Multiculturalism:

a Christian Retrieval

Jonathan Chaplin

Theos

The public theology think tank

"This is a superbly perceptive and constructive contribution to the debate about multiculturalism in Britain. Dr Chaplin offers a range of guiding ideas focussed on the realities of 'deep diversity' and the vital need for 'multicultural justice'. He draws on mainstream Christian wisdom in ways that will also make sense to those of other faiths and none. This should be read by all who want civil society to flourish and the government to deal well with our multi-ethnic and multi-faith nation."

David F. Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge

"Multiculturalism is a concept that is often mired in confusion and ambiguity so this concise essay provides a much-needed, accessible overview of the history, definitions and arguments surrounding the concept. The development of the theological argument for retrieving the concept as 'multicultural justice' is insightful and persuasive whatever one's political or religious persuasion. But perhaps the main contribution of this essay will be if readers take up Jonathan Chaplin's challenge to assess British culture for its flaws and strengths and then have the humility to look to other cultures for any remedies needed. A timely, constructive contribution to the multiculturalism debate."

The Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose

"How can faith provide stability in times of flux? Jonathan Chaplin provides here a Christian theological response to the challenge of increasing cultural and religious diversity. Difference and change are, for various reasons, a part of our present condition. Should we view this increasing diversity as a threat – retreating from or ignoring the debate – or should we engage from a position that combines faith with justice? Chaplin adopts the latter position, moving past the simplistic headlines that are associated with this debate and offering a careful analysis that takes Christian faith and theology as well as multicultural justice seriously. His contribution here is considered and important for people of faith and for government. I welcome his contribution which is much needed."

Atif Imtiaz, Academic Director, Cambridge Muslim College

"I have grown up imbibing a Trinitarian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This diverse divine nature gives rise to a universe that is also diverse and within that sits humanity made in the image and likeness of the triune God. Viewed from this theological perspective human diversity is not a matter of choice, it is intrinsic to what it means to be human, including our complex cultural expressions. Indeed, a recent Runnymede Report suggests that we now live in a super-diverse society that requires urgent attention as to how we relate to one another. I worry therefore when I hear talk of multiculturalism having failed, as though it were an experiment rather than a reality of our existence. I therefore warmly welcome this attempt to further explore the theme of multiculturalism precisely because however badly we may do it, failure is not a choice we have."

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs, Churches Together in England

"At a time when we hear so much woolly chatter about 'multiculturalism' and its failure as a state sponsored policy, it's refreshing to read Jonathan Chaplin's thought-provoking and insightful treatment of this emotive and controversial subject. Societies constituted by a diversity of cultures face the challenge of recalibrating the legitimate demands of unity and diversity in the body politic. How do we achieve political unity without cultural uniformity in the debate about national identity and our common sense of belonging? Chaplin challenges us to go beyond the traditional 'social justice' and 'commutative justice' paradigm to what he calls 'multicultural justice' (i.e., the justice of relationships between ethnic and religious minorities and between them and the majority society). Informed by Christian social thought, his argument for a just 'multicultural settlement' has much to offer policy makers and social commentators. Chaplin's contribution to the public discourse on multiculturalism is timely; hopefully it will halt those in danger of sleepwalking into incoherence on a subject we need to get right for peaceful, prosperous and cohesive communities."

Dr R. David Muir, Director, Faith in Britain

"How do we live together with all our tremendous diversity? And how do we do this, not only in peace and dignity, but also in a way that is meaningful, engaged, and with solidarity? That is perhaps one of the most angst-ridden quests of our age. This valuable contribution by Theos to the debate on Multiculturalism considers a wide range of views and brings a Christian perspective to the discussion. By considering the subject not only from the dimensions of equality and difference, but also justice and mutual respect, the essay rightly points out that Britishness has to be about much more than a mere list of values. It has to tell a story, bear a narrative, about who we are, how we came to be and what we stand for."

Dilwar Hussain, Head of Policy Research Centre, Islamic Foundation

Theos
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introduction

the many faces of "multiculturalism"

What images come to mind when we hear the word "multiculturalism"? Consider these examples.

- In four London boroughs, indigenous "white British" are already a minority of the population. By 2025, four other boroughs will reach this point, as will the cities of Birmingham and Leicester. Sociologists favourable to multiculturalism call these "plural cities", while critics call them "minority white" cities.[1]

- In 2008, Oxford Central Mosque announced it would seek permission from Oxford city council to issue the traditional Muslim call to prayer *(Adhan)* three times a day from a loudspeaker in the minaret of a newly constructed mosque in the East of the city, an area containing many of the city's 6,000 Muslims.[2]

- The UK's first ever Awards ceremony of the "Black Youth Achievements" organisation took place in November 2009 in the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Tottenham, London, attended by 400 people. The organisation exists "to provide a platform for young people to be openly recognised for their positive actions, talents and personal accomplishments, which all too often go unnoticed."[3]

- In 2009, a Hindu spiritual healer, Davender Ghai, petitioned Newcastle city council for permission to be cremated according to Hindu tradition, in a structure that was walled but open to the sky. The council refused on the grounds that this would breach the Cremation Act. The decision was upheld by the High Court but reversed in the Court of Appeal in February 2010.[4]

- In 2005, the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund gave nearly £50,000 to the Birmingham Council of Sikh Gurdwaras to build the capacity of the organisation, one of 578 grants made that year.[5]

These are just a few contrasting snapshots of what in Britain and elsewhere has come to be named "multiculturalism". The word points to the increasing plurality of ethnic cultures and religious faiths present within the same society. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor

calls it "deep diversity".[6] It is a complex, intriguing, often bewildering and sometimes disturbing phenomenon, one that participants in public debate often find it difficult to discuss dispassionately or even coherently.

This essay hopes to offer some fresh reflections, informed by Christian social thought, on "deep diversity" in Britain. One of its chief aims is simply to clarify what the debate is about. As one commentary rightly notes, talk about multiculturalism has become "a maddeningly spongy and imprecise discursive field."[7] But it also argues a case: in our haste to reassess multiculturalism in the light of compelling recent evidence of its darker sides, we must not lose sight of its indispensable contribution to realising a just society. We should not repudiate multiculturalism but *retrieve* it by reformulating it in a more modest, chastened and thus more persuasive way. Contrary to the current trend of public opinion, it will be argued that certain core multicultural aspirations remain just as necessary as they have been since their first appearance half a century ago. Aspects of existing multiculturalism may be badly, indeed at times dangerously, flawed, and the essay does not shrink from naming some of them. But the need to devise just public policies in relation to minority cultural and religious communities – to pursue what will be called "multicultural justice" – is as important as ever.

In our haste to reassess multiculturalism in the light of compelling recent evidence of its darker sides, we must not lose sight of its indispensable contribution to realising a just society.

A document of this length obviously cannot pretend to cover all the relevant issues surrounding a theme as complex as multiculturalism, nor to resolve any of them. It does not present new empirical findings (its author writes as a political theorist and theologian not a sociologist), but rather offers a commentary on selected aspects of the current debate about multiculturalism in Britain. The eventual focus of the essay is on the principles underlying multicultural *public policies.*

Tariq Modood defines multiculturalism as "the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries", and this will be the guiding sense of the term used in the essay.[8] However, in order to place this specific focus in perspective, it will be necessary first to clear the conceptual ground by distinguishing as many as six different senses of the term currently in play but often conflated. That is the task of chapter 3. In proposing what was just described as a more "modest, chastened" multiculturalism, the essay also argues that expectations regarding goals such as "integration", "social cohesion" and "citizenship" need to be specified more carefully than they often have been in recent debates. To formulate a defensible multicultural public policy, we must delimit, indeed deflate, some of its more ambitious pretensions.

The essay has seven chapters. Chapter 1 briefly introduces some key questions evoked by the term multiculturalism and explains why a Christian approach to these questions might have some interest not only within but also beyond the Christian community. Chapter 2 charts the course of the British debate about multiculturalism over the last decade, indicating how successive challenges to multiculturalism have displaced it from official favour and put its defenders on the back foot. Chapter 3 does some indispensable ground-clearing by distinguishing six senses of "multiculturalism" at work in current discussions and contends that the debate we need about a new, just multicultural settlement will create more heat than light unless these distinctions are constantly kept in mind. Chapter 4 presents one Christian perspective on cultural and religious diversity, a "theology of multiculturalism".

The remaining three chapters then concentrate on two of the six senses of multiculturalism outlined in chapter 3, namely multiculturalism as public policy, and multiculturalism as "segregation". Chapter 5 introduces a conception of the role of government with roots in Christian political thought, and then proposes a notion of "multicultural justice" arising from it and intended to serve as a broad guide to policy. Chapter 6 puts that notion to work in assessing particular aspects of multicultural policy, rooting the discussion in the charge that "state multiculturalism" has hampered integration and promoted "segregation". Chapter 7 then explores how a commitment to multicultural justice must be balanced by the obligations of citizenship, and concludes by posing the larger question of how a multicultural society can secure the conditions for its own future existence.

Certain key themes relevant to multiculturalism regrettably fall outside the scope of the essay. First, it does not attempt to deal adequately with the hugely important issues of race and racism in the UK.[9] The essay does address questions arising from the presence of the growing Muslim community in the UK and in this respect it engages with a significant section of the British Asian experience. But it does not claim to represent adequately the often very different experience of African-Caribbean Britons. Second, it does not engage fully with recent equality legislation, to which race equality is central, or with the increasing conflict between it and religious liberty.[10] Nor, third, is there space to examine in any depth the questions of immigration, refugee, asylum and settlement policy. This is not to deny the huge importance of these questions, nor to imply that recent directions of policy in these areas are unproblematic.[11] Finally, it does not deal in any detail with issues of security, extremism or terrorism. This is partly for reasons of space but also to signal that, contrary to tabloid stereotypes and some government statements, most of what needs to be said about multiculturalism is not tied to those issues, pressing though they obviously are. The essay went to press within days of the August 2011 riots and so could not begin to explore the possible relevance of those disturbing events to "multiculturalism".

introduction references

1. Nissa Finney and Ludi Simpson, *'Sleepwalking to Segregation'? Challenging myths about race and immigration* (The Policy Press, 2009), p. 155. The term "white British" is not ideal but will serve its purpose here.
2. "Clash of cultures: the screaming minarets of Oxford", *Independent,* 25 January 2008. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/clash-of-cultures-the-screaming-minarets-of-oxford-773879.html
3. http://blackyouthachievements.org/events/2011/04/black-youth-achievements-awards-2009-event-review
4. "Hindu wins right to open air cremation", *The Telegraph,* 10 February 2010. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/7204403/Hindu-wins-right-to-open-air-cremations.html
5. Ralph Grillo, "British and others. From 'race' to 'faith'", in Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, eds., *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European discourses, policies and practices* (Routledge, 2010), p. 59.
6. Charles Taylor, "Shared and Divergent Values", in Ronald Watts and Douglas M. Brown, eds., *Options for a New Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 75.
7. Vertovec and Wessendorf, eds., *The Multiculturalism Backlash,* p. 2.
8. Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Polity Press, 2007). p. 5.
9. On the complexities of this debate, see, e.g., "Rethinking Race" (special feature), *Prospect* (October 2010), pp. 30–37.
10. The theme has been well addressed in Roger Trigg, *Free to Believe? Religious Freedom in a Liberal Society* (Theos, 2010).
11. For one (controversial) reading of likely future trends, see David Coleman, "When Britain becomes 'majority minority'", *Prospect* (December 2010), pp. 34–37.

1

dilemmas of deep diversity

Is it possible for a society marked by deep ethnic and religious diversity to identify a workable framework for deep diversity which does justice to all communities? What would "doing justice to diversity" actually amount to anyway? Would it mean "respecting" all cultures and religions? If so, what might "respect" practically require of us? Would it mean treating all cultural and religious perspectives "equally", even those we think are false? And, whatever we think individually, who is to determine what counts as "false" in public policy? Further, what if falsehood implies (to us) not only erroneous beliefs – we could just ignore those – but also oppressive practices? Finally, where do those elusive "shared British values" fit in? These are among the many questions evoked by the term "multiculturalism". How well placed are British people to address them?

multicultural challenges

One aspect of Britishness that is often trumpeted is a strong tradition of tolerating minorities. In fact, survey data suggest that many British people have mixed feelings towards ethnic and religious minorities.[1] A majority of people in the UK support at least a minimal stance of tolerance towards such minorities. They appear to endorse the official position that non-indigenous communities should not be coercively "assimilated", forced to abandon their distinctive cultural or religious practices entirely as the price tag of acceptance into British society. Polls suggest that they seem committed (in principle if not always in practice) to a baseline of peaceful coexistence, understood as public space for minority communities to live out their beliefs and customs freely, within the law as it stands.[2] Yet this professed view lives alongside another, that 62% of people, including large numbers of members of ethnic minorities, think Britain has too many migrants.[3]

Clearly some Britons support more positive and engaged relationships among our nation's diverse communities. They don't just want to "live and let live", but favour more ambitious goals, such as "integration" or "social cohesion", to invoke the leading buzz-words of public policy over the last ten years. Some even want to insist on mutual "celebration" of each other's cultures and faiths.

The nation, however, is divided over how to achieve such goals, and even over how to identify the goals themselves. How would we know when the goal of "cohesion" has been attained? Does this term simply mean the absence of overt conflict, or does it require people to mix regularly and easily with members of other ethnic or religious communities? Am I required to be entirely relaxed about a Hindu cremation taking place upwind of my own street? Is "integration" undermined by allowing artists, comedians or cartoonists to mock revered religious symbols without restraint? Is the replacement of what most Britons call Christmas with what Birmingham city council in 1998 called "Winterval" an example of equal treatment, or a case of what the tabloids call "political correctness gone mad"?[4] Does integration really require compelling new immigrants to learn English or to sign up to an official statement of "national values" as a condition of citizenship?

How would we know when the goal of "cohesion" has been attained?

Since this essay is written from a Christian perspective, it cannot pass notice that Christians themselves are divided on such questions. On the one hand a growing number of Christians, and other defenders of the British "Judeo-Christian" tradition, are now asserting that multiculturalism is a threat to the Christian character of Britain, corroding the moral and spiritual fabric of the nation.[5] More outspoken voices complain that multicultural toleration has now been reduced to a straightforward indulging of Muslims, that while the rights of Christian conscience are increasingly set aside under recent equality legislation, no public body dares challenge assertive Muslims for fear of accusations of discrimination.[6]

Sometimes this view can come across as nostalgic, resentful or shrill (and sometimes all three at once). But more historically informed voices – as varied as Anglican former Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali and historian Tom Holland – argue that the very spirit of toleration that allowed immigrants from non-western cultures to be welcomed to these shores over many years itself lives off the moral capital of Christianity.[7] Squander Christian capital through "multi-faith relativism" and you put tolerance itself at risk, kick away the foundations of religious freedom and leave the field free to those who have fewer qualms about imposing their own religion on their fellow citizens if they ever got the chance.

Against this, other Christians argue that for the Church to attempt to cling on to the privileges bequeathed to it by its former cultural pre-eminence, such as funding for Church schools, prayers in Parliament or guaranteed seats for Bishops in the House of Lords, is itself disrespectful to other cultural and faith communities. They argue that such privileges fuel legitimate resentment on the part of other religious minorities (and secularists) leaving them aggrieved at their second-class status.[8] Such Christians hold that, in a post-Christendom context, the Church should humbly accept its diminished status as one minority among others, renounce inherited privilege and make its witness in the public square from a position of political parity with others.[9]

It is not only Christians who are divided over how to assess and respond to multiculturalism. A parallel, but much more fraught, debate is preoccupying Muslims.[10] Many mainstream Sunni Muslims argue that Islam requires maximal freedom for Muslims to live out the distinctive, counter-cultural implications of their faith in as many public arenas as possible. For some, this should include equal representation in public bodies, equal treatment for those seeking maintained status for Muslims schools and the use of aspects of sharia law in arbitration.[11]

At the other end of the spectrum, "liberal" Muslims, such as those represented by the Quilliam Foundation or British Muslims for Secular Democracy, urge their co-religionists to integrate as fully as possible into mainstream British culture, to commit themselves to acting as exemplary liberal democratic citizens, and openly to confront Islamist extremism everywhere.[12] Many other Muslims hover uneasily in the middle, keeping their heads down and their internal debates out of media earshot.

Unnerved and increasingly exasperated with all of the above, hardline liberal secularists like Polly Toynbee, Martin Amis and Rumy Hasan are reasserting ever more vigorously what they see as the defining political heritage of the Enlightenment: the privatisation of "tribal" faiths and cultures and the complete secularisation of the public square. By "secularisation" they don't normally mean the silencing of minority religious or cultural voices in public debate, but they do effectively mean the neutering of distinctive religious or cultural claims in government and policy-making. Only a comprehensive secularist settlement, they insist, can secure a just framework for our ramifying and increasingly unruly cultural and religious diversity.[13] Other liberals, by contrast, such as *The Guardian's* Madeleine Bunting, dissent from this stern secularist stance and favour accommodating cultural and religious diversity as much as possible, yet within the firm parameters of human rights.[14] Multiculturalism is not dividing only religious but also secular opinion.

> *Multiculturalism is not dividing only religious but also secular opinion.*

The anguished debate over multiculturalism taking place over the last fifteen years, which was massively intensified by 9/11, has brought all these questions into a sharp and disturbing focus. Multiculturalism is now "in the dock", with many commentators pronouncing "the end of multiculturalism". But reports of multiculturalism's death have, as the saying goes, been exaggerated. While multiculturalism is no longer praised or endorsed in official reports, many multicultural *policies* still continue as before and some are, on close inspection, often supported by those who otherwise decry "multiculturalism". Honesty in debate requires greater clarity about what is actually at stake.

As a nation we must confront the questions surrounding multiculturalism more imaginatively than we have done before. Naïve egalitarian invocations of mutual "respect" will simply serve to airbrush over issues like forced marriage or "honour killings". Equally, crude nationalist invocations of "Britishness" will obscure the persistence of racial prejudice and ethnic marginalisation. The challenge is to forge a new and durable multicultural settlement, one that is durable not because it is based merely on majority opinion, always a potential threat to minorities, but because it is, and is widely seen to be, *just,* by majority and minorities alike.[15]

a "christian" view of multiculturalism?

This essay seeks to offer a fresh contribution to the debate on a just multicultural settlement, informed by Christian social thought. The goal of presenting a *Christian* perspective on cultural and religious plurality in *public* debate may seem self-defeating. How can a perspective on multiculturalism have public traction if it proceeds from just one of the many faith positions present in multicultural Britain? Don't we need to start from some neutral, objective standpoint in order to offer a non-partisan assessment?

Although there isn't space to argue the point here, the starting assumption of this essay is that no such neutral standpoint is available. We all think, speak and live out of particular cultural affiliations (of which "Englishness" is one) and out of particular faith commitments (of which "secular humanism" is one).[16] There is no "view from nowhere" to which we can all repair in order to escape these particular locations and breathe the supposedly purified air of "objectivity". We must recognise that, as the philosopher Michael Polanyi famously put it, all knowledge is "personal".[17] *Knowledge* doesn't know anything (and nor does "reason"). Only *persons* know things, and persons are always and everywhere situated in specific cultures and shaped by particular faith-like assumptions, whether these are acknowledged or not. Other locations also play critical roles in how and what we know, among them gender, class, region and race. We aren't imprisoned in these locations, but we are unavoidably embedded in them and, up to a point, conditioned by them. If this is so, then a truly honest debate about multiculturalism must invite each participant to declare where they are starting from culturally and religiously, so far as they know it.

The essay ventures the claim that a Christian approach to these issues can appeal well beyond the community of those professing Christian faith. The proof of that pudding will, of course, be in the eating: the argument for the claim is simply whatever persuasiveness the essay actually musters. Readers will judge how far it succeeds in doing so. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that a specifically Christian perspective on multiculturalism should interest anyone who is curious about how Britain's oldest, largest and, as it happens, most culturally diverse religious community might view multiculturalism through its own distinctive theological lenses. If nothing else, this could be useful sociological information.

Beyond this worthy if limited goal, the essay is also offered as a stimulus to the ongoing dialogue and partnership needed both between different religious and ethnic communities and between them and wider society. For unless we all learn to get inside each other's distinctive understandings of the world, the much-needed debate about a just multicultural settlement will continue to be impeded by mutual incomprehension and suspicion.

That injunction, of course, applies equally to Christians as they run up against the contrasting and sometimes conflicting understandings of others. For example, it won't do for Christians to dismiss the concerns of sincere liberal secularists – about religiously justified patriarchy, for example – as resulting from "anti-Christian prejudice". Some of those concerns should be shared by Christians. Nor will it do to depict any bid by Muslims for greater input into public policy-making as part of some malign strategy of "Islamicisation". Some of *their* concerns, for example over the growing sexualisation of public space, or other ways in which British culture publicly demeans women, will be endorsed by Christians (and secularists) as well.

Finally, if cross-cultural and inter-faith respect is to be genuine, participants must be granted freedom to speak in their own distinctive languages. One of the surprises of such a dialogue may be that religiously inflected language can, contrary to the presumption of some liberal secularists, actually be publicly intelligible, accessible, and even insightful. Secularists sometimes suggest that to invoke religious language in democratic debate is an act of disrespect towards fellow citizens who do not share religious premises. Of course such language can be deployed disrespectfully (as can secularist language). Yet to insist pre-emptively that all must adopt a prescribed secularist vocabulary, or even simply confine themselves to the flat and often managerial prose of many official reports, would itself be an act of disrespect. A just political settlement for a society marked by deep diversity can only be attained through a democratic dialogue that itself reflects, even while it also disciplines, that deep diversity.

