principles work; they gave us the best example of the common life we presently have – the National Citizen Service (NCS). The original vision was set by government and the programme was built to fit a moment of transition as young people become adults. The marketers were front and centre ensuring that it appeals to young people of all backgrounds and the energy came from the entrepreneurs who left their day jobs to set up a charity to build the programme. I know the story well. For the charity I work for was that charity and I was one of those entrepreneurs. Eight years later, almost one in six young people are taking part in the NCS – and it reaches and connects citizens of all incomes and backgrounds.

And yet, by itself, it is not enough. It is time to double down and push for the next NCS, the next element of our common life.

Let me finish with an analogy and a call to arms.

Over the next five years, the renewable energy market is projected to double in size. Private sector initiative and investment has pushed the market forward at pace. But it took the government to act to start this revolution. They moved to provide funding, subsidies and investment that unleashed the creativity. Why? Because they realised that the 'natural' market made it cheaper to pollute than to renew. The government intervened not to corrupt the market, but to correct it.

Right now, when designing and building activities that bring people together, it is cheaper to segregate than to integrate. Cheaper to build a youth programme that appeals to one group in society: the rich, the poor, one ethnic group or another, the high achievers, the left behind. It is time for the government to start to change this. To provide a similar set of subsidies, investments and incentives to entrepreneurs who connect and build a common life.

We have a green investment bank, where is the integration one? ■

# CAPITAL IDEAS

People who are struggling to get by have little time to invest in their communities. We need to do more to help them rebuild the social fabric that benefits us all, writes **JULIA UNWIN**

*Julia Unwin is chief executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

There are few who would have predicted the huge political changes we have witnessed over the past year. The UK deciding to leave the European Union seemed unimaginable to many people, on both sides of the debate, just a few months ago. The election of Donald Trump and the rise of populist parties from both ends of the political spectrum in countries across the world have left people feeling shocked, bewildered and, in many cases, afraid.

2016 has shown us that the world we live in is a more deeply divided place than we realised. As we leave the year behind us, we must turn our attention to what we can do to heal these divisions. In my view, tackling dispossession, isolation, and the erosion of social capital in many parts of the UK must be at the heart of this.

The decision to take Britain out of the EU has laid bare some real and damaging fractures in our society. Research into the demographics of the vote has shown a strong divide along economic, educational and geographical lines. The decision to leave was made by people who feel overlooked and cut off from the growth that benefits those in more prosperous parts of the country.

We should not be surprised to find these levels of disconnection. Over the last decade, the UK's labour market, housing market and the role of the state in supporting people and places that lack economic security have all changed fundamentally. For some these have been positive changes, as people grasp the opportunities opened up by globalisation and technological advancements to reap the benefits of a more innovative, connected world. The huge increases in property values have brought increased economic security for some of those who own their own homes. Government action to bring down poverty rates amongst pensioners has helped to break broken the historic link between old age and penury.

> We cannot talk about how to support the social capital of our society without also looking at how to stamp out the hardship that can become entrenched when our communities are shut out from economic growth