The prospects for future dialogue depend in part on understanding how we got to where we are today. Accordingly, the next chapter traces how the argument about multiculturalism became progressively more fraught in the UK over the last decade and where it stands today.

chapter 1 references

1. A recent report names six "identity tribes" in Britain today, distinguished according to their positive or negative views of multiculturalism and related issues: Nick Lowles and Anthony Painter, *Fear and Hope: The new politics of identity* (Searchlight Educational Trust, 2011).

2. 2005 polls cited in Commission on Integration and Cohesion, *Our Shared Future* (2007), showed widespread support for anti-discrimination legislation and found that 62% of people thought multiculturalism made Britain a better place to live (p. 32). The Citizenship Survey covering 2009/10 reported that 85% of people thought minorities got on well together in their area, up from 80% in 2003/05. Communities and Local Government, Cohesion Research, *Statistical Release 12* (January 2010), p. 3.

3. 47% of Asians and 45% of blacks held that view. *Our Shared Future,* p. 32.

4. "UK Winterval gets frosty", BBC News 9 November 1998. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/210672.stm

5. Michael Nazir-Ali, "Breaking Faith with Britain", *Standpoint* 1 (2008), pp. 45-47; Jenny Taylor, "The Multicultural Myth", in Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh and Jenny Taylor, *Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in 'Secular' Britain* (SPCK, 1998), pp. 75–141.

6. *Melanie Phillips, Londonistan: How Britain has Created a Terror State Within,* rev. ed. (Gibson Square, 2008).

7. Nazir-Ali, "Breaking Faith with Britain" and "Freedom in the face of resurgent Islam", *Standpoint* (May 2011), pp. 34–37; Tom Holland, "Europe's First Revolution", *New Statesman,* 9 October 2008.

8. But some minority faith communities support Establishment. See Tariq Modood, ed., *Church, State and Religious Minorities* (Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

9. Jonathan Bartley, *Faith and Politics After Christendom* (Paternoster, 2006).

10. See Atif Imtiaz, *Wandering Lonely in a Crowd: Reflections on the Muslim Condition in the West* (Kube Publishing, 2011), ch. 2; Philip Lewis, *Young, British and Muslim* (Continuum, 2007), ch. 5.

11. One prominent Muslim lawyer, Hajj Ahmad Thomson from the Association of Muslim lawyers, has proposed the incorporation of "Muslim personal law" into UK domestic law. Cited in Denis McEoin, *Sharia Law or 'One Law for All?'* (Civitas, 2009), p. 49.

12. http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/. http://www.bmsd.org.uk/

13. See, e.g. Rumy Hasan, *Multiculturalism: Some Inconvenient Truths* (Politico's, 2009), ch. 6.

14. Madeleine Bunting, "Secularists have nothing to fear from women wearing headscarves", *Guardian*, 25 February 2008. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/feb/25/turkey.islam

15. In *Londonistan*, as elsewhere, Melanie Phillips frequently argues for resistance to accommodating Muslim demands because they are against the values of "the majority".

16. This claim is discussed later in the essay.

17. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (University of Chicago, 1958), pp. vii–viii.

2

multiculturalism in the dock: a decade of doubt

Recent years have seen defenders of multiculturalism placed firmly on the back foot.[1] They have had to parry vigorous attacks from both secular liberals and secular nationalists on one side, and from Christians of various stripes, and other religious voices, on the other. Labour governments from 2001 to 2010 took public distance from the previous Labour embrace of multiculturalism. While continuing to champion "diversity" they laid new emphasis on the need for shared national values and social cohesion, and warned against the danger of social fragmentation, especially the fear that isolated cultural or religious minorities might serve as covers for the oppression of women or as breeding grounds for violent religious extremism. This chapter sketches some of the immediate causes of, and flashpoints in, the UK debate since 2000.

It is worth noting early on that, although this essay is about "culture" as well as "faith", it is clear that in the last decade many multicultural anxieties have come to be associated with faith, hence the preponderance of faith-related examples in the list at the start of the Introduction. In the half-century or so since the earliest post-war debates about immigration, the focus has shifted from "race", through "culture" and "ethnicity", to "faith", producing today a "faith-based multiculturalism".[2] The content of this essay reflects this new preoccupation but it should not obscure the continuing relevance of issues of culture and ethnicity. Faith is now at the centre of the debate but it isn't everything.

origins of multiculturalism

As will be explained in the next chapter, the term "multiculturalism" is currently employed to refer to many more things than a set of public policies. Yet its origins lie in a series of policy initiatives that came to be adopted some decades ago in several western societies such as the UK, Canada and the Netherlands. These were responses to the predicament facing new immigrants arriving from non-western (in the UK, especially Commonwealth) nations in growing numbers from the 1940s onwards. Many came to the UK seeking better economic opportunities, and brought with them an attitude of respect and appreciation for British traditions of toleration, family, freedom, fairness, hospitality and, often, Christian faith. They had no intention of setting up ethnic enclaves or of seeking to create parallel communities distant from mainstream British life. Yet such minority ethnic

communities often met attitudes of suspicion and prejudice on the part of the host community, which placed them at a serious social and economic disadvantage and left them feeling excluded from, and disrespected by, mainstream society.[3] Much of the negative response was motivated, simply, by racism.

Accordingly, British and other host governments adopted measures to protect racial and ethnic communities from discrimination in housing and employment and also worked to ensure they received equal treatment in the provision of public services. Later, such equal treatment came to be seen by some as implying not only the enjoyment of identical civil rights and the benefits of universally available public services, but also "special" treatment in the form of, for instance, public funding for ethnic language education in schools or for ethnic community centres, or "exemptions" from statutory obligations such as, in the case of Sikhs, wearing motorcycle helmets.

The basic motivation behind the introduction of such equal treatment policies was straightforward and exemplary. Their broad objective was to move away from an older model of cultural "assimilation" that aimed simply to dissolve such cultural differences, towards a form of "integration" in which the cultural identity of diverse communities would be accorded equal respect and protection even as newcomers went through the necessary process of adjustment to the expectations of British society. Assimilation was, in fact, itself originally seen as the only way to realise equality for all irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, but over time it came to be seen instead as amounting to an illegitimate imposition of the culture of the majority on its minorities. Roy Jenkins' statement of the goal of racial integration policies in the 1960s stands as a good summary of the early egalitarian thinking of many governments at the time: "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance."[4]

The cultural identity of diverse communities would be accorded equal respect and protection even as newcomers went through the necessary process of adjustment to the expectations of British society.

But that was then. While many of these policies remain in place, and indeed have been considerably extended, there has been a sea change since the 1990s in public perceptions of what is now termed "multiculturalism".

"time to move on?"

One of the most eloquent recent commentators on multiculturalism is Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. He opens his book *The Home We Build Together* with poignant words that capture the mood of many of those disillusioned with the idea:

Multiculturalism has run its course, and it is time to move on. It was a fine, even noble idea in its time. It was designed to make ethnic and religious minorities feel more at home in society…It affirmed their culture. It gave dignity to difference. And in many ways it achieved its aims…But there has been a price to pay, and it grows year by year. [It] has led not to integration but to segregation…It was intended to promote tolerance. Instead, the result has been…societies more abrasive, fractured and intolerant than they once were.[5]

In an earlier book, *The Dignity of Difference,* Sacks defended the public recognition of cultural and religious diversity but in *The Home We Build Together* he warns that the public realm is in danger of breaking apart.[6] Multiculturalism has created for us not a "home" where we belong but a mere "hotel" in which residents co-habit but share no common purposes. Sacks speaks for many, and not just "white British", in lamenting the seemingly divisive results of pursuing what seemed at the time like an entirely laudable goal.

The debate about multiculturalism in Britain mirrors that occurring across much of Europe.[7] Sacks himself is deeply troubled by the recent experience of the Netherlands, a country that had gone furthest in allowing minorities to safeguard their separate identities and yet which is now reeling from the experience of being one of the most politically divided nations of Europe.[8] Everywhere in Europe people are asking whether we need to move "beyond multiculturalism" and reassert the importance of social cohesion, political integration, shared values and unifying national narratives.

In Britain in 2000, the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, set up by the Runnymede Trust, produced an influential report on ethnic diversity.[9] Chaired by Lord Parekh, a prominent theorist of multiculturalism, the report championed a multicultural vision of Britain. Parekh attacked the prevailing British understanding of "integration" as implying "a one-way process in which 'minorities' are to be absorbed into the non-existent homogeneous cultural structure of 'the majority'."[10] His report urged instead an acknowledgment that Britain is not only a "community of citizens" but also a "community of communities". Among other things, this required a rewriting of Britain's traditional national narrative so as to include the formerly unheard voices of Britain's ethnic minorities.[11] The report issued numerous policy recommendations, many of which were subsequently implemented. It concluded with a call to declare Britain officially a "multicultural society".[12] That call was not heeded, but the report can be seen as the high-point of multicultural enthusiasm in post-war Britain. It provoked an acrimonious debate at the time.[13] Around the same time, the Labour government introduced a significant relaxation of immigration policy, ushering in substantial increases in the rate of immigration that continued until at least 2010. An adviser later disclosed that for some leaders this was a quite deliberate, albeit concealed, attempt to change the cultural make-up of Britain.[14]

the "multicultural backlash"

Anxieties around multiculturalism were already waiting in the wings. These were often dismissed by secular (and Christian) liberal elites as motivated by racism or xenophobia, and sometimes they were. But such anxieties were seriously heightened by an outbreak of ethnically related riots in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in the summer of 2001. These led to a major public report, *The Cantle Report,* which warned that different ethnic and religious communities were living "parallel" lives.[15] Worries about multiculturalism had now become official and the events of 9/11 later that year inflamed those worries dramatically.

Following the northern cities riots, Home Secretary David Blunkett warned that "our values of individual freedom, the protection of liberty and the respect for difference, have not been accompanied by a strong, shared sense of the civic realm. This has to change."[16] Blunkett's initiatives marked a significant official rethinking of the meaning of integration: not a return to older forms of assimilation but certainly a call for much tighter social bonds and clearer political duties than earlier governments had thought necessary to impose.

Some of these same worries underlay the Home Office report *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy* (2004). This continued to affirm the importance of cultural diversity but laid pronounced emphasis on the need to encourage wider civic participation on the part of racial and ethnic minorities with a view to connecting them more closely to the rest of society.[17] A central practical recommendation to this end was the learning of English and the following year a language condition was introduced for British citizenship.

The cumulative shift in official thinking during New Labour years has been described as an embrace of a new "civic assimilationism", a position prioritising shared national identity and national values over ethnic or religious distinctness.[18] This obviously raised the question of what such national values might be, to which a succession of official documents from the period struggled to offer a convincing answer. We return to that question in chapter 7. In the end, the most important national values turned out to be human rights, equal treatment and non-discrimination – highly important, to be sure, but hardly the stuff to stir up a deep sense of British national identity. The new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), established in 2007 under the Equality Act, set itself the task of placing human rights at the centre of debates about multiculturalism, cohesion and integration, and the Equality Act of 2010 consolidated and extended this approach. The emerging model was that ethnic and religious identities were to be protected up to a point but not allowed to trump the universal obligations of human rights for all. As the White Paper proposing the EHRC puts it:

Greater diversity in our society poses a significant challenge to how we shape and promote the shared values that underpin citizenship. While respecting and celebrating our differences, citizenship will need to promote wider ownership of these common values and a shared sense of belonging. Human rights, establishing basic values for all of us, will play an increasing role in this, providing a language we can all share. [19]

Shortly afterwards, another Home Office report appeared under Home Secretary Charles Clarke, called *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (2005).[20] This underlined the concerns of the previous report and, among other things, also registered the growing perception among urban working class white people that ethnic minorities were being given preferential treatment in housing and public services.

The chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, himself a black Briton, had already shocked many in 2004 by joining in the critique of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism had been useful once, he said, but was now out of date. It had played a key role in opposing racial and ethnic inequality but now it was fetishising difference. In a major speech in 2005, he warned that Britain was in danger of "sleepwalking into segregation".[21] The emphasis of public policy should now shift to integrating minorities fully into British society, again prompting questions around what "integration" concretely amounted to and what "British society" actually was.

Multicultural anxieties were then massively intensified by the atrocity of 7/7, the suicide bomb attacks on the London transport system in July 2005 that killed 56 people (including four bombers). What was especially shocking was that the bombers turned out to be, not foreign intruders, but British-born radical Islamists. The French writer Gilles Kepel said, provocatively, that the July bombers were "children of Britain's own multicultural society", and that they "smashed the social consensus around multiculturalism to smithereens", a polemical exaggeration containing what for many seemed a disturbing kernel of truth.[22]

Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, took the opportunity of the creation of the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion (CICC) to give explicit official permission for critical questioning of multiculturalism:

> [I]t is now time to engage in a new and honest debate about integration and cohesion in the UK… We have moved from a period of uniform consensus on multiculturalism, to one where we can encourage that debate by questioning whether it is encouraging separateness.[23]

By 2007 there was further confirmation of the official retreat from multicultural enthusiasm, marked by the publication of the influential report *Our Shared Future,*

produced by CICC. This called for a new, thicker kind of integration and urged "an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them."[24] It recommended a "step back from the trend towards a society defined strongly in terms of competing separate group identities, and instead [a] move in the direction of a much greater sense of shared futures and mutual independence."[25] This document heralded a new strategic policy focus on "cohesion," and, the following year, led to the official adoption of a new definition of an integrated and cohesive community. Among the key components of the definition were: equality of opportunity between people of different backgrounds; a clear awareness of both rights and responsibilities; trust in the fairness of local institutions; a shared vision of the future; a sense of belonging and awareness of what is held in common across diverse communities.[26] There was also a strong sense that the meaning of these commitments would have to be worked out primarily at the local rather than the national level. A plethora of policy initiatives was taken between 2008 and 2010 to realise these ambitious goals (too many even to list).[27]

Alongside these debates about integration and cohesion there was growing preoccupation with the meaning of "Britishness" (a theme to which we return in chapter 7). In 2006, Gordon Brown had already given a major lecture to the Fabian Society, "The Future of Britishness", in which he argued that while we should continue to respect difference, the emphasis should now be on a Britishness "not so nebulous that it is simply defined as the toleration of difference and [so] leaves a hole where national identity should be."[28] In more populist vein, Tony Blair made a significant speech in the same year called "The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values". In it he made the claim that:

> Obedience to the rule of law, to democratic decision-making about who governs us, to freedom from violence and discrimination are not optional for British citizens. They are what being British is about. Being British carries rights. It also carries duties. *And those duties take clear precedence over any cultural or religious practice.*[29]

It was not surprising that by June 2007 the Economist columnist Bagehot could remark with not too much exaggeration:

> Once [multiculturalism] connoted curry and the Notting Hill carnival; these days, when applied to British politicians or their policies, 'multiculturalism' is almost as derogatory term as 'socialist' or 'neocon'. Even more than they agree about most other things, the main political parties are united in their convictions that multiculturalism is a perniciously naïve idea whose time has gone, or ought never

"[We need] an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them."

to have come at all.[30]

Disillusionment with multiculturalism was, of course, not confined to New Labour. Bagehot was commenting on a speech given the week before by David Cameron in which he claimed that multiculturalism was contributing to a "deliberate weakening of our collective identity".[31] In 2008, Cameron went so far as to lambast the "disastrous and discredited doctrine of state multiculturalism" for bringing about "cultural apartheid".[32] Conservative writer Melanie Phillips even claimed that multiculturalism had become "the driving force of British life, ruthlessly policed by an army of bureaucrats enforcing a doctrine of state-mandated virtue to promote racial, ethnic and cultural difference and stamp out majority values."[33]

The Church itself became embroiled in heated exchanges over multiculturalism. In 2008, the Archbishop of Canterbury was heard in the course of a radio news programme, ahead of an academic lecture, to endorse the "legal recognition of sharia councils" in England.[34] The interview unleashed a firestorm of protest in which Williams was accused by Melanie Phillips of "going down on his knees before terrorism".[35] David Cameron opined that the introduction of sharia law for Muslims is "the logical endpoint of the now discredited doctrine of state multiculturalism – instituting, quite literally, a legal apartheid to entrench what is the cultural apartheid in too many parts of our country."[36] Anglican former Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali and former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey also openly criticised Archbishop Williams for what they took to be his uncritical stance towards Islam.[37] They continue to serve as leading spokespersons for Christian opposition to multiculturalism and for the defence of Britain as a Christian nation.

conclusion: sleepwalking into a stand-off?

In a speech delivered in Munich in February 2011 David Cameron, now Prime Minister, made clear that the Conservatives in government would continue to voice popular concerns about multiculturalism:

> Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.[38]

Yet while critics of multiculturalism grow in number, defenders remain vocal. Lord Parekh had already published in 2000 a powerful, sophisticated and widely cited defence, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory,* reissued in 2006.[39] He continues to defend his position forcefully in public debate. In the aftermath of 9/11 and

7/7, leading British sociologist Tariq Modood published *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea.* Modood offered a renewed defence of multiculturalism as the only appropriate stance for a society which respects *both* cultural diversity *and* equality among individuals. Indeed he claimed that multiculturalism "is the form of integration that best meets the normative implications of equal citizenship and under our post-9/11 and post 7/7 circumstances *stands the best chance of succeeding.*"[40] Advocates like Parekh and Modood believe not only that multiculturalism can be upheld alongside goals such as social cohesion, social justice, national identity and patriotism but that multiculturalism (appropriately defined) is actually a *necessary condition* for these other valid public objectives. This essay shares that general perspective and seeks to retrieve a version of multiculturalism from its undiscriminating critics (and defenders).

Questions surrounding multiculturalism thus merit sustained and serious deliberation. But before we can engage meaningfully in such deliberation, we must determine much more precisely what it is actually *about*. That is the task of the next chapter.

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3

what is "multiculturalism" when it's at home?

Debates about multiculturalism often get mired in confusion because of lack of clarity over what the object of discussion actually is. Darra Singh, introducing *Our Shared Future,* warned that debates about integration were in danger of "sleepwalking into simplicity".[1] The aim of this chapter is to disentangle some of the multiple meanings of "multiculturalism" at work in current debates. There is simply no substitute for this patient work of clarification if we want – to put it bluntly – to know what we are talking about when we open our mouths. Careless discussion of multiculturalism carries the very real danger of either exacerbating social divisions needlessly or obscuring serious culturally or religiously legitimated injustice.

Multiculturalism is variously spoken of as:

- a *fact* of cultural diversity;

- a *fact* of religious diversity;

- a *doctrine* of multi-faithism;

- an *assumption* of cultural relativism;

- a *principle* of public policy towards minorities;

- a *cause* of segregation.

This is not a complete list and some of these usages overlap. The purpose of this chapter is not simply classificatory but also evaluative. It will be proposed that the first and second senses are empirical realities to be acknowledged and carefully understood; that the third and fourth are misguided beliefs we should expose and reject; that the fifth is a necessary, but vigorously contested, guideline for government and that the sixth is a controversial judgment about the consequences of the application of the fifth.

In the first two senses, the term "multiculturalism" is used to refer to *states of affairs,* namely the empirical reality of ethnic and religious plurality within one society. The suffix "-ism" is apt to mislead here, since it suggests not a fact but a belief. These realities are better termed, respectively, "multi-ethnicity"[2] and a "multi-faith" society.[3]

multiculturalism as a fact of cultural diversity

Many western and non-western countries are, and will remain, racially and ethnically plural. Terms like "race" and "ethnicity" (and indeed "culture") are, of course, fiercely contested. Sociologists and anthropologists have long warned of the dangers of using them carelessly. They warn against supposing that the terms refer to some objective natural facts ("reifying" them) rather than recognising that they are significantly constructed by humans themselves. They equally warn of the danger of taking "race" or "ethnicity" as fixed and unchanging properties of all members of the category ("essentialising" them).[4] While this essay cannot explore these academic debates, it is important to note that it proceeds on the assumption that these terms, however much contested, can nevertheless be used meaningfully in discussions of the politics of multiculturalism. As Tariq Modood puts it, "we do not have to essentialise or reify cultures to be multiculturalists… [T]he coherence of a group…is neither a fiction nor an essence but more akin to a family resemblance."[5] The essay will generally have "ethnicity" rather than "race" in mind, understood in the sense of *The Parekh Report's* definition of an ethnic group as "one whose members have common origins, a shared sense of history, and shared culture and a sense of collective identity."[6]

Multi-ethnicity is a permanent feature of British society, presenting both opportunities and challenges. Up until the 1970s the challenges were mainly seen in terms of race relations. On that score, while huge challenges remain, considerable progress has clearly been made. As broadcaster George Alagiah has noted, "A country in which John Sentamu helps to run the Church of England and where Shami Chakrabarti is one of the most eloquent defenders of our hard-won liberties is vastly different from the one I came to in 1967."[7]

In the 2001 National Census, out of a total UK population of 58.8 million, 4.6 million people identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority. Around 4% of the UK population identified as Asian, the majority Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, 2% as Black, about half of whom were Black Caribbean, and 0.4% Chinese, and the same percentage as "Other". A total of 7.9% of the British population were members of ethnic (i.e. "non-white") minorities.[8] Given the high rate of immigration over the last decade, we might expect that the 2011 Census will report a notable increase in that figure.

The question of what proportion of its population consisting of ethnic minorities a "host society" could in principle hospitably absorb is too speculative to be of much use.[9] How, for example, could anyone ever reliably conclude that "8% is too many"?[10] The figure for Canada in 2006, a relatively well-integrated society compared to the UK, was 16.2%.[11] More relevant than these national totals is the geographical distribution of ethnic minorities.[12] In 2001, 9% of the population of England was classed as minorities ("non-white"), while the figure for Scotland and for Wales was 2% and for Northern Ireland 1%. Within England, ethnic minorities live overwhelmingly in the largest metropolitan areas.

45% of minorities live in London, where they make up 29% of the population. The next largest concentrations were the West Midlands (13%), the South East (8%), the North West (8%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (7%).[13] Equally significant is the distribution of particular minorities. London contains 78% of the UK's Black Africans, 61% of its Black Caribbeans and 54% of its Bangladeshis. This differs significantly with the nation's Pakistanis, only 9% of whom live in London, with 21% in the West Midlands, 20% in Yorkshire and 16% in the North West.

Insofar as multi-ethnicity poses challenges to, as well as opportunities for, British society, those challenges are predominantly experienced by residents of some larger English cities. For example, as noted in the Introduction, indigenous "white Britons" are a minority of the population in four London boroughs, and it is estimated that by 2025 four other boroughs, and the cities of Birmingham and Leicester, will have reached this point.[14] Observers also speak of the new phenomenon of "super-diversity," as evidenced, for example, in the fact that over 300 languages are spoken in London, and the fact that in Haringey over 120 countries are represented.[15]

Currently, about 10% of UK residents were born elsewhere, roughly double the proportion 50 years ago.

The real picture is more complex still. Currently, about 10% of UK residents were born elsewhere, roughly double the proportion 50 years ago.[16] Does that mean 10% of our population is "foreign?" Two thirds of immigrants are classed as "white", mostly hailing from Europe, North America, Australia or New Zealand. These immigrants share a broadly common culture, are geographically dispersed across the country and would be largely "invisible" to onlookers. At the same time, about half of all people in ("non-white") ethnic minority groups were born *in* the UK, which means that although they are "visible" they have been raised within or in close proximity to a broadly common culture as well.

Such complexities notwithstanding, it is clear that a growing proportion of the UK population has been shaped by cultural backgrounds that are different – in some cases profoundly so – to that of the great majority of Britons. It is no surprise that this presents challenges of peaceful co-existence. If co-existence has already proven a significant challenge for different social classes, regions, generations and religions among the population of the UK in generations past, it is only to be expected that adding further cultural, ethnic and religious differences to this mix will generate new frictions as well as benefits.

Neither the opportunities nor the challenges of multi-ethnicity can be characterised merely by the sort of statistics just cited. The opportunities are created by the widening and enriching of life experiences as we encounter those from other ethnic backgrounds (in more meaningful contexts than their restaurants). The challenges arise from experienced or perceived clashes between ways of living, cultural or religious practices which puzzle, disturb or disrupt the behavioural expectations of either the majority of Britons or other minorities close by, or, in a few cases, clearly violate entrenched legal principles.

The degree of multi-ethnicity in the UK is, of course, significantly affected by immigration policy (which this essay will not address). But whatever our views on that, we all need to work out ways to live peaceably and justly with people we have already received to our shores and who are now our neighbours and, increasingly, our compatriots. Equally, new immigrants need to reflect on the adjustments they might need to make if they are to live peaceably with their "hosts", and indeed in turn be "hosts" to others.

multiculturalism as a fact of religious plurality

It is important to distinguish a multi-ethnic society from a *multi-faith* society. A society with a historically predominant faith (such as India or Iraq) can have more than one ethnic culture, just as an ethnically homogenous society (such as Finland or Japan) might contain more than one faith. Given that particular religions often tend to be carried by particular ethnic communities, it is very likely, of course, that a multi-ethnic society is *also* a multi-faith one. But the distinction must be carefully maintained. When the House of Lords ruled in 1983 that certain minority religions be included under the category of "ethnicity" it blurred the distinction unhelpfully.[17]

Over 70% of British people identified themselves in the 2001 National Census as "Christian".[18] This result should be treated with caution because in 2006 only 32% of Christians claimed to be actively practicing their faith, in comparison to other religions in the UK where the figures range from 50% to 80%. Alongside this 70% majority there are a number of minority faiths (data from 2009/10):[19]

Muslims – 4.2% (up from 2.8% in 2001)
Hindus – 1.4% (up from 1.0% in 2001)
Sikhs – 0.6%
Jews – 0.5%
Buddhists – 0.4% (up from 0.3% in 2001)
Other religions – 1.1% (up from 0.3% in 2001)
No religion – 20.5% (up from 15.1% in 2001).

The results of the 2011 Census are likely to confirm that while at least a majority of Britons still identify as Christian, the proportion of adherents to other faiths, notably Islam, or none, has grown.

It was noted in the Introduction that Christians form the most ethnically diverse community in the UK. For example, among the 70% claiming Christian affiliation are many

black Britons. Many of these are, or were born into families of, post-war immigrants from the Caribbean who, notwithstanding continuing problems of racism, are comparatively well integrated into British society. Most of them now regard themselves as culturally British as well as ethnically African-Caribbean. The number of black Britons has recently swelled considerably by the arrival of (mostly Christian) immigrants or refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom will take some time to adapt to their new environment. Yet for many such immigrants, their Christian faith supplies an immediate potential bond with British Christians, and hence with aspects of British culture, so making their transition into the host society much easier than, for example, Bangladeshi Muslims.

There is no tight correlation between Christianity and any single minority community. British Christianity is a truly multi-ethnic phenomenon (even though the great majority of its adherents are "white"). By contrast some religions in the UK have close linkages to particular ethnic communities. Sociologists speak of "ethno-religious" communities such as the British Pakistani community which, like Pakistan itself, is overwhelmingly Muslim. Some British Pakistanis are not Muslims, and many British Muslims are not Pakistani, so the term should be used with caution. But the reality of ethno-religious communities is highly important for multiculturalism in Britain, since it is often hard for outsiders – indeed for insiders – to distinguish between practices which derive from the religious faith of the community and those which are primarily ethnic traditions. We return to that point in chapters 4 and 6.

Two examples will illustrate why it is important to maintain the distinction between a multi-ethnic and a multi-faith society, even while recognising how ethnicity and faith are often deeply intertwined. First, it is sometimes thought that female genital mutilation (clitoridectomy) is a religious obligation upon Muslims. It is true that it is widely practiced among certain Muslim and other communities in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, and some Muslim scholars have argued that it is at least permissible. But a conference of leading Muslim scholars in Cairo in 2006 clearly condemned the practice as "un-Islamic".[20] The same applies to "honour killings", which are not in any way enjoined by Islam but are rooted in particular and very powerful ethnic traditions in, for example, parts of the Middle East and South Asia where "shame" and "honour" can be matters of life and death.[21] The horror of "honour killings", of which an increasing number have been occurring in the UK, must be correctly named if it is to be effectively opposed.

Second, just as it is wrong to "blame" a religion for what may at root be as much or more a cultural practice, so it is also misleading to claim, as many now do, that the emergence of radical Islamism in Britain is a problem arising mainly from ethnic marginalisation. Radical Islamism is a particular – most British Muslims would say deviant – variant of Islamic religion, and if governments respond to it as if it were merely a reaction to ethnic or racial disrespect or social deprivation they will fail to identify the deepest motivations behind Islamist-inspired violence, which are, at least in part, theologically based and

which must be challenged on such terms.[22] Governments have been tempted to suppose that such violence can be countered primarily by tackling deprivation and enforcing anti-discrimination laws.[23] These are certainly relevant factors in countering extremism but they are not enough in themselves since such extremism is not a direct response to poverty or marginalisation (though it may be exacerbated by them).

> **Blurring the distinction between ethnicity and religion will not only confuse our grasp of multiculturalism but could also be discriminatory or even dangerous.**

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multiculturalism as a doctrine of "multi-faithism"

Some commentators at times use the term "multiculturalism" pejoratively to refer not to a sociological state of affairs but to a *doctrine of multi-faithism*. This is a potentially very misleading usage.[24] "Multi-faithism" in this context means the view that all religious faiths should either be presumed to be equally true or that they should, at least, be regarded as equally valid pathways to the divine. Theologians sometimes call this view "religious pluralism", the doctrine that all faiths, however diverse, lead ultimately to the same god.[25] The metaphor of different pathways leading up to the same mountain peak is often invoked.

This doctrine is often motivated by a commendable spirit of generosity and inclusiveness, but that does not prevent it from being philosophically incoherent. Consider the mountain metaphor: how can anyone actually know that all the paths apparently leading up the mountain actually do reach the top, unless they have already reached the top themselves and gained an overview of the route taken by all the other paths? The claim that all such paths lead to the same destination assumes just the kind of privileged standpoint which the doctrine itself rejects. The doctrine of multi-faithism assumes a "God's-eye" view it denies everyone else.

It is crucial to recognise that this doctrine is not at all implied by government policies which, for example, seek to grant different religions equal legal rights or to fund minority faith projects. The doctrine might as a matter of fact be *subscribed to* by certain political, intellectual – even ecclesiastical – leaders. Such leaders might even try (wrong-headedly) to *justify* their favoured multicultural policies by appealing to the doctrine. And they might have been *led to entertain it* by their experience of the fact of religious plurality. But there is no necessary connection. Chapter 6 identifies legitimate multicultural policies which in no way presuppose this doctrine.

multiculturalism as an assumption of cultural relativism

The fourth sense in which the term "multiculturalism" is used in current debate is to refer to an assumption of the equal worth of all cultures, specifically to the moral values each culture embodies; hence it is sometimes called "moral relativism". This, at least, is what its critics mean by it. Their argument is that what passes for multiculturalism is actually a cover for an assertion of the moral equivalence of all cultures, and they are quick (and right) to point out that some cultural practices are just morally abhorrent.

Cultural relativism, it seems, is one of the targets Jonathan Sacks has in his sights in *The Home We Build Together.* As noted, Sacks holds that British society is less and less able to serve as a "home" and more and more resembles a "hotel". One of the reasons for this, he claims, is the progressive abandonment of shared public values rooted in universal principles, and the retreat into a relativistic celebration of mere "difference". The inevitable implication is that all cultural practices are regarded as having equal moral standing, disabling us from making any public moral judgements on palpable cultural injustices. The same charge, from a secular liberal perspective, is levelled by Rumy Hasan, from a secular conservative standpoint by Patrick West and from a religious nationalist position by Melanie Phillips.[26]

As it happens, the belief in the moral equivalence of all cultures is indeed a belief held (wrong-headedly) by *some* defenders of multiculturalism. But by no means all supporters of multiculturalism hold this view. Many seek to ground their support in, for example, universal human rights, a notion plainly incompatible with cultural relativism. There are various versions of cultural relativism on offer and some are more sophisticated than others. But in the rough and tumble of public debate, the practical conclusion of most versions often comes to the same thing: that no-one can presume to have access to valid moral criteria by which one cultural practice could be definitively judged superior to another.

The risk that an attitude of cultural relativism at official level can lead to connivance in outright injustice is shown by the case of Shazia Shafee, a thirteen year old Pakistani girl who disappeared from school in Sheffield for twenty months and was later found to have been beaten by her father for becoming "too western" and forcibly returned to her village in Kashmir to "teach her a lesson". No official agency followed up on her. The Foreign Office was reported as defending its inaction by saying, "You can't force ideas on people who have held different ideas for generations. You don't know who is on the right side, or even if there is a right side."[27]

Charles Taylor's discussion of the question helps us to see what is wrong with cultural relativism. In his influential 1992 essay "The Politics of Recognition", Taylor proposes what he calls a "presumption of equal worth" when we approach other cultures.[28] By this he

does *not* mean cultural relativism but rather that, when we begin to engage with a different culture, we should proceed with the *presumption* that it is at least worthy of respect if it has proven meaningful to many people over an extended period of time:

> [I]t is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time – that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable – are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject.[29]

A culture that has served as a context of genuine flourishing for many human beings should not be dismissed out of hand prior to an actual encounter with it. But Taylor shows how some multiculturalist philosophers then take a further, fatal step. They not only affirm the value of cultural variety and call for an attitude of openness towards different cultures, but they also claim that diverse cultures should be declared to be of equal moral worth *a priori*.

Taylor will have none of this. He insists that we must be prepared to render adverse moral judgements on aspects of other cultures (as well as our own). The claim by some postmodernist multiculturalists (advocates of "the politics of difference") to know *in advance* of investigating the contents of a particular culture that it *is* deserving of equal respect, is to abandon critical thought entirely. Contrary to what its adherents think, this view is not a *refusal* to evaluate, but an assertion that we must evaluate other cultures – positively. Ironically, Taylor points out, such a view actually undermines any basis for a positive appreciation of cultures:

> A favorable judgment on demand is nonsense...the giving of such a judgment demands an act of breathtaking condescension. No one can really mean it as an act of respect... A favorable judgment made prematurely [bypassing any critical exploration of a culture] would not be only condescending but also ethnocentric. It would praise the other for being like us... By implicitly invoking our standards to judge all civilizations and cultures, the politics of difference can end up making everyone the same.[30]

Sympathy for certain multicultural public policies does not imply the abandonment of vigorous inter-cultural (and inter-religious) argument and critique.

multiculturalism as a principle of public policy towards minorities

The fifth sense in which the term multiculturalism is used in contemporary debate is as a

principle guiding public policy towards ethnic and religious minorities. Chapter 6 assesses some specific varieties of multicultural policy and only some brief remarks are needed here. Multiculturalism as a type of public policy is one of the most prominent senses of the term used in academic discussions. Whatever we may make of specific policies sailing under the banner of multiculturalism, and whether or not we wish to retain the term itself, it is clear that governments of multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries like the UK need some broad principle to guide their policies in this area.

As was noted in passing in the previous chapter, underlying the variety of multicultural public policies in place in various countries is a broadly unifying commitment to the "equal treatment" of ethnic and religious minorities, both as communities and towards their individual members. This term may be understood in different ways and has been taken to imply a wide range of policy implications. Many are listed in successive public reports on integration and cohesion, and there are a large number of them, covering areas such as education, youth, health, welfare, housing, policing, neighbourhood regeneration and faith.[31] Aside from the BNP, almost no-one, not even fierce critics of multiculturalism, would really want to sweep aside the entire raft of such policies built up over recent decades in pursuit of equal treatment or anti-discrimination, even though any particular policy may, of course, be legitimately criticised. Britain retains a strong, if not always consistently applied, commitment to equal treatment. Since this is an integral part of multicultural policy, it is incumbent on contributors to public debate to make clear that they do not literally want to see the "end of multiculturalism" in *this* comprehensive sense – or, if they do, to explain why.

Contrary to what some commentators seem to assume, however, asserting a general principle of equal treatment is the beginning not the end of the public policy debate, for the practical meaning of the term is very much open to debate. The argument is not about *whether* to treat ethnic and cultural minorities equally but *how* to do so, and how equal treatment might need to be balanced against other valid principles of public policy. The notion of "multicultural justice" proposed in chapter 5 sketches one framework for approaching such questions, and chapter 6 illustrates how the notion might be used to assess policy.

multiculturalism as a cause of segregation

If multiculturalism is usually understood in academic circles as a principle of public policy, in popular, media and political circles the term is increasingly used to refer to the phenomenon of ethnic "segregation", or, at least, to a cluster of attitudes and practices causing or exacerbating such segregation. Unlike the other five senses, "multiculturalism as segregation" is unambiguously censorious: no-one intends it positively. We are already familiar with this usage from the account in the previous chapter of how multiculturalism is currently perceived in official and political circles. It gains support from reports of grass-

roots experiences such as this account, by an English vicar's wife (herself English), of life in part of inner-city Birmingham:

> As a woman, it was difficult for me to gain many first-hand impressions of the Muslims. I was generally ignored by both men and women, and on the rare occasions that I had to interact… I was addressed as if inconsequential… My husband…was chatting to a man…who had just arrived from Antwerp – one of an increasing number of Muslims who are arriving here with EU passports. He asked him why he had come to Birmingham. He was surprised at the question: 'Everyone know. Birmingham – best place in Europe to be pure Muslim.'[32]

The broader criticism that accounts such as this seem to sustain is that by affirming and supporting the public expression of minority ethnic and religious identities, multicultural policies have gone well beyond a proper equal treatment of minorities and have permitted, even encouraged, unhealthy and inward-looking ethnic and religious enclaves to develop.[33] Critics also often suggest that multicultural policy-makers are operating under the influence of the assumption of cultural relativism. We have seen that the two are not necessarily connected but it is evident that some who are complacent about segregation also appear tacitly to assume something like cultural relativism. In any event, the outcome, critics say, has been an uncritical championing of cultural and religious separateness – of "identity politics" – at the cost of social mixing, shared values and common projects. Some critics also point out that it is often a *failure to act* that is chiefly at fault. Rumy Hasan describes multiculturalism as a damaging stance of "benign non-intervention" in the life of ethnic and religious minorities on the part of well-meaning politicians who are fearful of being accused of "racism" if they challenge illiberal minority practices. Hasan holds that the combination of misplaced policies of support and neglect in the face of clear evidence of deepening ethnic, and in turn religious, "ghettoisation" has permitted the emergence of introverted communities which are not only geographically concentrated but also "psychically detached" from mainstream society. Worst of all, politicians have turned a blind eye to seriously oppressive internal practices impacting most adversely on women and children.[34]

Critics…often suggest that multicultural policy-makers are operating under the influence of the assumption of cultural relativism.

Since the notion of "segregation" will be very important to our assessment of multicultural policies in chapter 6 it is worth analysing the notion in more detail here. One sociologist has noted that "it is no easy matter to specify the exact nature of the proper concerns raised by segregation."[35] For example, it is important to distinguish between residential and institutional segregation (and these are not the only possible senses). The mere fact of a degree of residential segregation – the presence of ethnically concentrated

neighbourhoods – is not necessarily problematic or automatically a barrier to integration and cohesion.[36] A society which allows freedom of movement, residence and employment itself makes possible the emergence of such ethnic neighbourhoods. New immigrants often naturally desire to live close to families and friends for obvious reasons of mutual help, in which case geographical ethnic concentrations will very likely appear. It is then likely that distinct ethnic businesses, shops, community centres, places of worship and, in time, schools will emerge to serve the particular needs and preferences of members of the ethnic group concerned. A degree of social distance between certain communities, minority and majority, may therefore not only be unavoidable but also quite legitimate, where people choose to live somewhat separate from what most people might regard as "the mainstream" (itself a contested term). For example, Orthodox Jews congregating in areas of North London tend not to mix all that widely with their neighbours but do not cause significant social divisions as a result.

Mere residential segregation need not necessarily imply social hostility and nor does it automatically produce *institutional* segregation, i.e., an absence of regular social interaction through participation in schools, employment, religious activities or through voluntary organisations or local politics. Institutional segregation is more likely to be problematic as it diminishes the normal social processes that allow mutual understanding to develop naturally across ethnic or religious differences. It has been widely recognised that in parts of certain English towns and cities residential segregation is not only associated with high levels of institutional segregation but that the outcome has been increasing mutual suspicion, and, in some cases, dangerous levels of hostility.

The *Cantle Report* argued that this is what lay behind the northern cities riots of 2001, in which, following years of deepening alienation, groups of aggrieved young Pakistani Muslim men found themselves in violent running street battles with the police, following provocations by far-right groups.[37] Evidence emerged that in cities such as Bradford, Burnley and Oldham significant proportions of the members of ethnic minorities had been spending large parts of their lives relating only to members of their own ethnic or ethno-religious group.[38] In the absence of regular positive experience of contact with others, growing numbers of the Pakistani and the white working class communities, especially young people, began to develop strongly negative perceptions of the other group and to nurse their shared grievances behind walls of suspicion. In Bradford, for example, unskilled and educationally underachieving immigrants whose families had come mainly from rural Pakistan and Bangladesh, stood in mutual resentment against disadvantaged English working class communities left behind by industrial decline and resentful of a perceived bias against them by "politically correct" local authorities.[39] One commentator observed that in Bradford "the left-behind white working class and inward-looking Muslim minorities now glower at each other across no-man's land."[40] It is a situation ripe for exploitation by extremist groups such as the racist BNP or the radical Islamist Hitz ut-Tahrir.[41]

Similar patterns have existed in a small number of other urban areas around the UK. The causes of such mutual alienation in such neighbourhoods are many and varied, including both involuntary factors such as poor housing and racial prejudice from "whites", but also "self-segregation", linked in some places (not all) to separatist cultural or religious attitudes on the part of minorities themselves.[42] In addition, the wider reality of relative economic deprivation is often an aggravating factor behind ethnically related hostilities, though it is never enough in itself to cause them.[43] While minority ethnic communities account for around 8% of the UK population, 70% of them live in the 88 most deprived areas.[44] The employment rate for all new immigrants is only 62%.[45] Among ethnic minorities, as in the general population, economic deprivation is often correlated with other indicators of disadvantage, such as poor health, educational underachievement, family breakdown and high rates of offending.[46]

These wider economic and social factors are widely recognised by observers. But it is worth noting one particularly troubling (though not pervasive) feeder of "self-segregation" which tends not to be sufficiently acknowledged, namely the idea of "territoriality" propagated by a small number of radical Muslims living in what they are beginning to claim as "Muslim areas".[47] The example cited earlier of the English vicar's wife experiencing profound alienation in one area of inner-city Birmingham with a large Asian Muslim majority is one troubling illustration. There is disturbing evidence that Tower Hamlets is another.[48] A councillor in Newham also reports a case involving a young (married) former Muslim Bangladeshi woman being challenged by local Muslim men and women outside the shop in which she worked in Tower Hamlets and close to the site of a Tablighi Jamaat mosque. She was told that her style of dress was unacceptable in an area which is "95% Muslim", and later a complaint was made to her employer.[49] The very idea of there being exclusive ethnic or religious "territories" (Muslim or otherwise) is, of course, in direct conflict with British commitments to freedom of movement and residence, civil liberties and mutual respect. The necessary responses to such claims must include local inter-ethnic and inter-religious community initiatives, vigilant policing but also continuing debate among Muslims themselves.