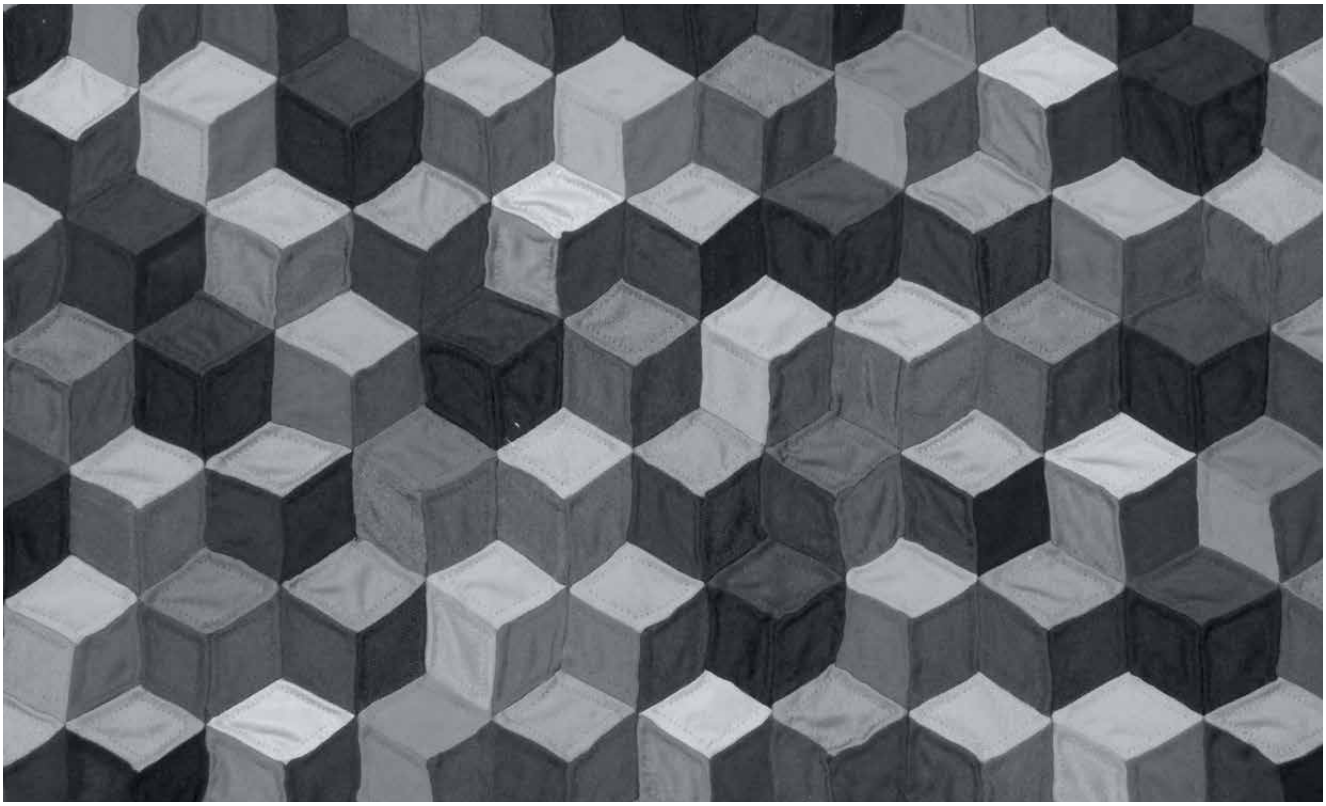
But while the last decade has seen many people prosper, it has also seen many people fall behind. Even before the global financial crisis of 2008, the social and economic progress of the boom years had shut out huge swathes of the UK's population. Economic prosperity at the turn of the 21st century has emphatically not trickled down and helped all to thrive, but has instead introduced dangerous new divides.

## The earnings gap

The so-called gig economy brings gains for many but for others it has created an extremely insecure labour market, where low pay and poor conditions are rife. The UK today is a nation where four in every five people in low-paid work will still be in a low-paid role 10 years later.

The huge fall in the number of pensioners who are living in poverty is one of the great public policy successes of recent years. But success in this area has not been matched by improvements in living standards for younger citizens. The number of people who work but still struggle to get by has been steadily increasing. Low pay, low hours and low productivity have meant that there are many people for whom earning enough for a decent standard of living has become impossible. The problem is exacerbated by the escalating cost of basic essentials like energy, food and childcare.

The housing market too is contributing to uncertainty, insecurity and is making it more difficult for some to connect with their local communities. People in the



© Viviane / Flickr

bottom fifth on the income scale who live in the private rented sector are likely to be paying 55 per cent of their income on their housing – in many cases for a six-month tenancy. This contrasts with the 13 per cent that a middle-income owner occupier is likely to be spending on their mortgage. This makes it difficult for many people at the lower end of the income scale to put down roots, make connections and build up the social capital that is at the heart of a healthy community.

To move forwards, we must bring together efforts to help people who struggling financially with work to increase social capital, to make sure that everyone feels they have a stake in a strong, welcoming society. We cannot talk about how to support the social capital of our society without also looking at how to stamp out the hardship that can become entrenched when our communities are shut out from economic growth.

The divisions that we face today cannot be tackled unless we first tackle the structural barriers that prevent people from building a secure life for themselves. And we cannot ignore the fact that although the vote for Brexit was heavily influenced by economics, its announcement was accompanied by a spike in hatred and violence which any of us found profoundly shocking.

## Crowded lives

To heal these divides we must also look at how to reduce isolation, support diversity and help local communities, particularly in less prosperous areas, to thrive. This social capital is not formed in a vacuum. Our connections are shaped by the way that we live, and people struggling to earn enough to get by are leading extremely crowded lives. A couple with two children needs to have at least one parent in full-time and one in part-time work on at least the National Living Wage to escape poverty. This leaves many families with little spare time to spend supporting neighbours, caring for friends or relatives and engaging with their local communities.

If intolerance and violence are allowed to spread, the social fabric which brings us together and creates social capital will collapse. If our communities are less open to migrants and closed to young people who are struggling to afford a secure home, they lose economic potential and innovation. If they are unwelcoming to older people who have lived in local area for years they will lose wisdom and leadership. If a lack of opportunity becomes entrenched, with some areas of the country shut out of economic growth for years at a time, the potential of the people living in these areas will be squandered and the result will hold the whole economy back.