Yet these undoubtedly real and disturbing examples of unhealthy segregation must not be allowed to dominate our picture of communities with high levels of ethnic concentration. The number of localities where segregation (of either kind) generates deep suspicion and alienation or political corruption is actually few across the UK as a whole. *Our Shared Future* reported in 2007 that "cohesion rates" in the UK ranged from 38% to 90% but that in only 10 out of 387 areas did they fall below 60%.[50] The experience of the three northern cities where riots broke out has not been replicated in most other cities with high levels of ethnic diversity or even of residential segregation. Leicester, for example is often cited as an example of a relatively successful ethnic and religious cohesion.[51] Among the factors cited there are strong, cross-community local leadership, as well as the unusual circumstance that the large Muslim population are mainly Gujarati Indians (expelled from East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s) bringing with them good

education and previous experience of migration and interaction with other minorities.[52] In chapter 6 it will be argued that while there are elements of truth in the "multiculturalism as segregation" charge, it must not be allowed to blacken multicultural policies as a whole.

conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to clarify what exactly we are talking about when we bandy about the term "multiculturalism". The chapter has proposed that the first and second senses (the empirical reality of ethnic and religious diversity) must be acknowledged and carefully interpreted; that the third and fourth senses (multi-faithism and cultural relativism) are misguided beliefs we should expose and reject; that the fifth sense (minorities policy) is a necessary response by government to the reality of ethnic and religious diversity, but one which is inevitably deeply contested, and that the sixth sense is a controversial judgment about the consequences of the pursuit of multicultural policies.

The next two chapters outline one Christian perspective on multiculturalism (there are, of course, others).[53] Chapter 4 lays out a theological framework towards that end, while chapter 5 proposes a notion of "multicultural justice" consonant with it. Chapter 6 then deploys that notion to offer an assessment of selected multicultural policies, focusing on the charge that they "cause segregation". The final chapter confronts the crucial question of the shared obligations of citizenship in a multicultural society and argues that the pursuit of multicultural policies can be quite compatible with the requirements of citizenship – even while those requirements also serve to limit the scope of legitimate multicultural claims.

chapter 3 references

1.   Commission on Integration and Cohesion, *Our Shared Future* (2007), p. 5.

2.   Or "multiculturality" or "cultural plurality".

3.   Or a "religiously plural" society.

4.   See, e.g., Gerd Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch. 2.

5.   Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Polity, 2007), p. 97.

6.   Runnymede Trust Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report* (Profile Books, 2000), p. xxiii.

7.   Quoted in Ralph Grillo, "British and others. From 'race' to 'faith'", in Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, eds., *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European discourses, policies and practices* (Routledge, 2010), p. 52.

8.   http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=455

9.   "Host society" is another problematic term; hence, like "white British", it is used in quotation marks.

10. Perceptions of reality can also be at variance with the facts. *Our Shared Future* notes that in one survey 38% of Britons estimated that at least 21% of the UK population was non-white (p. 43)

11. http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/rt-td/eth-eng.cfm

12. The following statistics are taken from the 2001 National Census: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=457

13. According to the 2001 Census, less than 4 per cent of minorities live in the North East and the South West. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=457

14. Nissa Finney and Ludi Simpson, *'Sleepwalking to Segregation'? Challenging myths about race and immigration* (The Policy Press, 2009), p. 155.

15. Home Office, *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy* (Home Office, 2004), p. 3; *Our Shared Future,* p. 34.

16. Contrary to the views of Migration Watch, Finney and Simpson (*'Sleepwalking to Segregation'?* ch. 3) argue that UK immigration is not out of control and that its rates are comparable to other western countries.

17. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandla_v_Dowell-Lee

18. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=460

19. Simon Webley, "Religious Practices in the Workplace," Occasional Paper 3 (Institute of Business Ethics, 2011), p. 5.

20. Amira El Ahl, "Theologians battle female circumcision", *Spiegel Online International,* 12 June 2006. http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,452790,00.html

21. The Muslim Council of Britain has strongly condemned the practice. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3150142.stm

22. See Atif Imtiaz, *Wandering Lonely in a Crowd: Reflections on the Muslim Condition in the West* (Kube Publishing, 2011), ch. 2; Philip Lewis, *Young, British and Muslim* (Continuum, 2007), ch. 5; Paul Marshall, "Understanding Radical Islam," in Jonathan Chaplin with Robert Joustra, eds., *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy* (Baylor University Press, 2010), pp. 71–86.

23. See, e.g. this statement of the Local Government Association: "The most effective way of responding to the threat of extremism is to tackle the underlying problems of deprivation and ignorance." Cited in *Strength in Diversity,* p.22.

24. As, e.g., in Michael Nazir-Ali, "Extremism flourished as UK lost Christianity", *The Telegraph* 6 January 2008. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1574695/Extremism-flourished-as-UK-lost-Christianity.html

25. For one account of "religious pluralism", see John Hick, "Religious Pluralism and Islam", Lecture delivered to the Institute for Islamic Culture and Thought, Tehran (February 2005). http://www.johnhick.org.uk/article11.html.

26. Rumy Hasan, *Multiculturalism: Some Inconvenient Truths* (Politico's, 2009); Patrick West, *The Poverty of Multiculturalism* (Civitas, 2005); Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan: How Britain has Created a Terror State Within,* rev. ed. (Gibson Square, 2008), ch. 4.

27. This information is reported in Jenny Taylor, "The Multicultural Myth", in Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh and Jenny Taylor, *Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in 'Secular' Britain* (SPCK, 1998), pp. 87–89.

28. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 225–256.

29. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", p. 256. In the next chapter we propose Christian reasons for such an expectation.

30. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", pp. 254–55.

31. See, e.g., *The Parekh Report; Our Shared Future.*

32. The Mole Special, "A stranger in my own land", *Standpoint* 29 (January/February 2011), pp. 26–29.

33. This critique is also being levelled by "non-white" immigrants. See, e.g., Afshin Shahi, "The failure of British multiculturalism and the virtue of reciprocity," *openDemocracy* 8 December 2010. http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/afshin-shahi/failure-of-british-multiculturalism-and-virtue-of-reciprocity

34. Rumy Hasan, *Multiculturalism,* chs. 1–3.

35. Alan Hugh Carling, "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims: Ethnic Segregation, Polarisation and the Future of Bradford", *Urban Studies* 45.3 (2008), p. 574.

36. This is recognised in the *Cantle Report,* p. 28, and in *Strength in Diversity,* p. 16. Carling points out that "segregation" and "self-segregation" may be "preconditions" for "polarisation" but do not necessarily lead to it, while polarisation is likely to generate segregation. "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims", p. 570.

37. *Cantle Report;* David Goodhart, "A tale of three cities," *Prospect* (July 2011). These riots followed similar ones in Bradford in 1995. See Taylor, "The Multicultural Myth", pp. 80–83.

38. Some argue that this analysis has been one-sided. See, e.g., Ben Chu, "Oldham: A town still divided?", *Independent* 26 May 2011. Carling, however, has shown that levels of residential segregation did increase markedly in Bradford from 1991–2001: "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims," p. 559.

39. David Goodhart, "A tale of three cities," pp. 36–42. *Our Shared Future* reports a strong sense of unfair treatment, by local authorities, of "majority white" people in ethnically mixed areas (pp. 98–100).

40. Anonymous Bradford academic, quoted in Goodhart, "A tale of three cities", p. 38. Carling notes that Bradford stands out against other centres of immigration because of "the numerical predominance within the minority ethnic population of a group with a specific set of geographical and cultural origins, which tends to give the group a ready-made foundation for internal cohesion." "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims," p. 570.

41. Carling, "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims", pp. 573–576.

42. In "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims", Carling finds evidence of "self-conscious self-segregation on racial or ethnic [and religious] grounds" (pp. 559, 560, 562). Carling's careful, evidence-based analysis of "self-segregation" is much more reliable that Hasan's problematic notion of "physic detachment", which presupposes a strongly secularist notion of integration and often proceeds on the basis of conjecture rather than firm evidence. Hasan, *Multiculturalism,* ch. 3.

43. *Our Shared Future,* p. 27.

44. *Fairness for All: a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights White Paper* (Department for Trade and Industry, 2004) p. 13.

45. *Our Shared Future,* p. 27.

46. *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion* (Home Office, 2005), pp. 17–19. While family breakdown is not specifically a minorities' problem, it afflicts African-Caribbean families in a particular way: two thirds of children in such families are raised without a father. The charity Faith in Britain, led by David Muir, recently launched a Commission on African and Caribbean Families to address the question. http://www.eauk.org/articles/faith-in-britain-launch.cfm

47. Carling identifies the extremist Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir, operating in Bradford, as one source of this notion. "The Curious Case of the Mis-claimed Myth Claims", p. 575. On "radical Islamism," see Richard Martin and Abbas Barzegan, eds., *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam* (Stanford University Press, 2010).

48. See Jenny Taylor, "The numbers game: immigrant religious activism, government policies and the interfaith challenge", Lecture at London School of Theology (CIS Occasional Paper, 2011), p. 17.

49. Alan Craig, "A challenge to Britain's freedoms", *Church of England Newspaper,* 24 June 2011, p. 11.

50. *Our Shared Future,* p. 21.

51. Leicester has been named one of a select number of "Beacon councils" (*Cantle Report,* p. 8). The *Cantle Report* also singles out Southall and Birmingham as relatively cohesive ethnically plural areas (p. 15).

52 Lewis, *Young, British and Muslim,* p. 24.

53. See, e.g., Lesslie Newbigin *et al, Faith and Power;* Rowan Williams, "Multiculturalism – friend or foe?", Lecture given at Toynbee Hall, 16 May 2007; T. J. Gorringe, *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture* (Ashgate, 2004); David I. Smith, *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity* (Eerdmans, 2009); Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths* (SPCK, 2008), ch. 4.

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4

a theology
of multiculturalism

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"How can you be Croatian?"[1]

This question was posed to theologian Miroslav Volf by foreign friends during the Balkan wars.

The speaker was implicitly questioning not just the actions of the Croatian government during the Balkans war but the very legitimacy of defending the Croatian cultural identity itself. Most human beings, however, experience cultural identity (or identit*ies*) as personally meaningful and socially beneficial. This chapter offers pointers for making sense of ethnic and cultural diversity from the standpoint of Christian social thought; initial gestures towards a "theology of multiculturalism". For inter-cultural understanding to be nurtured, it is important that each of us is able to articulate, out of our own traditions, why such respect is of value (if it is), as well as to appreciate why others might think so out of theirs. This is one such articulation.

The place of cultural identity in Christian theology is complex. The question has been seriously complicated, to say the least, by a history in which Christian practice has frequently fallen short of biblical imperative. Christians and Christian churches have sometimes, as in the Balkan wars, supported exclusivist ethnic or nationalist movements, and the shameful history of anti-Semitism among Christians is a terrible stain on Christianity's reputation for inter-cultural respect. Yet the New Testament itself has a fundamentally universal, culturally inclusive intent. Christianity is founded on the declaration that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek". (Galatians 3.28) It testifies to a promised future in which all peoples and nations will be united in a new kingdom of justice and peace. The book of Revelation celebrates the presence of people "from every nation, tribe, people and language" on the "new earth". (Revelation 7.9) At the same time, the New Testament rests upon the Hebrew scriptures, which affirm ethnic diversity as an expression of God's good creation and continuing providential beneficence. Indeed, the vehicle through which God chose to reveal himself to the whole world was an unpromising and fractious assemblage of Semitic tribes who became the "covenant people". (Genesis 17.1-8)

culture and "creation"

The first motif in our proposed multicultural theology is the foundational Christian belief in the *common habitation of all human beings and cultures in a shared order of creation* established and sustained by God. Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, starts from a profound conviction of the fundamental unity of the human race. Whatever ethnic, cultural, national or indeed religious differences they may display, humans all share not only a common genetic ancestry but a common spiritual standing as creatures "made in the image of God".

The account of the creation of human beings in Genesis chapter 1 strongly suggests that "image and likeness" is closely tied to the definitive task assigned by God to humans in the same verse: "Let us make humankind in our image…and let them have dominion…over the earth." (Genesis 1.26)[2] This is followed with an injunction which spells the task out in more detail: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it…" (Genesis 1.28) This is not a mandate for the ruthless exploitation of nature as mere object for the satisfaction of human desires but rather a summons to the responsible "stewarding", the "tilling and keeping", (Genesis 2.15) of the whole of creation as faithful trustees of God. As Pope John Paul II put it, "The human creature receives a mission to govern creation in order to make all its potential shine."[3]

> **Humans all share not only a common genetic ancestry but a common spiritual standing as creatures "made in the image of God".**

Theologians have referred to this as the "cultural mandate", the invitation given by God to humanity to rise to the task of cultural formation, to take what God gave in the original creation and unfold its riches for the blessing of human life and the praise of God. Intimations of the human response to this task already appear in Genesis 5 where agriculture, the arts, and technology first appear (Genesis 5.20–22), but the idea runs through many other parts of the Bible. The cultural mandate is reaffirmed to Noah after the destruction of the known human race in the story of the flood (Genesis 9.1). It is not suspended in the New Testament.

What is more, the appearance of differentiated cultural tasks is also associated with the emergence of "peoples" or "nations" displaying specific cultural talents. Here we see the first signs in the Bible of the recognition that, as human beings discharge the cultural mandate, they quite naturally gather into particular communities marked by distinct cultural traits. Sometimes the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11.1–9) is read to suggest that the existence of diverse human languages, and by implication diverse cultures, is a mark of divine judgement. But, as Jonathan Sacks has noted, the point of the passage is rather an attack on the attempt to impose uniformity on a diverse human race by political means. It is a critique of the arrogance of imperial power.[4] This reading is confirmed by biblical

scholar Walter Brueggemann who claims that the narrative depicts Babel as "a unity grounded in fear and characterized by coercion. A human unity without the vision of God's will is likely to be ordered in oppressive conformity."[5] God's response is to break up such imperial power by unleashing the decentralising power of linguistic diversity.

What does Christianity claim to add to these Hebrew conceptions? Two fundamental Christian beliefs are relevant here. First, the uniquely Christian confession that God became "incarnate" in the historical person, Jesus Christ, is a radical reaffirmation of the goodness of created human nature as such and, Jesus being Jewish, also of the value of cultural identity (John 1.1–14). Second, the early Church's confession that "in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek" is closely connected to the belief that human beings may now share "the image of Christ".[6] This "image" is continuous with the original image given to all human beings in creation. The "image of Christ" is the renewal of the "image of God" of Genesis 1. Christians believe that Jesus Christ makes available to all human beings the possibility of the renewal of the divine image given in creation but defaced (though never destroyed) by "the fall". Redemption reaffirms the solidarity of all humans by virtue of their common origin as creatures of the one Creator God, and equips them to take up once again the task of faithfully stewarding creation. In Jesus Christ the cultural mandate is not set aside but reaffirmed. Christians, then, should be enthusiastic formers of culture, and faithful stewards of all that is good in their own distinctive cultural patrimonies.

In the Christian tradition, membership of the human species establishes a much deeper bond than that arising from membership of any particular community, whether ethnic, cultural or national. Ultimately, no claims arising from these particular identities can ever trump those rooted in our universal humanity. A multicultural theology, then, must be rooted in a theology of universal creatureliness. Humans share with each other a profound dignity as creatures made in God's image and a noble calling to exercise responsible stewardship of the whole of creation. This is the surest foundation for the radically *universalist* character of Christian faith and ethics. The claim that all humans share a common origin and identity is overwhelmingly more important than the fact that they possess diverse and particular cultural identities. This is the deepest Christian motivation for reaching across cultural boundaries in search of common human solidarity. Yet Christianity was here extending the universalism already emerging in the Hebrew Scriptures, as in the repeated injunction to care for the stranger and alien, "for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19.33–34)[7] The same cross-cultural vision is affirmed in the biblical metaphor of the global "Body of Christ".

Yet Christianity is also able to affirm many of the *particular* cultural identities humans possess. These are not rejected or regretted but affirmed as gifts of the same Creator God. Diverse cultural (tribal, ethnic, national) identities can be seen, at least in part, as legitimate differentiations in human society occurring over time as human beings live out what it means to be made in the image of God in different contexts. If this is so, then we

may expect to find many humanly wholesome things in diverse human cultures, whatever *else* we find in them. Insofar as the image of God in individual humans is, as the next section explains, not destroyed but only defaced, we can expect significant evidence of the goodness of the original image to be visible in their collective cultural pursuits as well. This offers a theological foundation for Charles Taylor's proposal, noted earlier, that we should "presume" to find something of value in every historical culture.[8]

Here is a powerful basis for a positive Christian affirmation of culture-making in general and of cultural diversity, while equally for an affirmation of a much deeper human solidarity across cultures. It invites us to receive cultural diversity in the first instance as a testimony to the dignity of humans as creatures of God rather than as a symptom of human rebellion against God.[9] That rebellion, however, seriously complicates the picture, as we will now see.

culture and "the fall"

The second motif in a theology of multiculturalism is the equally important Christian confession of the *common solidarity of all human cultures in sin*. Since the effects of "the fall" penetrate not only the depths of the human heart but also the heart of all cultures, we will expect to find many deep moral distortions, evils and, to use biblical language, "idolatries", in each. This will, of course, also apply to those cultures (such as England, for example) which have undergone a considerable degree of "Christianisation". We must always be willing to take critical distance from any aspect of our own culture, distinguishing that within it which is conducive to human flourishing from that which twists and distorts the created gifts of God.

Consider a contemporary British example of the problem of uncritical cultural self-justification. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair in his resignation speech lapsed into a particularly gauche instance: "This country is a blessed nation. The British are special. The world knows it. In our innermost thoughts, we know it. This is the greatest nation on earth".[10] In less grandiose but still problematic language Gordon Brown on one occasion said that "there is nothing that is bad about Britain that cannot be overcome by what is good about Britain".[11] Taken literally this implies that British culture is morally self-sufficient, with nothing fundamental to learn from any other culture, suffering from no grievous moral distortions.

To use familiar New Testament language, it is always easier for us to see the speck in someone else's cultural eye than the log in our own. This is certainly the case for Europeans, given the legacy of our past cultural domination of others, and Americans, given their current hegemonic global standing. But it is going to become increasingly important for a country like China, now emerging as a global superpower, yet deeply

inured to external critique as a result both of the continuing legacy of totalitarianism and of the memory of an earlier civilizational supremacy. And it is equally important for those Muslims motivated by a desire to restore the lost civilizational power of Islam in former Muslim lands or to extend it into lands which have never been dominantly Muslim.[12]

A readiness to receive external critique does not imply a stance of cultural self-denigration or "liberal guilt" but simply a posture of humility towards our inherited cultural identities. For only if we are truly open to honest cultural self-examination can we then identify what is best in our own culture, acknowledge it with confidence and defend it appropriately. Here, perhaps, lies a basis for the development of a responsible, critical patriotism based on a "national narrative" suitably humbled by (what Christians would call) repentance and grace. Chapter 7 picks up this theme.

Another obvious consequence of the fall is the corruption of cultural diversity into mutual suspicion or enmity. In the face of insecurity or threat, perceived or real, ethnic, tribal or national communities all too easily retreat into themselves, exaggerate their difference from or assert their superiority to rival communities and compete for status, power, land and resources. Cultural identities easily become burdened with excessive moral and symbolic significance and, at the extreme, become revered as "idols", as witnessed in the "ethnic cleansing" occurring in the Balkan wars.

According to the Christian doctrine of the fall, then, all cultural traditions will reveal profound deficiencies and distortions. But in this doctrine, the effects of the fall are seen as operating at a level deeper than culture or society, namely religious faith. The Hebrew and Christian scriptures speak of sin as rebellion against the Creator and show how this manifests itself in a wide variety of false beliefs, about God, human beings and the world, and an enormous range of dehumanising and destructive practices.

As regards belief, Christians believe, unlike Hindus, that there is only one God, the creator and sustainer of the whole universe, and that the Hindu belief in multiple deities is false. Over and against Buddhists, Christians believe that there exists a personal and all-powerful God who transcends the created order and who can only be truly known by humans through his own self-revelation. Unlike Muslims, Christians believe that Jesus Christ is not one prophet among others but God incarnate and the unique saviour of the world. Equally, other religions assert or imply that Christians hold many false beliefs. From the standpoint of Islam, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity seems like polytheism. Secular humanism, of course, regards all such religions as both illusory and potentially dangerous, albeit perhaps serving some useful social or evolutionary functions. It is sheer sentimentality to deny the existence of these deep differences of belief among rival religions. The suppression of religious differences is a recipe not for tolerance but for mutual disrespect. A multiculturalism with integrity will not shrink from this conclusion.

In any event, the outcome of the historical emergence of many alternative religions, combined with extensive global population movements, is the inescapable reality of "multi-faith" societies. Whereas Christians have a powerful reason to celebrate those aspects of *cultural* diversity which arise from the historical unfolding of God's good gifts in creation, they have an equally powerful reason not to celebrate *religious* diversity *per se*.

Two crucial clarifications must be entered to that unfashionable claim. First, Christians do not (or should not) believe that other religions contain no true insights or wholesome practices. What is more, they *have their own reasons* for this expectation, hinted at already: namely that since all humans are made in God's image, they will inevitably continue to display ample evidence of this image irrespective of what they believe about God. It is this *Christian truth* which compels Christians to be receptive to the truths that may be grasped in other religions.

> **Christians do not (or should not) believe that other religions contain no true insights or wholesome practices.**

Such receptivity does not imply that believers may not seek energetically to persuade others of the truth of their own faith. The "proclamation" of such truth is often prejudicially stigmatised by some secular liberals, and some wrong-headed Christians, as "proselytisation".[13] The firm protection of the right to convert to a different religion without legal or physical penalty will, however, always be a non-negotiable commitment for any seriously Christian account of multiculturalism. Conversely, receptivity to other faiths does indeed imply the need to be prepared for, indeed positively to seek out, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and a sincere openness to be changed by such experiences.

Second, Christians do not (or should not) claim that their own contingent historical formulations of "true faith" are immune from profound and damaging errors. The merest glance at history shows how wrong such a claim would be. An obvious twentieth-century example is the way in which the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa offered theological legitimation for the racist ideology of apartheid. An earlier one is the complicity of many British Christians in sustaining the attitudes of cultural supremacy underpinning British imperialism.

The conclusion is clear: adherents to any religion and none need to work hard to discern the difference between legitimate cultural diversity within their (and others') religious traditions and illegitimate deviations from what they regard as true faith. There is no escaping that hard work of mutual critique and self-critique, and only naïve cultural relativists or religious pluralists will pretend it can be circumvented.

culture and "redemption"

The third biblical motif required for a theology of multiculturalism is the *openness of all cultures to the transforming effects of redemption*. The suggestion is not that cultures as collective entities can be "saved" in the same sense that individuals can. Yet over time cultures can bear and have borne the cumulative impact of the transformative activities of Christian communities living out what they took to be the social imperatives of the Gospel.

Tracing the transformative cultural influence of Christianity is hardly an exact science and any claims on that score are likely to be robustly contested, both outside and inside the Church. Moreover, an obsession with identifying precise lines of influence would ignore the truth that the impact of what the New Testament calls the "Kingdom of God" on society (the area where God's will is done) is in God's hands not Christians' (and is thankfully not the same as "what the Church does").

Yet with those caveats in place, it is possible to point towards significantly "redemptive" cultural changes brought about through Christian influence over many centuries. In this qualified sense, "redemption" is indeed a category that can be applied to collective enterprises like cultures.[14] For example, one of the most distinctive public stances of the early Church was its resolute opposition to the widespread Roman practice of "child exposure" (i.e. infanticide).[15] Christians would take in such children (mostly girls) and care for them, a practice leading to the eventual establishment of the new institution of the orphanage. Another distinctive stance was the strikingly different attitude displayed by early Christians towards "slaves" (a term sometimes meaning bonded domestic servants). They were in no position to "campaign" against the Roman legal institution of slavery, but they did seek to follow the apostle Paul's injunction to Philemon to welcome back his runaway slave Onesimus "no longer as slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother". (Philemon 1.6) The modern story of the decisive contribution of Christians such as William Wilberforce and his circle to the abolition of the slave trade has been well told. Christians in previous centuries have also taken the initiative in a wide range of other projects of social improvement such as the establishment of schools, hospitals, welfare organisations, even football clubs and, in the twentieth, the founding of the hospice movement and the establishment of many development NGOs. Notwithstanding their evident faults, European missionaries contributed significantly to the transformation of the cultures in which they worked. Leading African missiologist Lamin Sanneh has shown how, by translating the Bible into many vernacular languages, missionaries left behind a powerful tool for social and political emancipation.[16] Recent scholarship has also begun to make clear how Christian influence was operative, not only in social movements but also in some of the major constitutional and political advances of the modern west, such as representative and constitutional government and the emergence of codes of human rights.[17]

Unsurprisingly, it is often Christians who have come to the UK from other cultures who have the most vivid awareness of the formative contribution of Christianity to British culture and who worry most about its erosion. For example, Archbishop John Sentamu, who was born in Uganda, has declared:

> It is my understanding that [the] virtues…which form the fabric of our society have been weaved through a period of more than 1,500 years of the Christian faith operating in and upon this society. The Christian faith has weaved the very fabric of our society, just as the oceans around the United Kingdom and Ireland have shaped the contours of Britain's geographical identity. Whilst it is of course true to say that such virtues of kindness to neighbour, fair play and common decency are not unique to the Christian faith, just as they are not unique to England, it is equally true to say that these virtues have become embedded into the United Kingdom's social fabric and heritage as a result of the Christian faith and influence on society.[18]

It is not only Christians who make such claims about the formative influence of Christianity on the development of liberal democracy. German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, a secular modernist, acknowledges such a formative role in the historical emergence of core modern political values such as "emancipation", "fellowship" and "human dignity",[19] offering independent testimony that Christianity has indeed contributed to the "redemptive" uplifting of the cultures that have received it. If so, then a historically aware multiculturalism will not see doing justice to ethnic and religious minorities as requiring the marginalisation of Christianity in British public life. On the contrary, there is an important sense in which the nation's capacity (at its best) to embrace diverse cultures has been significantly enhanced by the cumulative impact of Christian faith.

The relevance of these three theological affirmations, about creation, fall and redemption, for multiculturalism can be sharpened further by clarifying more precisely the relationship between "culture" and "religion".

culture and "religion"

It is important to make explicit a claim about religion that has so far been implicit. In this essay, "religion" is not understood as a set of private beliefs or as a merely "cultic" phenomenon, i.e. one only related to formal liturgical or "sacred" settings. The Christian Scriptures view religion far more expansively than that. "Religion" is understood in this tradition as a comprehensive, communally held and dynamic set of beliefs and practices shaping all areas of personal and public life. Indeed, the logic of that definition means that

the category of "religion" will also include worldviews that do not even profess belief in a transcendent deity, such as varieties of paganism or secularism.[20] Religion is a deeper formative force than culture, even though it is certainly shaped by culture. Getting clarity on the precise relationship of religion to culture is indispensable for any serious treatment of multiculturalism.

Four points relevant to multiculturalism need to be affirmed. First, every religious tradition bears the marks of its particular cultural origins. Islam evidently displays its Arabic origins in key respects, and not only because the original Arabic language of the Qur'an is accorded special status. This is not to say that religions cannot transcend their cultural origins. Some do not but others, especially monotheistic ones, clearly have done. Islam has now become a truly global, cross-cultural religion which has transcended its culturally specific origins. A central goal of the Prophet Mohamed in Medina was to impose peace upon its warring ethnic tribes and the trans-ethnic, and now trans-national, vision of a global *ummah* is a powerful inspiration for many Muslim movements around the world. Christianity itself very early on transcended its distinctive Jewish origins and announced itself as a faith with a universal membership and mission. All such universalistic religions continue nevertheless to display some traces of the influence of the ethnic roots from which they sprang.

Second, every culture is impregnated with the deep influences of religious tradition(s). Since most religions speak not only to the interior life of individual adherents but to the public lives of the communities they generate, it is almost inevitable that cultures must reveal the influence of religion(s). Particular cultures may, of course, often bear the marks of more than one religion. Contemporary Indian culture remains dominantly Hindu in character but also reveals the notable shaping effect of Islam and (less so) of Christianity. Singaporean culture is an amalgam of Buddhism, Shintoism, Islam, Christianity and other faiths. By contrast, modern British culture was initially formed overwhelmingly by Protestant, and secondarily by Catholic, Christianity, but has been powerfully transformed by the secular humanism inspired by the English and Scottish Enlightenments. The relation between religion and culture is not one-to-one.

Third, the deep divergences *within* religious traditions must be acknowledged. Western and eastern Christianity share many common doctrines – they can both recite (almost all of) the Nicene Creed – but the respective cultural forms they have generated are notably different. Cultures shaped by eastern Orthodoxy are visibly different to western cultures shaped by Latin Christianity. Within Latin Christianity there are further differences. Protestantism has given rise to practices of social equality and political opposition which were much less pronounced in (official) Roman Catholic teaching until the Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s. Equally, Islam contains streams as diverse as those in Christianity: not only the two largest, Sunni and Shi'ite, but also important streams like Sufism (a largely Sunni movement), and minority streams like branches of Shia Islam such

as Ismailis and Zaidis.[21] In addition Islam embraces many modern movements such as the Deobandis, Jama'at-i-Islami (to which the Islamic Foundation in Leicester belongs) and Tablighi Jamaat.[22]

Fourth, and more controversially, "secular humanism" – or rather secular human*isms* – should also be counted as akin to a religious tradition, or set of traditions.[23] If the definition of religion just proposed – religion as a "comprehensive, communally held and dynamic set of beliefs and practices shaping all areas of personal and public life" – is correct then it is hard to see why the varieties of secular humanism should be excluded. Secular humanism has become the dominant religion of western modernity, replacing Christianity as the cultural vanguard by the late nineteenth century. Debates persist about the chronology, but it is widely accepted that by the mid twentieth century, the most influential drivers of British culture, notably in the economy, politics, the arts and media, and the academy, reflected far more the impact of secular humanism than that of Christianity.[24]

We would venture the additional, if admittedly controversial, claim that the impact of secular humanism(s) on the Christian legacy of Britain will remain significantly more powerful for the foreseeable future than that of Islam.[25] So Christians should be careful before declaring that they seek to "defend British culture" against "foreign" religions. If what counts as "British culture" is as much, if not more, the product of a secularist worldview as it is of Christianity, Christians need to specify exactly what parts of that culture they are seeking to protect. Talk of "protecting our Christian nation" bypasses this challenge. Christians should also entertain the possibility that Islam, for example, might be an ally in defending certain valuable aspects of the Christian legacy, as much as it might also present a serious challenge to others.

What *precise aspects* of a particular culture can be attributed to the impact of religion? It cannot be everything, for then we would find ourselves having to trace visible lines of influence from one or other aspect of a religion to every detail of the culture in question. We would need to demonstrate, absurdly, that the spiciness of Indian or Mexican food is a direct outflow of Hinduism or Catholicism. Not every cultural manifestation of humour, social respect, courting, architecture and so on, can be traced back to some identifiable religious source. On the other hand, norms of family or political authority often do reflect such sources: Confucianism has tended to generate cultures of deference to superiors whereas Calvinism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Catholicism in the late twentieth century, especially in the form of Liberation Theology, have fed cultures of debate and critique.[26] The complexity of the lines of influence from religions to cultures must be borne in mind in any discussion of multiculturalism.

> *There are within Christianity deep and robust reasons for appreciating culture and cultural diversity as inherent goods of creation, but equally for exposing the deficiencies and injustices they frequently harbour.*

conclusion

This chapter has sketched a "theology of multiculturalism" based on the overarching biblical motifs of creation, fall and redemption, accompanied by a specific view of the relation between culture and religion. It is one reading of biblical theology but not, it is hoped, an idiosyncratic one. The argument has been twofold. First, there are within Christianity deep and robust reasons for appreciating culture and cultural diversity as inherent goods of creation, but equally for exposing the deficiencies and injustices they frequently harbour. Second, although, from a Christian viewpoint, religious diversity should not in itself be celebrated, there are powerful Christian motivations for seeking inter-religious understanding and neighbourliness where these are attainable. Christianity is not naïve about the human evils that have been and still are practiced under the banner of ethnic identity and religious belief (including its own), but it can and should offer resources for discerning what is good in diverse cultures and in other religions.

On the basis of such a vision, Christianity can hope to make a serious and constructive public contribution to a just multicultural settlement in Britain today. In the remaining chapters, some specifically political outworkings of this vision are explored.

chapter 4 references

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4. Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (Continuum, 2002), pp. 51–63.

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8. Theologians also speak of this as the result of "general revelation", the knowledge available in principle to all human beings even if they have not encountered the "special revelation" of "the Gospel".

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13. In human rights law the term "proselytism" is generally used, but neutrally not pejoratively.

14. Oliver O'Donovan points to examples of the "redemption of society" occurring as a result of Christian influence in the west. *The Desire of the Nations* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch. 7.

15. John Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death* 2nd ed. (IVP, 2009), ch. 6.

16. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Orbis, 1989).

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19. Jürgen Habermas, "Pre-political Foundations of the Democratic State", in Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (Ignatius Press, 2006), pp. 44–45.

20. Admittedly, not all Christians follow this usage.

21. Colin Chapman, *Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenges of Islam* rev. ed. (IVP, 2007), ch. 14.

22. Tablighi Jamaat is the fast-growing and secretive group seeking to build Europe's largest mosque next to the site of the 2012 Olympics in London. See Jenny Taylor, "What is the Tablighi Jamaat?" *Guardian CiF Belief,* 8 September 2009. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/sep/08/religion-islam-tablighi-jamaat; Lapido Media report, "Salafi mosque get go-ahead – led by team that looks after royal palaces", 25 May 2011. http://www.lapidomedia.com/mosque-gets-go-ahead-led-by-royal-team

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5

an affirmation
of multicultural justice

The framework outlined in the previous chapter supports a positive but discriminating appreciation of diverse human cultures and religions. But it doesn't tell us very much about how to manage multiculturalism *politically*. The imperative to welcome cultural diversity, whether understood in Christian terms as a gift of God or in some other terms, and to work for the reconciliation of alienated cultural and religious communities, is not in the first instance a political imperative. Most of what it requires does not involve governments at all but can only be pursued through inter-personal relationships, in neighbourhoods, religious organisations, schools, the business sector or "civil society" associations such as NGOs and trade unions.

The Christian tradition, however, also contains insights on the role of government in the face of cultural and religious diversity. There are, of course, several traditions of Christian political thought, and they do not all converge on the same view of multiculturalism. Hopefully the approach adopted here will meet with at least a degree of recognition, not only among diverse Christian traditions but among others too.

A longstanding commitment lodged deep in Christianity is that political authorities are mandated to establish and maintain an order of justice in the public realm of society. This commitment originates in the Hebrew Scriptures where rulers are seen as standing under a command of God to administer justice fearlessly and impartially through the enforcement of just laws and decisions across society. This view has remained central in most strands of Christian political thought.[1] Centuries of Christian reflection have affirmed that government, whatever its particular institutional form, is bound by a clear obligation to act against social injustice, to defend the weak and vulnerable, to show hospitality to strangers, to restrain the powerful, to govern in the public interest and not in the private interests of rulers and to create conditions conducive to peace, prosperity and international cooperation.

The claim that Christianity calls for governments to establish justice in the public realm of society is not a call to impose a "theocracy" on society or even to offer constitutional privilege to the Church or Christian belief. Rather, it represents a (Christian) perspective on how government should act fairly across the whole of a complex, ethnically and religiously plural society, and for the good of that entire society. What might that look like? Here is one account.

multicultural justice

Philosophers have often been tempted to define "justice" in terms of some single, unifying concept such as "equality", "fairness", "proportionality", "entitlement" or "rights". This has the advantage of rhetorical clarity but the disadvantage of ideological flattening. Justice is actually a complex, multi-layered concept, as its application to cultural and religious diversity will confirm. "Justice" denotes not one thing but a wide array of normative relationships among individuals, institutions, communities and society as a whole.

Justice has long been understood in Christian traditions to mean not only retributive justice (i.e. criminal justice) but also distributive justice (or "social justice") and commutative justice (the justice of inter-individual relationships, such as contracts). It now needs to embrace *multicultural* justice, the justice of relationships between ethnic and religious minorities and between them and the majority society.

As we contemplate the specific challenges of our own society, we are bound to conclude that governments committed to public justice must respond to the challenges of deep diversity by establishing fair and respectful public relationships among the minorities in their territories. Given the three central biblical motifs reviewed in chapter 3, this has always been implicit in the Christian political tradition, even though practice has all too often fallen far short of principle. In responding to the new challenges of multiculturalism today, it needs to be made explicit.

Claims of justice arise in every area of social interaction. American political thinker Michael Walzer points out that there are distinct "spheres of justice" in human society that must not be confused, and that each should be governed by criteria of allocation specific to it.[2] Justice claims regularly arise within, for example, business corporations, trades unions, families and marriages. The responsibility to ensure that justice is done is distributed across all these institutional spheres.

Christian social thought has long insisted that "society" is not the same as the state. Yet it has also recognised that there is a larger realm of social interactions that transcends the zones of any particular institutions or communities. This is the "public realm", the wider space in which individuals and many institutions, and today many ethnic and religious communities, interact in numerous ways, but which they cannot themselves oversee or supervise. This realm has its own specific good, the "public good". This wider public realm, and its distinctive good, are not easy to define precisely and their boundaries shift over time. But one way to bring out the core of the public good is to say that it is neither a mere *aggregation* of the interests of individuals, institutions or communities nor something *over against* those interests. Rather it is the ordered space that *makes possible* mutually beneficial connections between those diverse interests. In that regard it functions a bit like the London Underground, a web of complex and dynamic inter-linkages among citizens and their many institutions and communities. The public good is not the *same as* multicultural justice. Multicultural justice (like other forms of justice) is an important part of the public good, yet the public good also imposes constraints on multicultural justice (as we note in chapter 7).

The distinctive aim of multicultural justice is to ensure that no minority experiences entrenched prejudice or disadvantage, is left to languish in serious internal discord or generates attitudes or behaviour that endanger individuals or the public good. While individuals and other institutions can contribute to this aim, government alone has the responsibility to secure such public relations of justice across the whole of society. The challenge of multicultural justice is to propose an adequate and realisable framework of just public relations (rights, duties, responsibilities, benefits, opportunities, etc.) among diverse ethnic and religious citizens and communities within a society. Government is uniquely authorised to foster such a framework, as it also pursues other forms of justice, such as individual rights or distributive justice, and as it protects the wider public good and upholds the shared obligations of citizenship. Multicultural justice is one vital form of justice, and this essay seeks to rehabilitate it against those who would denigrate it.

Adapting the metaphor introduced earlier, we might say that government's role in pursuing multicultural justice can't be to ensure that all the trains on the "multicultural Underground" run on time or are never overcrowded or that travellers don't hide behind their newspapers. Governments pursuing multicultural justice should not seek to inculcate demanding ethical virtues like friendship, still less require a mutual *celebration* of difference.[3] There is a major difference between treating individuals and minority communities fairly, the goal of multicultural justice, and frog-marching them into fraternity.

> *Governments pursuing multicultural justice should not seek to inculcate demanding ethical virtues like friendship, still less require a mutual celebration of difference.*

But government should at least aim to maintain a fair and functioning network of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships which accords sufficient protection and respect to all travellers on the system. This is not everything they should do but it is an essential part of it. Chapter 6 illustrates what this might amount to in terms of defensible multicultural policies.

This is, of course, one account of "multicultural justice". The actual content of that term will be continually contested in the noisy and unpredictable deliberations of a pluralist democracy. Debates about multicultural justice will reflect the deep diversity that multicultural policies themselves seek to manage. Each particular community will have to work out its own distinctive view of the desired contents of multicultural justice alongside, and sometimes against, others. The following is one way to spell out such contents in more concrete terms.

varieties of multicultural justice

Multicultural justice can be advanced by a wide variety of means. First, it can be advanced by two distinct *categories* of public policy:

- *specific* multicultural policies designed to redress, or prevent, unfair treatment of ethnic or religious minorities;[4]

- *generic* policies not framed exclusively for such minorities but intended to impact significantly upon them.

Second, we can distinguish between three beneficiaries of multicultural policy: individuals; associations or communities and the public good. These require fuller explanation.

The idea that *individuals* have religious rights is well understood; the idea that they also have "cultural rights" is controversial, though hardly novel.[5] Some cultural and religious rights are already contained in human rights codes like the European Convention, which the UK formally incorporated into its own domestic law in the Human Rights Act of 1998. Others have been added to British law over several decades, with the Equality Act of 2010 consolidating many of them in a single piece of legislation.

The argument in favour of cultural rights is that where ethnic identity is well established and is an important marker of a person's public standing, and where it may be at risk from corrosion or assault, it may be deserving of what Charles Taylor calls "recognition". It is sometimes difficult for members of a majority culture to feel the force of this argument, since they themselves do not experience "non-recognition" on account of their culture. But Taylor rightly claims that "non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted mode of being."[6] Offering appropriate public recognition for vulnerable minority identities is the central ground for introducing multicultural policies.

> **Differential treatment in law is sometimes necessary to produce substantive equality of outcome.**

This could imply a variety of initiatives. It might, for example, include facilitating equitable access by minority members (not necessarily leaders) to representative assemblies such as local councils or a reformed House of Lords, or to consultative or regulatory public bodies such as police authorities or community health councils.[7] It might also include the creation of new legal rights. For example, the right of a black schoolboy to an exemption from a school policy mandating "short back and sides", allowing him to wear his hair in "cornrows" in keeping with family and ethnic traditions, was rightly upheld by the High Court in June 2011. The court held that to have denied him such an exemption would have amounted to "indirect racial discrimination".[8]

This is a clear example of how *differential* treatment in law is sometimes necessary to produce *substantive equality* of outcome, a point often overlooked by those assuming that the mantra of "one law for all" resolves all such matters.