Social capital is what distinguishes open, creative, thriving communities from isolated places where development and progression are stifled. It is not an optional extra. It is as fundamental to a healthy society as economic growth and financial prosperity. Modern social capital enables and encourages the small acts of kindness that enable us all to survive. But it can also connect people across generations, across faiths and across nationalities. Without a conscious, concerted effort to build social capital, this will be put at risk. Divisions will grow, diversity and inclusivity will suffer and communities will shut down. In the 21st century, in one of the richest countries in the world, we cannot stand by and watch this happen. ■

# A SHARED FUTURE

Young and old have so much to gain from each other. **ALEX SMITH** explains how bridging the generation gap strengthens our common bond

*Alex Smith founded North London Cares and South London Cares. He was formerly an advisor to Labour leader Ed Miliband and editor of* LabourList

In my job, I'm sometimes asked, "What's the difference between baby boomers and millennials?" It's a strange and simplistic question, and one that seeks to highlight the divergences we have in our experience rather than what we all have in common.

But in the context of the globalisation, digitisation, gentrification, migration, housing bubbles and inequality that define the past 40 years of rapid social change – and the recent schisms in our subsequent electoral expressions – it's also a question that requires more consideration than ever.

As we try to piece together the shards of separation that have sheared at our integration in recent times, we must consider how, in our fast moving, connected age, we ensure that no one, regardless of age, class, ethnicity, faith or income feels left behind. In a time when voting patterns, and indeed voting participation, are diverging across the generations, how do we make sure that government and our politics at large represent the needs of everyone in our communities?

And, beyond policy and psephology, how do we begin to marry two diametrically opposed worldviews – one forged on a backdrop of war, rationing and solidarity that ultimately led to the founding of the National Health Service and the welfare state, the other on post-Thatcherite individualism?

These deeper questions will need to be addressed if we are to establish intergenerational justice, let alone authentic integration. To find answers, they require analysis of how we got here, and new ideas for how we can help people to live not just parallel experiences, but fully shared lives.

The reality of our social and generational divides has been brutally exposed in recent years. A distance was already opening up when, in 2011, some of our biggest cities were torn apart by riots.

The causes of those troubles included despair amongst some communities at the power of the state, particularly the police. A rapid rise in youth unemployment, which spiked to 1 million that year – and which at 21 per cent was twice the overall UK rate at the time – was another key part of the picture. A general inequality of life chances was also at play. Institute for Fiscal Studies research shows that people between 22 and 30 were in the process of becoming 7 per cent worse off; the over-60s 11 per cent better off.

Meanwhile, as student fees were hiked to £9,000 a year, the prospects of joining the ranks of the well-connected felt further away for many young people: a 2010 poll showed that 75 per cent of people believed the change in policy would make teenagers from more deprived backgrounds less likely to go to university.

Even if those initial urges to lash out have for the time being largely quietened, the anger amongst many young people remains. And in our current context, it's no wonder that young people can feel estranged from their older neighbours and the political system. In the 2015 general election, people aged 18 to 24 were half as likely to vote as those over 65. Even in the EU referendum the higher-than-normal 64 per cent youth turnout was long shy of the 72 per cent national vote.

It's not just *who* votes, of course, that matters, but *how* people vote too – and again the discrepancies between young and old are striking. In that finely balanced 2015 election, Labour attracted more votes from young people than the Conservatives, while its vote share amongst over-65s dropped to just one in four. With older people more likely to read newspapers, with their established editorial positions, and younger people increasingly consuming news and content through digital platforms connected to their own social networks those trends may only perpetuate over time.

Although a relatively crude distillation, information firm Experian's demographic mosaic groups offer an explanation as to how divergent life experiences have led to such distinct worldviews. 80 per cent of its 'Vintage Value' category is over 65. A majority live alone in social rented accommodation, and make little use of the internet. Most are on low incomes drawn from state pensions, other benefits and savings. The 'Rental Hubs' generation, on the other hand, are predominantly under the age of 35, have become accustomed to digitisation, are professionally ambitious and live in private rented accommodation.

Not all older and younger people fit into these categories, of course. But in our growing big cities in particular, where people live closest together but often

© Phil Richards / Flickr

worlds apart, these differences in culture and attitudes are clear, and stark.

That's why the charities that I run, North London Cares and South London Cares, exist – to reduce social isolation amongst older people and young professionals alike; to harness the people and places around us so that neighbours can help one another improve their skills, power and connection in a rapidly changing world; and to bridge the gaps across social, generational, digital, cultural and attitudinal divides.