If that is an example of a "specific" multicultural policy, consider also how a "generic" policy might also advance multicultural justice (an example touching on both cultural and religious rights). The Racial and Religious Hatred Act, which came into force in 2008, outlaws intentional racial and religious hatred directed against anyone, but is obviously of particular benefit to racial and religious minorities.[9] The Act proved controversial, and there is legitimate debate about the adequacy of its current wording. But it is arguably a legitimate instance of multicultural justice insofar as it seeks to protect minorities, as individuals and as "communities", whose identities have been shown to be vulnerable to public denigration.[10]

There is a lot more to multicultural justice than individual ethnic or religious rights, but such rights are an essential part of it. Yet, like all rights, such individual rights always need to be balanced against other kinds of rights, some of which will be individual and some associational, and against the requirements of the public good, including the obligations of citizenship. There is no blueprint for what the outcomes of such balancing should look like in any particular case. Individual cultural and religious rights are very important but they have no automatic veto over other legitimate claims. Multicultural justice must be pursued alongside, and not at the expense of, other forms of justice.[11]

The same approach applies to rights possessed by ethnic or religious *associations*.[12] In principle such associations stand on a par with any other non-governmental association which may be entitled to some generic public protection or benefit. Governments are not necessarily obliged to offer any particular benefits to associations at all, but if they offer them to some there is a *prima facie* expectation that they should offer them impartially to all, in the absence of overriding factors. The starting presumption, then, should be that ethnic community centres, faith-based schools or health care providers ought to receive equal (in this case not "differential") treatment in the public sector with other similar bodies.

At this point we need to highlight two points of wider importance. The first is that the protection of *generic* associational rights serves as a significant contributor to multicultural justice. A strong civil society turns out to be a crucial institutional precondition for a secure and vibrant multicultural society. For unless a society possesses an ethos of associational initiative, self-governance and independence, and a legal culture that protects these, ethnic and religious communities will face serious obstacles to creating the kind of associations which nurture their self-confidence and enable them both to defend their interests and contribute to the common good. Outsiders may not always like what independent ethnic or religious associations do but it is a key mark of a free society that it vigilantly safeguards the right of independent associations to exist and manage their own affairs, within the limits of the law and the public good. A free society

operates with a "presumption of autonomy" on the part of individuals – their liberty should only be curbed where strictly necessary – and it should apply the same principle to ethnic and religious associations, subject, as with individual rights, to the need for balancing against other rights (for example, the rights of women) and against the imperatives of the public good.

> *It is a key mark of a free society that it vigilantly safeguards the right of independent associations to exist and manage their own affairs, within the limits of the law and the public good.*

The second point is that multicultural justice favours a strong public presence of religion in public life generally.[13] We have so far illustrated multicultural justice with examples both of particular *cultural* rights of individuals and assocations, and also of particular *religious* rights. But multicultural justice also calls for a wider presumption of openness to the contribution of religion in public policy-making. This approach resists hardline versions of secularism – described by Archbishop Rowan Williams as "programmatic secularism" – which seek to exclude religion from democratic deliberation and from influence over policy.

A more positive approach to public religion has been gaining wider recognition in recent years, and from a variety of quarters. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, for example, has proposed "an inclusive concept of secular society, in which religion is included within the public space rather than excluded."[14] Tariq Modood has recommended an "accommodative" (or "moderate") secularism which involves the "pluralistic institutional integration" of religious minorities such as Muslims, and yet which can be justified on liberal egalitarian terms.[15] Along similar lines Rowan Williams calls for a "procedural secularism" allowing a wide open forum in which many religious and other visions can cooperate or contend in the public square.[16]

Labour governments since 1997 proved increasingly ready to include religious organisations in the processes of policy-making. In 2003, a Faith Communities Unit was established in the Home Office. In 2006, the Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC) and the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF) were set up, and in 2008 a substantial framework for relating to faith communities was produced, entitled *Faith to Faith and Side by Side*.[17] Similarly positive signals have emerged from the Coalition government since 2010.[18]

It is certainly not suggested that these initiatives are problem-free or that they yet indicate a deep grasp by government of the internal dynamics of religion or of the risks as well as the advantages attached to enlisting "faith communities" generally into public policy-making.[19] Yet they at least indicate that governments today ostensibly reject the kind of exclusivist "programmatic secularism" which would frustrate the religious rights and

responsibilities affirmed by multicultural justice.[20] It is worth adding that Christians who already enjoy the benefits of such inclusion have a duty to stand up for responsible religious minorities who are still experiencing illegitimate exclusion.

So far we have focused on the ethnic and religious rights of individuals and associations. This account needs to be completed by noting the wider context of the *public good*. Such a cluster of rights (and responsibilities) is, indirectly, itself a contributor to that good. But the public good is more than the sum of these parts, and includes a wider set of public concerns, as alluded to earlier by the metaphor of the London Underground. Such concerns include economic disadvantage, social exclusion, crime, public health, immigration and security. They also include two terms at the heart of the current debate about multiculturalism: social cohesion and citizenship (discussed in chapters 6 and 7, respectively). Like all rights, claims to ethnic and religious rights, whether individual or associational, cannot simply trump these wider considerations. The demands of the public good must be seen as an essential complement to, and at times constraint on, those of multicultural justice.

The next chapter deploys the notion of multicultural justice as a broad guide in assessing the overall direction of multicultural public policies. It assesses selected multicultural policies. It does so through an exploration of the specific charge that "state multiculturalism" may have damaged "cohesion" and contributed to unacceptable levels of "segregation". Chapter 7 then seeks to identify what are the core obligations of "citizenship" in a multicultural society, and then concludes by asking the deeper question whether a society marked by deepening ethnic and religious diversity can summon the resources necessary to sustain multicultural justice, indeed any kind of justice, into the future.

1. See David McIlroy, *A Biblical View of Law and Justice* (Paternoster, 2004); Alan Storkey, *Jesus and Politics: Confronting the Powers* (Baker, 2005); Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment* (Eerdmans, 2005); Nick Spencer and Jonathan Chaplin, eds., *God and Government* (SPCK, 2009).

2. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (Blackwell 2003).

3. Commission on Integration and Cohesion, *Our Shared Future* (2007), recognises that government cannot create friendship (p. 121).

4. *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion* (Home Office, 2005), p. 24.

5. Will Kymlicka calls these "polyethnic rights". *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 30–31.

6. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 225.

7. This is affirmed in The *Cantle Report,* which lists many such bodies (p. 58). *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (Home Office, 2001).
    http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/Default.aspx?recordId=96

8. Matthew Taylor, "School's ban on boy's cornrows is 'indirect racial discrimination'", *Guardian,* 17 June 2011.
    http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/jun/17/school-ban-cornrows-indirect-discrimination

9. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/contents. The Act defines "religious hatred" as "hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief", and outlaws "threatening words or behaviour, or displays [of] any written material which is threatening" if the person committing such acts "intends" to stir up religious hatred. Some held that proving "intention" would be very difficult, and some Muslims proposed defining the offence more broadly as the "defamation of religion". This mirrors global lobbying by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) of the United Nations for laws banning the "defamation of religion", a campaign presented as an extension of existing human rights but which is clearly intended to curtail public criticism of Islam in non-Islamic states. See "Policing Belief: An Introduction", Freedom House (n.d.). http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=570

10. Those who dismiss "Islamophobia" as entirely a construction intended to prevent any criticism of Islam are wide of the mark.

11. See Julian Rivers, "Multiculturalism", *Cambridge Papers* 10.4 (2001). http://www.jubilee-centre.org/document.php?id=34

12. Note that for a group to exercise legal rights or fulfil duties it must possess "legal agency" and thus a decision-making centre. Organised ethnic and religious associations possess such agency, but entire ethnic or religious "communities" – "the Black community", "the British Asian community", "the Polish community", or "the Muslim community" – do not. These are prime examples of the danger of "reification".

13. For thoughtful reflections on this theme, see Atif Imtiaz, *Wandering Lonely in a Crowd: Reflections on the Muslim Condition in the West* (Kube Publishing, 2011), ch. 6.

14. "Themes, Messages and Challenges: A Summary of Key Themes from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion" (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007), p. 13.

15. Tariq Modood, "Moderate secularism: a European conception," *openDemocracy* (7 April 2011); *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Polity, 2007), p. 78. Given the differences between religious groups, and their contexts, Modood suggests allowing for a "variable geometry" regarding structures (p. 83).

16. The theme is discussed in Jonathan Chaplin, *Talking God: The Legitimacy of Religious Public Reasoning* (Theos, 2009).

17. Department for Communities and Local Government, *Faith to Faith and Side by Side: A framework for partnership in our multi faith society* (2008). The FCCC succeeded the Inner Cities Religious Council established under Margaret Thatcher.

18. http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/baroness-warsi-speech-blackburn-diocese-board-social-responsibility

19. See Jenny Taylor, "The numbers game: immigrant religious activism, government policies and the interfaith challenge", Lecture at London School of Theology (CIS Occasional Paper, 2011).

20. A continuing concern, however, is the frequent failure of government, and courts, to appreciate the increasing tension between rights to religious freedom and certain anti-discrimination rights. See Daniel Boucher, *A Little Bit Against Discrimination?* (CARE, 2010); Julian Rivers, "Three Principles for Christian Citizens", *Cambridge Papers* 18.1 (2009). http://www.jubilee-centre.org/document.php?id=297

6

an assessment of multicultural policies

[W]hen did we, as a society, agree that the great multicultural experiment had failed? Where is the proof that policies that specifically celebrate different identities and cultures across our nation fuel extremism in a tiny minority?... The strange thing is, it was only in accepting that I was Indian that I finally felt comfortable being British. It was the very multicultural nature of my upbringing that made me most integrated… I worry that the use of the word multiculturalism…is making it almost synonymous with segregation. Allowing the word to drift in that direction stops us being able to use it in a much more positive way.[1]

The range of public policies that could be classed as "multicultural" is bewilderingly wide. We need to narrow the field to manageable proportions. In the following assessment of multicultural policies we will respond to a major critique of such policies emerging in recent years – best summed up in the charge, outlined in chapter 3, that "state multiculturalism generates segregation". Those speaking of "state" multiculturalism are clearly referring to multicultural *policies* (both "specific" and "generic"), that is, policies intended to protect or benefit minority communities.[2] The charge is that such policies have created, exacerbated or at least negligently permitted, the emergence of areas in which different ethnic or religious groups live what the *Cantle Report* termed "parallel lives", and that this is damaging to individual and communities.[3]

Some multicultural policies, however, can be vindicated against this charge and this chapter evaluates a selection of such policies with the "segregation" critique as its focus. It deploys the notion of multicultural justice to help determine whether particular policies have tended to promote illegitimate degrees of segregation. It argues that the notion of multicultural justice can at least isolate some key issues in this particular debate, even if it cannot conclusively resolve any of them. It acknowledges that the segregation charge is valid in specific respects but also proposes that there are legitimate multicultural policies which need not feed segregation and may actually be a condition for integration and cohesion.

We saw in chapter 3 that "segregation" is a complex phenomenon requiring a discriminating analysis (in the proper sense of that term) of its causes and consequences. Let us now briefly consider four areas of policy, asking whether multicultural justice helps us determine whether particular policies have contributed to unhealthy patterns of segregation.

public funding and multicultural justice

A wide range of public funding initiatives at both local and national levels have been introduced in order to respond to the particular needs or demands of ethnic and religious minorities. Some, such as neighbourhood "regeneration" or "capacity-building" schemes, or housing improvement strategies, are generic multicultural policies aimed at entire neighbourhoods which happen to contain large numbers of ethnic minority members. Others can be classed as specific multicultural policies since they channel funds directly to particular ethnic or religious organisations or are intended specifically to benefit members of such communities.

Some of these funding initiatives have occasioned considerable controversy. Both official reports and independent observers have reported a widespread perception that generic funding schemes have been unfairly stacked in favour of ethnic or religious minorities over (especially) "white working class" communities.[4] At other times the criticism is that "generic" funding ends up favouring one powerful local ethnic or religious minority over another weaker one. For example, Gerd Baumann documents how Southall's new community centre built in 1986 was resented by members of the local African-Caribbean community because it seemed to cater predominantly to the preferences of the more numerous and politically powerful South Asian community.[5] On either criticism, the claim is that the public funding has become victim to an assertive "identity politics" which serves to exacerbate consciousness of minority identity and also to fuel unseemly inter-ethnic competition.

These charges of bias are often linked to a wider critique that unhealthy "patron-client" relationships have developed between local politicians and one or other minority community. In these "clientelist" relationships, public funding (and sometimes access to decision-making) is offered by those in power in return for political support and promises to "deliver the vote".[6] It is also alleged that the leading beneficiaries of clientelism are often the (usually male, and often self-appointed) leaders of ethnic or religious minorities ("identity entrepreneurs") who exaggerate minority differences for their own ends and, in any case, whose representative status in the communities for which they claim to speak is open to challenge.

A more recent twist in this debate was provoked by the "Prevent" strategy launched by the Labour government in 2007, which made available substantial funds aimed specifically at Muslim communities (thus seemingly qualifying as a "specific" multicultural policy). The goal was to tackle extremist ideology within such communities by channelling support to organisations which would pre-empt or resist it. The initiative proved controversial for a variety of reasons. It angered Muslims who thought they were already working hard to combat radical Islamism, and civil libertarians troubled by the strategy's conflation of integration policy with security concerns. Others cited evidence that it was too close to radical Muslim organisations which might themselves be feeding extremism.[7] Douglas Murray, director of conservative think-tank the Centre for Social Cohesion, made an additional criticism, that "there is very little that government does well…[and]perhaps what it can do least well is theology. Yet through its 'Prevent' strategy, that is exactly what this Government has tried to do."[8] The strategy was reviewed in 2010 by Lord Carlile and modified by Home Secretary Teresa May in 2011.[9] It remains to be seen what difference this will make. This policy is one example of how a well-intentioned "multicultural" funding policy can get off on the wrong foot.

Yet the deficiencies of this and other particular funding initiatives does not yet warrant the conclusion that all public funding initiatives aimed at the needs of ethnic or religious minorities should be scrapped. Here it is instructive to note the debate that has occurred in recent years on whether it is ever appropriate for public funding to be directed to specific ethnic or religious groups, the legitimacy of "Single Group Funding". In response to the criticism that such funding has weakened cohesion and increased segregation, central government has since 2007 moved to discourage "Single Group Funding", adopting an official preference for collaborative inter-ethnic or inter-faith projects, i.e. those which produce "bridging capital" between communities and so, it is thought, promote "cohesion".[10] This amounts to an admission that previous funding policy has indeed sometimes fed segregation.

Yet official documents contain surprisingly little hard evidence that Single Group Funding has generally contributed to "segregation". Such evidence might, of course, yet be found. But, in its absence, the notion of multicultural justice would caution against a wholesale retreat from Single Group Funding. Indeed official documents themselves continue to recognise that there could be valid grounds for such funding in certain cases, such as that mainstream provision failed to meet particular community needs or was discriminatory, or that only separate provision could be culturally sensitive.[11]

The claim made in chapter 5 that multicultural justice implies an affirmation of both associational diversity and equitable treatment among ethnic and religious groups lends *prima facie* support for retaining this practice as an option. A "public sector guidance document" from the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2009 provides (perhaps unexpected) support for this view. Its specific concern was that an inflexible resistance to Single Group Funding was putting at risk the funding of women-only services such as those helping victims of domestic violence, including those catering to ethnic minority women.[12] It asserted a fundamental principle which we already noted in chapter 5: "An informed understanding of substantive equality, aimed at reducing disadvantage… recognises that people have different needs and that equality can be achieved sometimes by treating people differently."[13]

> *Equality can be achieved sometimes by treating people differently.*

Yet this does not exclude that government may place conditions on Single Group Funding, especially in localities where funding single ethnic or religious groups has been shown (rather than merely presumed) to exacerbate unhealthy segregation, or might do in the future. Here is a case where governments need to strike a fine balance between a particular claim of multicultural justice and the wider imperatives of the public good. As current policy jargon has it, a "one-size-fits-all" approach is as unhelpful here as it is elsewhere.[14]

The conclusion is that, notwithstanding widely perceived deficiencies in the use of some public funds for "multicultural" purposes, multicultural justice would argue for the continuation of public funding in certain circumstances (including in some cases to single ethnic or religious groups), where such funding could contribute towards substantive equality of treatment and where transparency and accountability in disbursement and use of funds are enforceable. The issue is more complex than this short section has been able to convey, but enough has been said to suggest the need for a case by case approach in this area of policy and to argue against any comprehensive retreat from something called "state multiculturalism".

Housing and multicultural justice

Housing policies have also been a major bone of contention in debates about segregation. This is hardly surprising, since it has been estimated that 39% of ethnic minority members live in homes falling below the "decent homes standard".[15] Not every problem with housing is, of course, within the control of government. The lack of sufficient affordable private housing is not something that governments can directly or rapidly influence. Conversely, the shortage of social housing is primarily a government responsibility, and where such shortages contribute to the relative deprivation and isolation of ethnic minorities we can speak of government's failure to address one contributor to segregation.

Some have suggested that immigrant minorities "self-segregate" in housing either out of preference (which is not something government can control) or for fear of moving into predominantly "white" neighbourhoods (which is in part a failure of policing). Others explain segregation in terms of "white flight", which is also largely out of government's direct control. Further, some have charged that new housing developments permitted by local authorities have tended to consolidate rather than mitigate residential ethnic segregation, while others have held that the social housing allocation policies pursued by local authorities have had the same effect. As a result of this criticism, local authorities are now required not only to avoid racial discrimination in making allocations but also to work for ethnically mixed communities.[16] The policy of "choice-based lettings" has also succeeded in increasing the possibility for members of ethnic minorities to move out of their ethnic neighbourhoods if they wish, thus mitigating residential segregation.[17]

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion also acknowledged a further factor that has been the cause of particular resentment on the part of longstanding residents (many of them "white working class") towards ethnic minority newcomers:

> Where there are high levels of diversity, authorities can be obliged to give reasonable preference to certain categories of household defined by need. Certain BME [Black and Minority Ethnic] groups are over-represented in terms of need and therefore are equally over-represented in social housing allocation.

Since "need" is determined partly by family size, it is understandable that longstanding "white working class" families of average size might resent newer immigrants with much larger families being allocated scarce social housing ahead of them. Note that what is occurring here is not partiality towards new immigrants (a widely held myth) but simply the strict application of universal criteria of need – which impacts disproportionately on longstanding families. This raises the question whether such needs-based criteria are the only justifiable ones. Do local authorities not have any duty at all to preserve the character of longstanding "indigenous" British neighbourhoods by giving "reasonable preference" to households with existing family or other connections? However we answer that highly controversial question, some local authorities have been criticised for failing to engage local residents adequately in the making of housing policy, thereby permitting mutual suspicions to fester.[19]

In the case of housing, then, we again meet a complex set of interacting factors associated with the residential segregation of (some) ethnic minority households in areas of relatively poorer accommodation. While central and (some) local governments are partly responsible, by design or neglect, for this state of affairs, some factors causing it are outside their control, and some government policies are successfully mitigating it and are, in that way, promoting both better cohesion and improved economic prospects for ethnic minorities. The blanket charge that "state multiculturalism causes segregation" turns out, again, to be too blunt an instrument for such a complex question.

education and multicultural justice

It is widely known that certain ethnic minority children, especially African-Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (and especially boys), frequently perform at below average educational standards.[20] This partly reflects the wider economic disadvantages already noted. Various government initiatives, such as the Minority Ethnic Achievement Project, have attempted to redress this imbalance.[21] They are examples of a "specific" multicultural policy and are to be welcomed. But have other multicultural educational policies contributed to "segregation"?

It is the case that some urban schools are highly ethnically concentrated.[22] The chief reason is that the schools reflect the existing residential segregation in their catchment areas (as do those in "white" areas), and local authorities cannot easily change this state of affairs. Much official and public opinion regards the existence of such "mono-cultural" schools as hindrances to integration and cohesion because children lack the opportunity for ethnic and religious mixing and so are liable to fall into mutual misunderstanding and suspicion.[23] There are, however, some ethnically concentrated schools which are very outward-looking and interact well with other schools and with their neighbourhoods. For example, Birchfield School in Bradford was judged "outstanding" by Ofsted in 2006; nearly all its pupils are Muslims from minority ethnic communities. Oldham Sixth Form College, which is 60% White and 40% Asian, was awarded Citizenship Champion Status in 2005.[24]

Yet the assumption that, in at least some cases, mono-cultural schools have hindered integration and cohesion is at least a plausible one, and to the extent that governments have not been sufficiently alert to this they may, by neglect, have contributed to the growth of unhealthy segregation. Critics have additionally charged that deliberate educational policies or official attitudes have also sometimes been at fault. One example is the claim that teaching the English language in ethnic minority schools has been downplayed out of fear of "imposing" British culture. A headteacher contributing to a commission following the 1995 riots in Bradford claimed that "in a laudable attempt not to appear too Eurocentric, Bradford's educational policy planners may well have increased inequality of opportunity by not emphasizing the centrality of effective English acquisition, which…is the key to helping Asian families prosper in England."[25]

In the last decade, however, governments at local and national levels have introduced a raft of policies to enable – and since 2007 to require – maintained schools to promote cohesion. This is to be realised through a variety of means: incorporating attention to "respect for diversity" throughout the curriculum (where this is rightly seen as a component of, not an alternative to, cohesion); introducing Citizenship (since 2002) into the National Curriculum; working for high standards of English while also offering options in minority languages and not only modern European ones; establishing links with schools of different ethnic composition and so on. These kinds of initiatives qualify as "multicultural" policies insofar as they intentionally seek to uphold inter-cultural respect and justice in the state education sector and as such are to be welcomed.

Particular concern, however, is often expressed about faith (or "mono-faith") schools. They are often seen as divisive and as worsening existing problems of segregation. Already in 2001, the *Cantle Report* suggested that the admissions policies of faith schools were one cause of school segregation.[27] The same charge is often made in wider public debate and deserves more extended discussion than is possible here.[28] Yet faith schools continue to enjoy strong support from government, as contributors both to integration and to the overcoming of educational disadvantage.[29]

An important implication of the notion of multicultural justice must be noted. As shown in chapter 5, this notion lends support to wide associational freedom, including associational ethnic and religious freedom. This supports what might be termed a general "presumption of plurality" in areas of public service provision where this is feasible, such as in areas of health or social services, and also in education – where this has indeed been the trend of public policy in both major parties for several years.[30] Multicultural justice thus offers *prima facie* support for faith schools, bearing in mind the need to balance this justice claim with those of potentially vulnerable individuals and with the imperatives of the public good. In view of the latter, the duty on schools to promote social cohesion also quite properly applies to maintained faith schools, such as by ensuring pupils are introduced to a variety of cultures and religions.

Many faith schools are, however, already committed to active engagement with their neighbourhoods and many are also multi-ethnic.[32] The Anglican Bishop of Bradford claims that:

> Church of England schools are [not confessional but are] established primarily for the communities they are located in. They are inclusive and serve equally those who are of the Christian faith, of other faiths and of no faith. Their Christian ethos is underpinned by Christian values concerned for the wellbeing of all in the community, irrespective of religious, cultural or socio-economic background…In inner-city Bradford, Church of England schools are some of the relatively few that are multireligious and multi-ethnic. They serve areas of multiple deprivation and many schools have a majority of pupils of non-white British heritage.[33]

If the notion of multicultural justice implies a presumption of legitimacy for faith schools, it also implies a requirement of equitable treatment among different putative faith providers. It seems to follow that those minority faith communities seeking to establish maintained schools or academies should be treated on comparable terms to majority (Christian) faith schools. Indeed, in consultations for the *Cantle Report,* many contributors, including some opposed to faith schools, agreed that "there was also a clear recognition that as faith based Christian schools were already supported, fairness demanded that the same facility should be available to Muslims and other communities".[34]

As of January 2011 there were over 6700 Christian schools, 38 Jewish, 11 Muslim, 1 Hindu and 4 Sikh.[35] It is immediately evident that minority faith communities are substantially under-represented in the school sector in terms of their proportion of the general population.[36] While this may in part reflect a relative lack of demand or capacity, it suggests that new applications for maintained or academy status be treated as favourably as possible in order to remedy this serious imbalance.[37]

Such applications may, of course, need to be declined where there were well-grounded reasons for thinking that creating a new faith school could inhibit integration and

> *Again, therefore, we see that multicultural justice upholds some key planks of multicultural education policy while acknowledging the significant defects of others.*

cohesion (rather than a mere prejudicial supposition that it might, or simply majority local opposition). But multicultural justice does imply a "presumption of approval" in the absence of overriding factors. This conclusion runs against the grain of secularist opinion, but this example of equitable treatment in public service provision seems clearly implied by multicultural justice.[38]

Again, therefore, we see that multicultural justice upholds some key planks of multicultural education policy while acknowledging the significant defects of others.

women's rights and multicultural justice

A frequent criticism of multiculturalism is that it undermines the rights of women, especially those from ethnic groups where traditional patterns of patriarchy are still entrenched. Let us consider two practices that have understandably evoked deep anxiety in recent years: forced marriage and sharia tribunals. The fear is that these are both the outcome of unhealthy ethnic and religious segregation and that they also serve to consolidate it.

Forced marriage is a problem occurring particularly, although not only, within certain South Asian communities, such as immigrants from remote rural areas of Pakistan. To make sense of it, it is necessary to grasp a particular cultural feature of such communities, namely the continuing operation of very tight kinship patterns transferred from the home culture. Such kinship bonds are not, of course, necessarily detrimental to members of such communities; they can serve as crucially important "bonding capital" made even more important when members experience marginalisation by wider society. Yet the expectations on members to conform to the obligations and defend the "honour" of the extended family and of the clan *(biradari)* in which it is embedded can in some cases still be pervasive and extremely powerful. Not surprisingly, they are a cause of intense and growing discontent among disaffected Pakistani youth (not only women) seeking to define their identity in a society which places a high value on individuality.[39]

It is now evident that such kinship structures have in some cases provided cover for forced marriage. Civil society organisations have already begun to take action against this practice. The organisation Practical Solutions, for example, offers confidential advice to those from all ethnic and faith groups on issues of forced marriage and "honour"-based violence.[40] The Muslim Arbitration Tribunal has also declared the practice to be against Islam (thus providing confirmation of the warning not to conflate the obligations of

culture and those of religion).[41] But on an issue of such importance, government also has a clear and unique duty to intervene to protect the basic civil rights of women (and men) subject to this kind of repressive coercion. This is a clear case of where a putative "cultural right" of a family must be rejected in favour of other claims of justice, namely the individual liberty to marry the spouse of one's choice (or not to marry at all).[42] British governments proved themselves initially reluctant to confront this question head on, and to some extent this was out of undue deference to the "cultural sensitivities" of the community concerned. Although it cannot be said that specific multicultural policies directly "caused" such practice, government can be faulted for negligence for allowing it to develop unchecked for too long. Fortunately the British government has now woken up to its responsibilities in this area, introducing the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act in 2008 and setting up a Forced Marriage Unit within government. The Coalition government is also strongly committed to addressing the issue.[43]

The second issue – the status of women's right under sharia tribunals – also clearly falls within the remit of multicultural justice and is another important test case of its practical meaning. In recent years, "sharia councils" or "tribunals" have been established in various towns in the UK containing large Muslim populations.[44] These tribunals do not have any official public standing but they are not illegal. They make rulings between supposedly consenting individuals on the application of limited aspects of sharia law to cases involving family and related matters, utilising provisions in the Arbitration Act of 1996 which are available to all citizens for the private settlement of disputes.[45]

They claim to be a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), though it has been argued that this blurs the distinction between "arbitration", operating under law, and informal "mediation".[46] Individual Muslims can decide to have their differences arbitrated in such a way instead of going to the civil courts, a route that is more expensive, time-consuming and socially embarrassing. The civil courts can enforce their decisions under contract law, although parties can appeal against a tribunal's ruling if they think it manifestly unjust. The current legal status of such tribunals is similar to that of any private tribunal permitted under civil law, of the type used by all kinds of people for many purposes. The entitlement to avail oneself of such a private tribunal is a generic right available to all UK citizens, and there are as yet no legal grounds for curtailing it in the case of sharia tribunals.

The principle of multicultural justice would, in the first instance, suggest a "presumption of freedom" to live according to the requirements of religious conscience in the area of dispute resolution.[47] On the face of it, allowing religiously based alternative dispute resolution could also be seen as continuous with the strong British tradition of "legal accommodation" of religious conscience, as in the case of the abortion conscience clause for medical practitioners or the exemption from wearing motorcycle helmets for Sikhs.[48] Equally, as with any other such cases of accommodation, multicultural justice must be

balanced against the requirement that such a practice should not undermine the fundamental individual rights of those participating in it or damage the public good by seriously undermining community cohesion.

Critics of sharia tribunals, however, argue forcefully that Muslim women are in fact effectively coerced into participating in such tribunals and compelled to accept decisions which would not be countenanced by British law.[49] They fear that restrictions on women's equal rights like those which certainly hold in constitutionally established systems of "legal pluralism" in countries such as India, Indonesia or Lebanon, will be replicated in the UK, locking vulnerable women even more tightly into segregated enclaves.[50] Spurred by these understandable concerns, and claiming accumulating evidence to justify them, in June 2011 Baroness Cox introduced a private member's bill in parliament to protect women against such unacceptable outcomes.[51] Her bill actually makes no mention of sharia tribunals at all, but they are its precise target. The bill is thus an example of a policy formulated in generic terms but which is clearly intended to have a specific (in this case restrictive) impact on the practices on one religious minority.

Concerns about the genuineness of the consent of women participants in sharia tribunals suggest the need for their operation to be carefully scrutinised. Here we can learn an important lesson from Ontario – though not the one many think we should – which experienced an incendiary debate about the issue in 2004–05. In 2004, the Islamic Institute for Civil Justice announced that it would begin using sharia law in private arbitrations (and, provocatively, that faithful Muslims had an obligation to take up such an option). The provincial government wisely commissioned a report on the question which held extensive hearings. The 190-page *Boyd Report* was a thorough, factually based and fair-minded study of the question of whether religious law such as sharia could be used in resolving family disputes under the existing arbitration law already available to any citizen (the Ontario Arbitration Act of 1991). The report issued a careful and qualified permissive conclusion that they could, subject to the implementation of many detailed and rigorous recommendations designed to protect women and ensure professionalism and accountability. The report, however, was later shelved following vociferous protests.[52]

Boyd's conclusions for Ontario cannot simply be assumed to be compelling in the different circumstances of the UK in 2011. Indeed, here we confront a case where the question of the proper balance between religious conscience, associational autonomy and individual rights that is called for by multicultural justice is difficult to resolve in the absence of sufficient reliable information. There is, it seems, a case that, before proceeding too hastily to legislation, the British government should commission its own "Boyd Report" in order that its position on the question be based on solid evidence and that it avoid needlessly antagonising those Muslims who claim that sharia tribunals actually benefit women.[53] Such a report might not reach the same conclusions as Ontario's but the process of preparation would bring the issue out into the open, offer a platform for

practitioners to explain themselves to the public and allow an opportunity for other stakeholders – especially Muslim women – to contribute to a consensus on the question. Handled well, it could provide a unique opportunity for open democratic dialogue between Muslims, Christians, secularists and many others on an issue of enormous significance for the meaning of multicultural justice in the UK. Prior to such a process, we must therefore record an open verdict on whether the government's currently non-interventionist stance towards sharia tribunals exacerbates segregation.

conclusion

The four areas of policy just considered are intended only as suggestive illustrations of how the notion of multicultural justice can help us assess multicultural policies. A fuller account would need to examine other areas of policy relevant to multiculturalism, such as poverty, health, welfare, race, families, youth and criminal justice (which are not all linked to "segregation"); and different conclusions might emerge in each area.

In the cases considered we saw examples of both specific and generic multicultural policies, and of policies intended to benefit or protect individuals, associations or communities, and the wider public good. In each area we identified problematic policies, or cases of government neglect, and to this extent the charge that "state multiculturalism has contributed to segregation" is indeed partially upheld. In those respects we do need to go "beyond multiculturalism".

But we also identified policies which are, or might be, justifiable and necessary means of contributing to the realisation of multicultural justice. The conclusion, then, is that we should not seek the "end of multiculturalism" *in toto*. On the contrary, continuing the successful policies just identified are as important priorities as many others confronting contemporary Britain. They are not "playing identity politics" but attempting, however imperfectly, to "do justice to deep diversity".

The final question addressed in this essay is broader than any particular multicultural policy and concerns not only the rights or benefits of Britain's minority, and majority, communities but also the duties under which they all stand – the duties of "citizenship". Such duties – if we can identify them – are a necessary constraint on the assertion of ethnic or even religious identities and on the public claims arising from such identities. Multicultural justice must be compatible with the duties of justice we have to the political community as a whole. This is the theme of the final chapter.

chapter 6 references

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21. Another example is "Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities" (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007). See DCLG, *The Government's Response,* p. 74.

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23. e.g., *Cantle Report,* p. 59. It is worth noting that this is not a charge typically levelled at "mono-cultural white" schools, even though they too lack the opportunity for inter-ethnic mixing.

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34. *Cantle Report,* p. 34.

35. This includes both maintained schools and academies. "Christian" includes Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist and other Christian. This information was published by the Department for Education in response to a Freedom of Information request in 2010 and updated in January 2011. http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/foi/disclosuresaboutschools/a0065446/maintained-faith-schools

36. For example, in 2009/10, Muslims made up 4.2% of the population.

37. *Faith in the System* affirms the government's openness to new applications (pp. 4, 18).

38. The point being made here applies to faith based maintained schools rather than private schools, where different issues arise. For example, Muslim maintained schools are distinct to private Islamic schools, whether after-school provision by a mosque or full-time private Islamic schools. It is not suggested that the latter receive state funding. Controversy was generated in April 2011 by a Channel 4 programme, "Lessons in hate and violence" revealing evidence of sectarian views and ill-treatment of children in a small number of "madrasas". http://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/episode-guide/series-80/episode-1

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multicultural justice within the bonds of citizenship

The argument of this final chapter is that multicultural justice, and the policies pursuant to it, must be balanced against and constrained by the shared obligations of "citizenship". To champion the state's responsibility for multicultural justice without reckoning with the limits necessarily arising from membership in the state would be to offer a lop-sided defence of multiculturalism. In addition, Christian political thought has always place a high value on fulfilling the responsibilities attaching to membership of the political community, including the *prima facie* (if never unconditional) obligation to obey the law. Some of the limits of multicultural justice have already been indicated. Government must balance multicultural justice against other forms of justice (distributive, retributive); must maintain a proper balance between various claims of individuals (e.g. civil rights as well as cultural rights) and those of associations and communities and must weigh multicultural claims against the wider claims of the public good, such as security and social cohesion. The obligations of citizenship form another crucial component of that wider public good, since they arise from membership in the political community as a whole. There are, of course, also *rights* attaching to citizenship. But the recent debate about multiculturalism has, understandably, been preoccupied with the *obligations* of citizenship, and that is the focus of this chapter.[1] The chapter concludes by asking what the sustaining sources of such obligations might be in a society containing many ethnic and religious communities answering to different moral authorities. Without these sources, the commitment to sustain policies of multicultural justice – indeed any kind of justice – will be fragile.

> *Multicultural justice, must be balanced against and constrained by the shared obligations of "citizenship".*

what is citizenship?

Citizenship is a political relationship; it is not the whole of our social relationships, nor a more important marker of our identity than others. When I volunteer with a local charity or raise my children responsibly or set up a business I am not acting in my capacity as a citizen but rather fulfilling the roles of neighbour, parent and employer.[2] Yet citizenship is a very important role, and in a society becoming ever more multicultural it becomes

increasingly important to define the commitments attaching to it. They are, perhaps, the only commitments that everyone in a society marked by "deep diversity" may share in common.[3] That may indeed be regrettable, but it is a reality we must face.

In 2004, the Home Office report *Strength in Diversity* argued that a new, more demanding understanding of citizenship would be required to promote integration in the context of today's multicultural society:

> To build a successful integrated society we need to promote an inclusive concept of citizenship, which goes further than the strictly legal definition of nationality and articulates the rights and responsibilities we share. Building this wider notion of active citizenship through participation, volunteering and civic action, underpinned by a sense of shared values, is one of the main ways in which we can strengthen the relationships and connections between communities.[4]

Working for such an "inclusive, active" notion of citizenship is a laudable goal. The language in which it is expressed here may be imprecise. But it is certainly a legitimate and necessary objective of government to nurture strong bonds of citizenship in any society, whether or not multicultural. The call, issued by Labour leaders since 2000 and reiterated by Coalition ministers since 2010, for greater clarity on the basic commitments implied in citizenship, is to be welcomed.

Everything depends, however, on what those commitments actually are and how they are to be encouraged. To be realisable, they need to be tailored to the residents of our society as they are, or could become, and not as we might wish them to be. Accordingly, a key proposal to be advanced in this chapter is that we should respect a distinction between the "mere citizen" and the "virtuous citizen". Useful as it is, the definition above unhelpfully blurs this distinction. "Mere citizenship" requires adherence to an essential baseline of political duties, which may be enforced by law. Government may indeed seek to nurture the fulfilment of more aspirational social and political responsibilities; these will be termed the obligations of the "virtuous citizen". But it may not compel them, only promote them indirectly by supporting individuals or other institutions or communities better placed to nurture them.[5] Thus the "rights and responsibilities", "participation" and "civic action" cited in *Strength in Diversity's* definition will in what follows be divided across those of the "mere citizen" and those of the "virtuous citizen".

> **We should respect a distinction between the "mere citizen" and the "virtuous citizen".**

mere citizenship

What are the essential baseline political duties of citizenship? The precise answer to this question will differ from country to country, but we can propose at least four broad categories of public obligation which are clearly valid in nations such as the UK and which attract wide support: law-abidingness; payment of taxes; knowing the host language and willingness to engage in other essential public duties such as offering oneself as a witness in court cases, performing jury service or (subject to important qualifications) even military service.[6]

At first blush this may seem a disappointingly slender list, but on closer inspection it actually amounts to a demanding set of responsibilities. For example, consider how much the first implies. The duty to abide by the law is actually very far-reaching. It is not simply adherence to the formal principle of the rule of law, important though that is, for law imposes a wide range of substantive obligations. The foremost is loyalty to the political community itself. The Life in the UK Advisory Group ventured that this was actually the core of "Britishness":

> To be British to us means that we respect the law, the democratic political structures, and give our allegiance to the state (as commonly symbolised in the Crown) in return for its protection. To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values and beliefs that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order.[7]

Law-abidingness embraces the acceptance of the outcomes of constitutional democratic government and a respect for the fundamental constitutional rights and freedoms of all citizens, including those we may vigorously disagree with politically.[8] It includes the full range of laws governing areas of social life such as family, marriage and divorce, custody, property ownership and inheritance, education and health, the regulation of contracts, business practices, environmental behaviour, bribery, corruption and transparency. It also includes the acceptance of government's discretion to determine the level and types of taxation, and the uses to which public spending is put, for example, on public welfare, education, health, housing, defence and so on.

A "mere" citizen must abide by all laws and public policies in these areas, even though s/he may campaign against them politically.[9] Tax evasion, welfare benefit fraud, false accounting, clientelism, promoting racial or religious hatred, discriminating on grounds of race or ethnicity, forced marriage, domestic violence and assisting illegal entry to the UK violate the duties of the mere citizen. Every citizen, from whatever ethnic or religious community (minority or majority), must abide by these duties and governments must enforce them robustly and impartially. In a case from 2009, in which a mother was sentenced to three years for attempting to pervert the course of justice while covering up

an attempted forced marriage of her two daughters, a judge in Manchester Crown Court declared starkly:

> Everyone is entitled to his or her beliefs and is to be encouraged to practise in accordance with those beliefs and to live a life which embraces the culture of those beliefs. But those who choose to live in this country and who, like you, are British subjects, must not abandon our laws in the practice of those beliefs and that culture. If they do, they will face the consequences.[10]

If many more people in the UK did no more than consistently obey the full scope of the law, many of the problems thought to be associated with multiculturalism would diminish markedly. But instead of criticising some abstraction called "multiculturalism", contributors to the debate would do better simply to spell out clearly the detailed requirements of the law and explore how levels of conformity could be increased. This is the most important of the baseline duties making up "mere" citizenship.

Recently some western countries have proposed adding to the duties of citizenship an obligation to learn the host language. Such a requirement has been in force in the UK since 2004, and since 2005 applicants for citizenship must demonstrate a level of proficiency in English by passing the "Life in the UK" test. It seems clear that learning the host language is an important condition of fulfilling the other requirements of mere citizenship and it is surely legitimate that governments should possess the power to impose such a requirement upon those who aspire to be full members of their states. In 2007, the UK government also imposed a language condition on those only seeking permanent residence. This too seems justifiable, so long as appropriate exemptions are allowed for certain categories of applicants for whom this might be an unfair burden.[11]

Poor facility in English will certainly be a barrier to participation in contexts such as education or employment, so for universities or employers to impose their own language requirements where English is essential for successful performance is obviously legitimate. Those who (voluntarily) decline opportunities to learn or improve the language (thereby possibly foregoing the option of permanent residence), must accept the consequence that this will diminish their social, economic and political opportunities. Language proficiency should not, however, be a condition for the benefits of those generic social policies designed to protect basic human dignity, such as access to basic health care or translation in courts, or to legal advice for refugees or asylum seekers.

There may be some citizens – vulnerable women in certain patriarchal communities, for instance – who are in effect prevented from acquiring sufficient proficiency in English through family or religious constraints. That presents a difficult dilemma for government in deciding how to promote equality of opportunity for these citizens without breaching the integrity and autonomy of families, or provoking needless resentment from the ethnic or religious communities to which they belong. It is not clear exactly what government

could achieve by any direct intervention. It can, however, support other institutions in their work of language education, such as schools or Local Learning and Skills Councils, and work to widen access to such resources.

Government, then, may indeed impose the demanding duties of "mere citizenship": law-abidingness; payment of taxes; learning the host language, and willingness to engage in other essential public duties. They amount to more than a mere "thin" or "procedural" notion of citizenship. Acceptance of, or at least conformity to, these core duties by the great majority of the population is essential to the healthy functioning of the political community.

virtuous citizenship

By contrast, the responsibilities of "virtuous citizenship" considerably exceed those of "mere citizenship". They cannot, and should not, be made legally compulsory. *Life in the UK* implicitly recognises this distinction. The chapter "Knowing the Law" refers to "the rights and duties of a citizen", while the chapter "Building Better Communities" enjoins citizens to go beyond these and "get on well with their neighbours and contribute to the well-being of all."[12] Lord Goldsmith's Citizenship Review, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond,* also speaks of a "social bond of citizenship" going beyond mere legal rights and duties.[13] Virtuous citizenship involves active participation in social and political life, from the level of neighbourhood volunteering to that of national democratic politics – and indeed beyond that to the global level. It includes much more than simply turning out to vote, important though that is. It embraces regular and informed engagement in public discussion in civic forums and elsewhere, promoting political education, working in or supporting political organisations or parties, campaigning on public issues, and, for those so equipped, a readiness to stand for office at various levels. It could also involve contributing to debates about a British "national narrative" or "shared national values", on which more below. It may be that only a minority of the population is ever likely to engage in the activities of virtuous citizenship, but current levels of participation should not be regarded as fixed: changing circumstances (such as heightened concern about climate change) and opportunities (such as easier access to local councils) can increase those levels.[14]

The central proposal, then, is that government may legally impose on all its citizens only the baseline political duties of mere citizenship, but that it should also indirectly support schools and other civil society institutions in their distinctive roles of encouraging and empowering people to move beyond mere citizenship and towards virtuous citizenship.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly, however, that the norms of citizenship (mere and virtuous) are applicable not just to new citizens but also to existing ones. We should not place heavier demands on aspiring or new citizens than on those who are already citizens.