We've been gobsmacked by the results. 81 per cent of older people we work with regularly tell us they feel better connected as a result of their participation. 77 per cent say their relations with young people have improved. Neighbours report feeling happier, a greater sense of community and that they have more people to rely on.

And the connection goes both ways – with 97 per cent of the young professionals feeling better able to appreciate older people and 98 per cent reporting a greater connection to their community.

In an age where housing is increasingly "ghettoised", with council estates and gated new-build apartment blocks exacerbating a sense of 'otherness' we're particularly pleased that The Cares Family's work does not just bring people together across generational lines, but across social lines too – with a similar proportion of private and social rented tenants participating.

But with our media filter bubbles and national dialogue continuing to underscore our differences, and networks turning ever more inwards, we need more ideas and initiatives to bring people together to tackle our problem of disconnection in a connected age.

Government can make a start by developing a proper social integration strategy with a full time champion attending cabinet and working across departments to push for the type of programmes and funding that can help tighten our common bonds in a time of rapid change.

On welfare, reforms can focus on what's strong about communities – incentivising older and younger people to share their time, skills and networks for the benefit of others, and drawing back on universal benefits in order to focus on the hardest up.

Next, more homes – and mixed housing developments in particular – would create the security and spaces for people to live together, and spend time together, in the real world. Building on the Dutch model, residential homes should not be exclusively for the oldest and frailest, but places where young people, too, can mix with their older neighbours and create meaningful relationships that benefit everyone.

To fix the challenge of young people feeling disengaged from the political status quo, the franchise should be extended to everyone over 16. In most parts of the law, those 16–18 year olds are already adults – they can have children, receive state benefits, join the armed forces and pay tax – so they should be trusted with the vote too.

And why not explore the notion of a 'GI Bill'-style investment, that helps people of all ages to build a business, buy a home, or save, according to their own priorities – rather than plastering over the cracks of an unfair economy with never-ending tax credits that do more to offset poverty than to really solve it?

Across the community sector, too, we can do more to bridge the gaps of disconnection in our connected age. Bite the Ballot does good work to engage young people politically across the country. Currently working in Sixth Form colleges, youth centres, faith groups and online, they should expand their vision to bring older people to the table too, to demonstrate the culture and importance of participation and to share understanding across generations.

The Centre for Ageing Better, which is working to establish and understand the evidence around that process that we're all going through, should expand its remit to include how attitudes and experiences amongst young people can develop through time and into later life.

And across political parties, the media, charities and business, we should build a new 'Re:generation' campaign coalition – one that challenges our national stereotypes of younger and older people alike, puts a new spin on people's perceptions of 'dynamism', 'wisdom', and 'lucky and unlucky generations', and helps us to change our collective attitudes towards age groups and social attitudes other than our own.

There's a convention and a cliché amongst some groups working with older and younger generations – that 'age doesn't matter'. But age does matter. Age is a collection of life experiences, of love and loss, of hope and heartbreak, of mischief and misadventure. And context matters too. People who were brought up in a time of war or restraint or sexual revolution or digital abundance may think differently from those of other generations, and act accordingly. That's OK. Life would be boring if we were on repeat.

But in our context of a rapidly transforming world shifting faster than our sense of identity can keep up with, we should do more – through every channel of civic life – to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, circumstance or background, can feel a part of, rather than left behind by, their changing communities.

Then we might realise that people from across social and generational lines still have so much in common, and so much to gain from one another – in shared time, laughter, new experiences and, ultimately, their shared futures. ■

# LESSONS IN ASPIRATION

Our schools can be engines for social integration, argues **JAMES O'SHAUGHNESSY**

*Lord O'Shaughnessy is a Conservative peer, senior fellow at Legatum Institute and founder of Floreat Education. He was director of policy and research for former prime minister David Cameron*

The vote to leave the European Union has turned the world upside down. There is a fog of discussion about what the result really meant – are we in a post-liberal world now, or a post-truth one – but one thing is obvious: the Brexit vote revealed, with unprecedented clarity, the extent of the social divisions that wrack the United Kingdom.

In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, the Legatum Institute and the Centre for Social Justice set about analysing the behaviour of voters in an attempt to piece together a coherent and robust narrative about why they behaved as they did. Our *48:52 – Healing a Divided Britain* report found that poorer and less-well educated voters were more likely to have voted to leave the EU, as were those who are not in work, those living in council or social housing, and those dependent on a state pension. This is, if you like, a picture of low prosperity Britain, and indeed the Legatum Institute's *UK Prosperity Index*, published after *48:52*, found a correlation, particularly strong in England, between living in a low prosperity area and a propensity to vote Leave.

But now we find ourselves on the other side of the vote. As the Prime Minister has said, Brexit means Brexit, and time has come to begin to heal those divisions. While it is inevitable that the task of redefining our relationship with the EU will dominate the government's attention, we must not forget that the primary reason that Britain voted to leave is because of Britons' faltering relationships with one another. With Disraeli in mind, we need to recognise that there are perhaps not just two nations in Britain but dozens of them, striated by class, of course, but also ethnicity, culture, age, religion and place. How might we be able to bring people together again, to have a more integrated society rather than one that is slowly drifting apart?

It strikes me that there are essentially two different societal issues involved here. The first is the impact of multiculturalism. The second is what, in a US context, George W Bush so memorably called the soft bigotry of low expectations – the absence of hope for those people living in the least prosperous parts of the country. Education, particularly school-level education, has a central role to play in solving both problems.

As David Goodhart explains in his book *The British Dream*, successive governments have pursued a policy of multiculturalism over the last 40 years. This has sought to promote tolerance of, and accommodation with, immigrant communities rather than the more complex challenge of trying to integrate them. Goodhart convincingly argues that this policy has two major flaws – it weakens the bonds necessary for a well-functioning society, and it creates resentment among all groups but especially the host majority.

Through my work with the academy trust Floreat Education, which I founded, I have spent a great deal of time in areas where there is very little integration, let alone assimilation. People from different religious and ethnic groups live side by side, mainly peacefully, but very little activity – social, civic, economic – crosses these bounds. Lives are lived in parallel, with the temple, gurdwara, mosque or church usually at the centre of each group's activities.

At Floreat we actively try to combat this marginalisation in three ways. First, we ensure our pupils have very rigorous literacy and numeracy teaching from a young age so they have the basic skills needed to participate in society. Second, we teach a knowledge-rich academic curriculum that introduces the children to, in the poet Matthew Arnold's famous words, the best that has been thought and said. This is the only way they will be able to have a powerful voice in Britain's national conversation. And third, we explicitly and purposefully teach a programme of character virtue development so that our pupils understand that the keys to a life well lived are to be found in all major religions and cultures, and that there is much more that binds us as humans than there is that divides us.

Floreat's schools are secular and we welcome children from every background,

but our approach means that we do not have to downplay the importance of faith and community as a source of strength and inspiration. It is more than just tolerance – it is an activist approach aimed at integrating and assimilating all pupils into the wonderful, tradition-rich but forward-looking culture of modern Britain. Across our three open schools Floreat is not only bringing people together but forging the kind of culture that will give our children a true sense of common purpose throughout their lives.

© The Challenge

### Low prosperity

Rejecting multiculturalism in favour of integration is a challenge mainly centred on cities. For many towns in England the challenge is different – too much educational mediocrity and, as I described it in a 2012 report for Policy Exchange, a long tail of underachievement. The integration required here is not between various minority groups, but rather between one group – often the white working class – and the rest. This is task is largely focused on less prosperous areas, which lack social capital and the critical mass of academic teachers and aspirational parents needed to break out of a culture of underperformance.

Successive governments have been alive to this problem and tried to intervene. City Technology Colleges, Education Action Zones, Teach First, City Academies, the National Teaching Service; they have all been tried and, despite being successful in many areas, some places are stuck. This is the context for the Theresa May's highly controversial proposals to introduce a new wave of grammar schools.

There are three main proposals for expanding selection in the Department for Education Green Paper *Schools that work for everyone*: allowing existing grammar schools to expand, allowing new grammars to set up, and allowing all schools the chance to select some or all of their pupils. The first proposal is much less controversial than the others, so let us set that aside.

The most radical of the ideas in the Green Paper is allowing all schools to select. The evidence about totally selective areas, like Kent or Buckinghamshire, cannot be said to be supportive of a wholesale move to reintroduce selection. Totally selective areas seem to do worse on both social mobility and income inequality, although it is true that for the minority of less well-off children who do get into them they can have a transformative effect. So reintroducing selection across the board seems to be anything but integrative, a point made by campaigners from across the political spectrum.

The idea of allowing a small injection of academic selection into low prosperity areas, where performance is poor, local capacity is weak, and there is a need for an external stimulus, has more potential, however. A new grammar (or, perhaps, a converting independent school) could act as a catalyst for change by raising aspiration, bringing in academic teachers, and then spreading quality throughout the local system. It would be unlikely to drive significant negative performance in a community that is already characterised by low standards.

> The desire to see schools as engines of social integration is perfectly in keeping with their core educational responsibilities

However, just introducing a new grammar would not be enough. The critical test is not that it raises standards for its own pupils, which it obviously must, but that, in the phrase used by Stanford academic Caroline Hoxby when talking about the potential benefits of school choice, it should be a 'tide that lifts all boats'. Certain conditions should apply to make sure that everyone benefits from the arrival of a new selective school. The most obvious are limits on pupil numbers, partnering with other schools, increasing the intake from less well-off families, and accountability for performance across the local network of schools.

For example, a new grammar school might be permitted if it provides no more than 5 per cent of local secondary places, sponsors a local multi-academy trust that included low performing schools and feeder primaries, admits a high percentage of less well off pupils, and became a teaching school. This would ensure that one institution was held accountable for the education performance across the ability spectrum while also taking positive steps to increase local capacity.

There is always a danger that policymakers seek to load schools with ever more responsibilities because they are the one moment when young people are in one place for a long time. This urge is usually to be resisted, but the desire to see schools as engines of social integration is perfectly in keeping with their core educational responsibilities. A broad 'academics + character' education is not only right in itself but has the happy by-product of binding young people together in a common culture. And spreading the benefits of an aspirational culture – using grammar schools if necessary – to those places that don't enjoy it is consistent with the view that a core purpose of education should be should be to provide equality of opportunity, so that every child has the chance to become, in Michael Gove's words, the authors of their own life story. ■

# TWO INTO ONE

Planned mergers between ethnically segregated schools can promote integration, as **MILES HEWSTONE** explains

*Miles Hewstone is professor of social psychology at the University of Oxford*

Every school pupil is taught in maths lessons that two into one won't go. But sometimes it does. About six years ago my research team was given the opportunity to evaluate a rare 'natural experiment' – a planned merger between two schools, each serving a distinct ethnic group (86 per cent white British and 93 per cent Asian-British Muslim, respectively). Waterhead Academy would be a brand-new school on a site carefully chosen to promote social integration in Oldham, one of the towns that experienced rioting in 2001. It would provide a test of the 'contact hypothesis' – the social-psychological idea that positive contact with members of an outgroup improves relations between groups. How has the merger worked?

We collected data from three year groups (years 7–9 at the start of the study) before the move to the new school site in June 2012 and followed them over the next five years.

Our main research method was longitudinal analysis of pupil surveys – we repeatedly assessed the same pupils over time, measuring how much contact they had with pupils from the ethnic 'outgroup', the quality of that contact, their anxiety about mixing with the outgroup, and their attitudes towards them. The final sample comprised 389 Asian British and 341 white British pupils.

> Pupils self-segregated by gender and, to a significantly greater degree, by ethnicity. There was, however, a significant increase in integration over time

We analysed individual changes over time. The greatest changes were evident for Asian British pupils; but there was a significant increase in contact and positive attitude – or 'liking' –, and a decrease in anxiety, for both white British and Asian British pupils. We also found that increases in contact with the other group were significantly associated with increases in liking for that group.

Although it is encouraging to see overall positive effects for the merger, in further analyses we asked for whom the merger had the greatest impact. We did this by investigating its effects on pupils with relatively lower versus higher levels of contact with the ethnic outgroup. We did this analysis separately for white British and Asian British pupils.

For white British pupils, especially for the measure of anxiety about mixing with the other group, those with previously low contact with the ethnic outgroup showed a steeper decline in anxiety after the merger. The drop was highly statistically significant and in absolute terms was almost a full point on the scale from 1 to 5. Thus, on average, participants' anxiety decreased, but those with low contact showed the


© Andrew Nash/Flickr

greatest decrease, meaning that for those with almost no contact, the impact of the merger was largest. For liking, the pattern was similar: only at low levels of contact did liking increase significantly over time. In other words, the merger worked best for those who had previously mixed least with the outgroup.

We next investigated the impact of gaining just one outgroup friend over the course of the study. We found that gaining a new outgroup friend was associated with reduced anxiety for both white British and Asian British pupils.

All these findings indicate that mixing does take place at Waterhead, that contact increases over time, and has a positive impact on measures of anxiety and attitudes. However, it is important not to be overly optimistic. To provide a more nuanced analysis of integration we also studied seating patterns of pupils. We did this when they were free to sit where, and with whom, they wished at lunchtime in the school cafeteria. Previous work has documented segregated seating choice in such situations, illustrating the principle of homophily, whereby 'birds of a feather flock together'.

We conducted observations using multiple observers and over multiple time points during the lunch break, sampling lunch periods for different age groups and at two points in one school year. Cross-ethnic mixing at lunchtime was modest in each of the three different lunch periods, and at each of the two calendar periods. Pupils self-segregated by gender and, to a significantly greater degree, by ethnicity. There was, however, a significant increase in ethnic integration over time. Nonetheless, what we call re-segregation remains, and it poses a question for teachers: should we try to intervene and promote greater mixing at lunchtime? While respecting freedom of choice, I believe that a case can be made for some intervention, even light-touch 'nudges' to promote greater mixing during this social period of the school day. Without that, future generations of pupils will, presumably, continue to sit apart, and 'model' this self-segregation for others. This passes 'segregationist' norms onto future generations. Thus, new year 7 pupils will arrive at their secondary school each September, wonder about how things work there, who sits where, and with whom, and they will conform to a norm of segregation.

In a final study we investigated pupils' social networks of close friends. Previous research has reported that such social networks tend to be segregated. We assessed social networks very simply by asking pupils to list up to ten closest friends from their year group. We did this for all pupils in year 7 in January 2014, in their first year at the school, and repeated this process over two further time points (July 2014 and July 2015). We then plotted a 'network' of all the links between year 7 pupils. This analysis showed the extent to which the network was clustered as a function of ethnicity and gender. One of the most useful aspects of data generated by this kind of analysis is that it shows reciprocal friendships. It might, for example, be relatively easy for a White British or Asian British pupil to say, "Yes, I have [outgroup] friends" or even to nominate "Mohammed" or "Michael", respectively, as one such friend. But social network analysis requires that Mohammed nominates Michael and vice versa if it is to count as a reciprocal friendship.

The social network analysis showed that both Asian British (90 per cent) and white British pupils (90 per cent) primarily had friends of the same ethnic group as themselves. Like the data from the cafeteria these findings indicate that when it comes to closest friends there is still some way to go towards full integration.

Waterhead, merging previously segregated white British and Asian British schools, represents a radical merger in ethnic terms. Has it succeeded? That depends on exactly how you measure integration.

We found reduced anxiety and increased liking and contact, especially for Asian British, over time. We also showed that increases in contact over time were associated with increases in liking. Contact had most impact on those with previously low contact. And gaining just one outgroup friend made a positive difference to intergroup relations. That sounds like success.

Yet, self-segregation, or re-segregation, was evident both in patterns of actual behaviour in the form of lunchtime seating patterns, and in social networks based on pupils' nominations of their closest friends.

To conclude, if one were writing a school report on Waterhead one might say "great effort has been shown, with promising results; but more work is needed." That work must more fully exploit the potential of its diverse environment. But as a beacon for other planned mergers Waterhead shows that it can be done. These young people no longer lead the "parallel lives" referred to in the Cantle Report on the 2001 riots. They have mixed and made friends across the ethnic divide. That seems a very heartening story for an increasingly diverse nation and world. ■

# BEYOND THE NUMBERS GAME

Stable housing and welfare support for low-income working families are essential in creating integrated communities, writes **DAVID MONTAGUE**

*David Montague is chief executive of L&Q housing group and chair of the g15 group of London's largest housing associations*

Britain's housing crisis is often just seen as a numbers game. The government has pledged to build one million new homes by 2020, and if that is achieved then supply will start to keep pace with demand, prices will fall and the crisis will be over. Simple.

But although boosting supply is crucial and it's easy to see why politicians and the media focus on numbers and targets, Britain's housing crisis is actually a complex web of issues which requires a cross-party vision, partnership working across the whole housing sector, and a much better understanding of the people who need homes.

Housing associations have a key role to play in this. In London, the g15 group of the capital's 15 largest associations which I chair houses one in 10 Londoners and builds a quarter of all new homes in the capital.

We know that more homes are needed overall, but we also have a broader social mission. We want to build homes that are genuinely affordable for people on low incomes, and we want to create thriving, diverse communities that all residents can be proud of.

Housing associations have a key role to play as place-makers. We need to design neighbourhoods with a harmonious blend of housing types, we need to provide quality services and we need to invest in communities to enhance the life chances of our residents.

At the same time, the government can help us by providing investment for social rented housing, and adjusting welfare policy so that those on low incomes have enough financial security to put down roots and become long-term members of the community.

A core part of a housing association's mission is to support the disadvantaged and promote social mobility.

We reinvest all our business surpluses back into housing and a variety of innovative community and economic development initiatives, including employment, skills, education, health and wellbeing, volunteering and financial inclusion programmes.

Last year, the g15 alone invested £40m in these programmes, and we have helped more than 11,000 Londoners into work over the last three years; with plans to help a further 21,000 find employment in the next three years.

These programmes make a real difference, but they need to be underpinned by an effective benefits system if work is genuinely to pay and we are to prevent many low-income households falling into serious poverty.

This is not yet the case, as the Real London Lives project, commissioned by the g15 and independently undertaken by

the University of York's Centre for Housing Policy, has shown.

This three-year, large-scale study, also demonstrated that since 2013 welfare change has had a cumulative impact – affected households got by on a restricted income for a time but many are now desperately struggling to manage.

Unlike the often sensationalist media portrayal of social housing tenants, the study found evidence of a strong work ethic among tenants. The majority of social housing tenants were working in each of the three years of the study, with 86 per cent of those working in 2013 still working three years later, generally in stable employment. However, 11 per cent of them were on zerohours contracts – four times the national average.

The research found some tenants working full-time but with incomes below the minimum wage, and others who would have been better off not working once their travel costs were taken into account.

Welfare benefits were incredibly important in helping many of these low-income working families make ends meet. Working tax credits were an invaluable income top-up. Yet there were cases where people fitting work around childcare could not reach the 16-hour minimum threshold to claim them

About a quarter of households in the study were affected by the 'bedroom tax'. Despite substantial reductions in housing benefit as a result, virtually none had moved. Instead, families tended to downgrade their living standards, with some developing severe financial problems.

Many tenants had come to see the welfare system as a set of risky and complex challenges to be overcome. Getting welfare 'wrong', for example a technical slip on a housing benefit claim, could result an intractable debt taking years to resolve.

Even families who micro-managed a low income highly effectively were in difficulty by year three. Eighteen per cent of households in the study had used food banks, payday loans, pawnbrokers or rent-to-own shops, and some of the poorest families were selling or pawning possessions to buy essentials like food.

Social rented housing was vital to a life with dignity for all the households in the Real London Lives study. For those working in stable jobs, the low rent offered the prospect of independence from the

© Lydia / Flickr

benefit system. For the poorest households, the social tenancy was a bulwark against utter destitution.

But equally important is the need for social rented housing to be part of mixed-tenure communities.

Housing associations have learned over the years that by building mixed-tenure developments, we create more successful and integrated communities.

> As we look to build the numbers of new homes we need to tackle the housing crisis, we must remember the importance of getting the mix right

In our experience, the people living in social rented housing are often among the most active community champions, working to break down barriers, unite neighbourhoods and deliver positive change for the benefit of all.

The alternative to mixed communities is to sit by and allow market forces to price low-income families out of their homes and neighbourhoods. We have already seen the effects families forced hundreds of miles away from their communities and support networks; children having to change school and leave their friends behind, and people having to quit their jobs because the extra cost of commuting makes them unsustainable.

Of course even in cities like London, there are pockets of deprivation where housing costs are lower, but very often they have limited employment opportunities and little in the way of support services. These areas of transient low-income families struggle to create a positive community identity and social problems invariably surface.

With this backdrop, my housing association, L&Q, has commissioned the University of Birmingham to carry out a major research project exploring the impact of mixed tenure estates.

The research is ongoing, but early findings are that truly mixed communities will have residents with a diverse range of socio-economic circumstances and ethnicities and that a balance of incomes, and not just a diversity of tenures, is important in making mixed communities work.

There is also strong evidence emerging that residents – both private tenants and social renters – living on mixed tenure estates recognise their potential to widen people's social circles, prevent segregation and create cohesive communities. Some residents do, however, feel that more needs to be done to address factors that often lead to separation between residents of different tenures.

We hope that the full findings will provide us with empirical evidence, rather than the largely anecdotal evidence we have now, about the value of mixed tenure communities. We also hope to identify examples of best practice that we can share with politicians and place-makers across the country.

As we look to build the numbers of new homes we need to tackle the housing crisis, we must remember the importance of getting the mix right. In building the sustainable mixed communities we need to give all residents the best life chances, the housing sector needs investment in social rented housing and a welfare system that ensures work pays. And we need a recognition that good, mixed-tenure, mixed-income homes are the foundation for successful, well-integrated communities that work for all their residents. *The Real London Lives research reports and summaries can be found at www.reallondonlives.co.uk* ■

**The Challenge** is UK's leading social integration charity. We design and deliver programmes that bring different people together to develop their confidence and skills in understanding and connecting with others, and promote policy ideas to forge a more integrated Britain.

**Bright Blue** is an independent think tank and pressure group for liberal conservatism. Its work is guided by four research themes: social reform, integrated Britain, green conservatism and human rights. As a community for liberal conservatives, Bright Blue is at the forefront of thinking on the centre-right of politics.

**The Fabian Society** is Britain's oldest political think tank. Founded in 1884, the society is at the forefront of developing political ideas and public policy on the left. The society is alone among think tanks in being a democratically-constituted membership organisation and was one of the original founders of the Labour party.

**This report represents not the collective views of the organisations involved but only the views of the individual authors.**