There is already an asymmetry in British practice in this regard since aspiring citizens need to master a degree of knowledge about Britain in the *Life in the UK* citizenship test that very few existing citizens themselves possess. Requiring every natural-born citizen to take the citizenship test would obviously be intrusive and unworkable. Probably the most effective way to disseminate the necessary knowledge for upcoming generations of citizens is through citizenship education in schools. The expanded curriculum proposed in the *Ajegdo Review* and the various initiatives suggested in *Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (such as holding citizenship ceremonies for everyone at the age of 18) are promising starting points.[15] Religious communities can also play a significant role here, not by turning themselves into "schools of civic virtue", but, drawing deeply on their own faith traditions, by commending to their members a genuine and sustained commitment to working for the public good. Many are doing this already; probably all could do better.[16]

To end the essay at this point would, however, be to close the discussion with a bare imperative: "this is what citizens and governments in a multicultural society must do". But that would leave unaddressed the deeper question of how citizens, and in turn their institutions, might actually acquire the motivation to fulfil the duties of (even mere) citizenship. What could serve as the *generative moral sources* for citizenship in a society marked by deep diversity? What, in other words, can hold a multicultural society together over the long haul?

what holds a multicultural society together?

"National values" or a "national narrative"?

A leading answer to this question emerging from government and other sources over the last decade has been that a multicultural society like Britain can hold together – can meet the demands of shared citizenship – if it can agree on and commit to a set of "shared national values", or a "shared national narrative", or both. Such things will, it is supposed, evoke the moral energy and commitment of citizens, old and new, and help restore the weakened bonds of a multicultural society. However, on closer inspection, current formulations of "shared national values" or a "national narrative" turn out to be simply too vague and bloodless to do the work expected of them; this is why we made no mention of them in the account of citizenship just presented.

Official attempts to formulate a set of "shared national values" over the last decade have struggled to go beyond a series of worthy but bland generalities with which it is hard to disagree, but which lack intellectual depth and contain little compelling moral appeal.[17] For example, *Our Shared Future* makes a worthy initial attempt at a formulation which can be summarised, not unfairly, as follows: values are important, yet they are derived from very different sources. There is wide agreement on what they are: fair play, tolerance,

respect, equal worth, compassion, justice (plus the four key principles of the report itself, namely "shared futures", a "new model of rights and responsibilities", an "ethics of hospitality" and "visible social justice"). But there is substantial disagreement on how to apply them. Defining "national" values is problematic, so the emphasis should be laid on the articulation of "local values". Finally, given Britain's ethnic and religious diversity, defining shared historical values is problematic and contested so the focus should therefore be on "shared futures".[18]

Life in the UK offers more detail, listing as "shared values" eleven responsibilities widely thought to be incumbent on all citizens in the UK.[19] Quite properly, the first is to obey the law.[20] The rest are: raising children properly; treating others with fairness and respect; behaving responsibly; helping and protecting one's family; preserving the environment; behaving morally; supporting oneself by working; helping others; voting.[21] This is an advance on *Our Shared Future* yet it obviously leaves wide open exactly what it means to do things like "raise children properly" (does that include insisting that they eat a healthy diet, volunteer for community work, etc?) or "behaving morally" (does that exclude getting drunk in public, or require seeking marriage counselling before divorcing, etc?).

This alerts us to another recurring feature of official formulations of "shared values", namely their narrow range. Quite properly, such formulations contain much talk of human rights, respect, tolerance and civic participation, coupled with the frequent injunction that "shared national values" must emerge out of dialogue. Perhaps, as is sometimes implied, these are the only moral commitments our diverse society can unite around. But there is very little here about what for many people are equally if not more important "national values" at stake in our society: family and relational stability; the protection of humans at the beginning and end of life; business integrity; media ethics; the curtailment of corporate greed; environmental concern and global responsibilities.

The reason for the blandness and limited scope of these official forays into "shared national values" should now be pretty clear. As Britain is an increasingly plural society with continually diversifying moral commitments and behaviour patterns, it becomes less and less easy to define what "shared British national values" are. Often what are proposed as "British" values are really generic "western" values, such as individual freedom, legal equality, tolerance, hospitality, neighbourliness, the rule of law or a commitment to democratic procedures. These are extremely important – they are what ground several of the duties of citizenship – and Britain has often championed them. But there is little about them that is uniquely British. Indeed, they are increasingly championed in non-western societies too, as the "Arab Spring" has most recently demonstrated.[22]

This is not to suggest that the project of drawing up a set of "shared British values" – at least one that would be sufficiently concrete as to have practical bite for ordinary people – is futile; only that devising such a set of values is likely to be extremely difficult, and securing agreement on it even more so. This presents a particular problem for

government, since the tools at its disposal – law, regulation, policy, funding, leaders' exhortations, etc. – are ill-suited to securing wide agreement among citizens on deeply contested ethical questions. Seeking to devise a set of "shared national values" is not likely to be the most promising route *for government* to nurture the bonds of citizenship in a multicultural society.

> *To convey what something like "Britishness" means we need to do more than list a set of values; we need to tell a story.*

Could government get further if, instead of seeking to identify "British national values", it tried to inspire commitment to citizenship by appealing to a "British national narrative"? Some have rightly argued that, in order to convey what something like "Britishness" means we need to do more than list a set of values; we need to *tell a story,* to offer a narrative of how Britain came to be what it is and to embody the complex and sometimes conflicting set of values that it does.[23] Certainly, if most citizens (old and new) acquired a better understanding of the unique historical journey that led to the emergence of the UK, they would have a better grasp of what the basic duties of (mere) citizenship in Britain are and why they need to be fulfilled. Thus, for example, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond* plausibly proposes that:

> we need to create a shared narrative about citizenship which threads through very many different aspects of our lives and our lives together. What we ask of each other as citizens – in terms of mutual protection and support – is quite extensive and hence the experiences that underlie our sense of shared citizenship must be quite extensive as well.[24]

This should surely be the minimum goal of a sense of patriotism which hopefully every citizen will (come to) share.

But writing the "story of Britain" would be no less complex and contested a process as formulating a set of "shares national values", for at least two reasons. First, since the only worthwhile national narrative would be an honest one, it would have to convey not only the achievements, glories, successes and hopes of the nation but also its struggles, conflicts, failures, unfulfilled promises, inconsistencies and pathologies. It would need to issue in "critical patriotism". Second, it would need to incorporate the distinctive accounts of Britain's various minority communities. Thus, while the History and Citizenship curriculums in British schools should certainly have British history as their backbone, *The Parekh Report* and the *Ajegbo Review* are right to insist that the historical experiences of Britain's ethnic minorities (we would add, religious minorities) should feature in any account of a British national narrative, in schools or anywhere else. For example, it is hard to imagine how any responsible treatment of British history could avoid serious engagement with Britain's interactions with the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.[25] Excluding

such ethnic narratives sends the message, "we are not interested in your stories or your cultural identities".[26] While the potted seventeen-page account of British history in the government's citizenship test manual, *Life in the UK,* serves its limited purpose, it cannot remotely be expected to do justice to such a complex story.[27]

The difficulties inherent in attempting to draw up either a set of "shared national values" or a "national narrative" lead to an important conclusion: government should neither lead the process of deliberation about such ambiguous and contested items nor assume the authority to define them for the rest of society.[28] For government to do so would involve it in hotly contested debates about "Britishness" and "the human good" which it is not competent to resolve authoritatively. In recent debates about multiculturalism, government invocations of "national values" or a "national narrative" usually serve only to reveal their hesitation to commit to much by way of substance. Or, worse, they come across as vaguely intimidating to those whose commitment to the British "mainstream" is thought to be under suspicion.

> *Government invocations of "national values" or a "national narrative" usually serve only to reveal their hesitation to commit to much by way of substance.*

Debates about national values and narratives are far better left to the continuing processes of open – and open-ended – debate *in civil society:* the media, the academy, think-tanks, religious organisations and so on. Politicians are free, of course, to contribute to such civil society debates, and those that can do, should. Mention has already been made of Gordon Brown's contribution in 2006, "The Future of Britishness". Yet the presence of a major blind-spot in even a speech as thoughtful and informed as his – the absence of any significant reckoning with the decisive role of religion in the formation of Britain – reminds us that such contributions will always be partial and subjective, and so should never be accorded official status. We could also reliably count on the fact that, for example, a parliamentary commission set up to draft a national narrative would have its own glaring blind-spots as well – even if advised by the nation's best "experts".

The clear implication is that governments should confine themselves, first, to specifying clearly and authoritatively the baseline duties of mere citizenship, and, second, to encouraging virtuous citizenship indirectly by supporting other institutions well placed to nurture it. This is a task they might fulfil tolerably well. That task would, of course, involve ongoing political contestation, but there are established democratic channels for ensuring that government decisions on such matters stand at least some chance of being representative of the diversity of the citizenry. It is not a minimal task, nor a merely "procedural" one: it requires the demanding challenge of deliberating on, specifying, modifying, successfully communicating and enforcing the duties, and the rights, of mere citizenship. This is a job for every department of government (not just the Home Office), and it is a job for other organs of state as well, notably the courts.

It seems, then, that the challenge of supplying the needed moral motivation for performing the duties of mere citizenship – a crucial part of what holds a multicultural society together and inspires the pursuit of multicultural justice – will not be met by government attempts to appeal to "shared British values" or a "shared national narrative". Those may be worthy aspirations, but they are best left to civil society. Where else might we turn?

Religion?

It is worth noting that the desired civil society debates about "shared national values" or "national narratives" could not take place in a moral or spiritual vacuum. Participants in such debates would need to avail themselves of a wide variety of moral resources if such debates are to confront the largest challenges of a multicultural society: determining the content of multicultural and other forms of justice, the nature of the public good, and the foundations for the obligations of citizenship. Civil society is the appropriate forum for the fullest possible deployment of such resources. What resources might religion bring to these debates?

It was noted earlier that Jonathan Sacks presses the question of what it takes to make a society a "home we build together" rather than a mere "hotel". Sacks claims that neither individualist liberalism (with its narrow focus on rights) nor "group-based multiculturalism" (with its divisive focus on identity) can offer anything beyond a hotel. Both lead to a "procedural state", which rests on an agreement only on minimal rules of co-existence but not on any substantive notion of a good human life. His proposal is a revival of the idea of a "social covenant" in which diverse members retain their particular identities but yet commit themselves wholeheartedly to the common project of society-building.[29] This is a laudable proposal, not least because Sacks rightly does not look first to government but rather to civil society to lead the project. Other terms have been proposed to capture his intention. The *Cantle Report* speaks of a "new compact", and *Our Shared Future* calls for a "new social contract".[30] This essay has used the term a "just multicultural settlement".

Sacks' chief concern in *The Home We Build Together* turns out not to be with multicultural public policy *per se* (on which the book has little to say) but on the shared moral bonds that must underlie any ethnically and religiously diverse political community. He invites us to ask the questions what these bonds are and what are their generative sources. These are momentous questions, and in these final pages we do no more than indicate the territory in which answers might be sought. Since this essay is written from a Christian perspective, it will be no surprise to hear that the author believes the resources of Christian social thought to be well placed to contribute to the identification and nurturing of such bonds.

The debate will need to identify as precisely as possible what is the relationship between religions (whether these are traditional religions or modern secularist worldviews) and the

shared bonds that are necessary to furnish the moral motivations of (at least) mere citizenship and so to sustain a just, multicultural democracy. Some participants in the debate about multiculturalism may claim that only one religion stands any chance of generating these essential foundations. Such a claim is being heard today from representatives of Christianity and Islam, but even more from spokespeople for one or other variety of secular humanism. Others (such as the author) hold out the more likely prospect that a variety of religious visions could supply moral resources to sustain the basic requirements of a just, multicultural democracy in Britain.[31] Both Christianity and secular humanism have, at their best, made such contributions over several centuries; both will need to replenish and correct their intellectual and moral resources if they are to continue to do so in the future.[32] Leading Muslim thinkers such as Tariq Ramadan are now taking up the immense challenge of delving deeply into their own tradition(s) to ask what Islam has to contribute to the moral sustenance of a western democracy like the UK, and coming up with hopeful answers.[33]

This is not the place to pursue those fundamental debates. But since the focus of this essay has been on what governments should do about multiculturalism, it is necessary to ask what follows *politically* from claims like these. Citizens who believe that their religion or worldview has something to offer to help replenish the moral wellsprings of a just, multicultural democracy over the long haul will, of course, be motivated to seek to persuade others of their views. Indeed if they aspire to virtuous citizenship, they will feel bound to do so passionately (and so they may, so long as they do so respectfully and legally). But such claims cannot be advanced by political means, and nor should they be accorded any privileged constitutional standing.[34] The same applies, of course, to those who seek to work towards a partial convergence around core political commitments from representatives of different religions. As in debates over "shared values", the task of persuasion on these even more contested questions can only take place in the realm of free civil society and should not be advanced by government action.

An inescapable, if perhaps to some unsettling, conclusion turns out to be this: *government itself is not equipped to guarantee the moral and spiritual conditions of its own continued healthy functioning.* The political community is not fully self-sufficient or self-sustaining in this sense. Nurturing such moral and spiritual conditions is immeasurably important, indeed essential, but it falls chiefly to actors in civil society not government to do so. Certainly government must, by contrast, attend to the *political* conditions of its continuing existence. These would include the promotion of the basic political duties noted above (as well, of course, as the protection of state institutions against subversion or assault). But if we reflect on what government would need to look

> *Government itself is not equipped to guarantee the moral and spiritual conditions of its own continued healthy functioning.*

like if it were to try to *guarantee its necessary moral and spiritual conditions,* we would come up with something resembling a totalitarian state.

Happily, a great deal can be done by bodies *other than government* towards nurturing the moral, political and religious preconditions of a just multicultural democracy. Individuals can choose to go beyond the duties of mere citizenship and aspire to those of virtuous citizenship, acting in numerous ways to nurture and enact practices of tolerance and truth-telling, mutual respect and active civic participation. Parents can raise their children to think, talk and argue about these things and encourage them to take up civic engagement at an early age. Schools and universities can be sites of honest, respectful and truthful negotiation of the challenges of deep diversity, engaging with rather than denying or suppressing real difference. The media can end their ratings-driven preoccupation with the momentary, the divisive and the sensational and transfer their energies to hosting serious and extended conversations about the requirements of citizenship in a multicultural society.

Finally, churches and other religious groups can play a vital role in promoting civic virtues. They can, for example, host inter-faith conversations about such issues in which each faith community would be encouraged to present confidently what they take to be the distinctive contributions their tradition can bring to the nurturing of good citizenship, and to listen respectfully to those of others.[35] Probably the most significant inter-faith encounters happen, when they do, on a daily basis on street corners, in homes, schools, shops, factories and community centres around the country, wherever civil conversation occurs between people of different faiths about life in community. Jonathan Sacks adds to this the important observation that, for most people, inter-cultural and inter-faith respect is even more likely to emerge from practical cooperation than from conversation, more from working "side by side" with others of different backgrounds on shared practical concerns than from meeting them "face to face" in formal discussions.[36]

Such multicultural respect, itself one of the vital norms of civic life we need today, will best emerge out of the routine practices of neighbourliness. Sacks reports on a telling initiative taken by a Christian woman worried at the unsightliness of neglected grounds surrounding a North London synagogue opposite her house. Instead of complaining to the synagogue leaders, she offered to lead a project in which synagogue children would turn the grounds into a "biblical garden". "The project was magnificent", says Sacks. "The children learned more that year than any other… They gained, the synagogue gained, and the Christian neighbour now had a beautiful garden to look at."[37] Out of simple neighbourly gestures like these, whether or not inspired by religious faith, the fabric of a multicultural society marked by justice, mutual respect and even friendship can begin to be woven. There are no guarantees available to secure that goal, but there are plenty of opportunities to seize.

chapter 7 references

1. The term "multicultural citizenship" is prevalent in contemporary academic debates about multiculturalism, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to assess it. See, e.g. Tariq Modood, *Citizenship: A Civic Idea* (Polity Press, 2007), ch. 6; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

2. One of the limitations of *Life in the UK: A Journey to Citizenship* 2nd ed. (Home Office, 2007) is that it does not make this distinction clearly enough.

3. This is implied by the title of Lord Goldsmith's Citizenship Review: *Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (2008).

4. *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Race Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy* (Home Office, 2004), p. 6. This led to *Citizenship: Our Common Bond,* which specifies the many legal rights and duties of British citizens and contains proposals as to how these should be further clarified or modified.

5. This view is supported by the Bar Council's response to Lord Goldsmith's Citizenship Review: *The Governance of Britain: Lord Goldsmith QC's Citizenship Review. Report of a Working Group of the Bar Council* (2009).

6. Military service raises complex issues which cannot be addressed here, except to say that it is a duty that must be balanced by a strong protection of the right of conscientious objection.

7. Life in the UK Advisory Group, cited in *Strength in Diversity* (2004), p. 6.

8. This does not mean that it should be illegal to campaign for radical changes to such basic constitutional provisions, so long as existing law is adhered to in the process.

9. Except, for example, where exemptions are granted on grounds of religious conscience. But this is not a departure from legality, only the enjoyment of a legally sanctioned exception.

10. Cited in Denis MacEoin, *Sharia Law or 'One Law for All'?* (Civitas, 2009), p. 42.

11. For example, older family members who would be well taken care of by their relatives and who might not seek or be able to take up employment or education might not have the facility to acquire sufficient English, yet barring them from permanent residence seems an illiberal constraint on the integrity of the family life of immigrants.

12. *Life in the UK,* p. 107.

13. Goldsmith, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (2009), ch. 5.

14. The Citizenship Survey for 2009–10 reported that, in that year, 10% of people in England had participated in "civic activism", 34% in some form of "civic participation" and 18% in "consultation" about local issues. 25% of adults had engaged in voluntary activity at least once a month. Communities and Local Government, Cohesion Research, *Statistical Release 12* (January 2010), p. 2.
    http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1368299.pdf

15. *Ajegbo Review,* Appendix 1. See also the Active Citizens in Schools Programme. See *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion* (Home Office, 2005), p. 43.

16. See, for example, the school materials produced by the Islam and Citizenship Project:
    http://www.theiceproject.sdsa.net/index.php

17. In *Strength in Diversity* some of those consulted suggested that "the one unifying element of 'Britishness' was this very diversity of cultures". A stronger account is Bikhu Parekh's notion of "operative public values" in *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 363–366.

18. Commission on Integration and Cohesion, *Our Shared Future* (2007), pp. 65–66.

19. *Life in the UK,* pp. 107–108.

20. The chapter "Knowing the law" quite properly details a number of key rights available in the UK but it does not identify clearly or assert strongly enough the substantive duties aspiring citizens must accept and practice.

21. We might note that the list contains elements of what was just defined as "virtuous citizenship", but also other social responsibilities, such as parenting, which are highly important although not strictly falling within the role of "citizen" as understood in this essay.

22. This is not to imply that such values are exclusively a product of the west.

23. Rowan Williams, "Multiculturalism: Friend or Foe", Toynbee Hall, 16 May 2007. http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/1602

24. Goldsmith, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond,* p. 89. The document also calls on government to offer a more formal "narrative statement of citizenship rights and duties", but does not offer one itself (p. 93).

25. "Black History month" is one attempt to allow for exposure to such minority narratives within schools. See also the Mayor of London's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (2005).

26. As one official report puts it, "People should not need to choose between their British identity and other cultural identities. They can be proud of both." *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society,* p. 20. This is also a major theme of *The Parekh Report.*

27. *Life in the UK,* ch. 1.

28. *Our Shared Future* recommends the development of a national narrative but does not say whose role it should be to develop it (p. 49).

29. Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (Continuum, 2007), chs. 9, 13.

30. *Cantle Report – Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (Home Office, 2001), p. 19; *Our Shared Future,* p. 14.

31. Not just *any* religion or worldview could do so; it is hard to see how either radical deconstructionism (as distinct to ethical postmodernism), or Britain's reviving paganisms, have much to offer.

32. On this see Archbishop of Canterbury, "Religion, cultural diversity and tolerance – shaping the new Europe", address at the European Policy Centre, Brussels, 7 November 2005. http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/967

33. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2004); *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

34. On whether this might rule out Anglican "establishment", compare Jonathan Chaplin, "Can nations be 'Christian?'" *Theology* (November/December, 2009), pp. 410-424, and Nigel Biggar, "What is the good of establishment?" *Standpoint* (April 2011). http://www.standpointmag.co.uk/node/3804/full

35. "Inter-faith dialogue" is sometimes unfairly depicted as an elite indulgence for those far removed from the rough and tumble of street-level multiculturalism. For a valuable defence of the "Scriptural Reasoning" movement, see David Ford, *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), ch. 8.

36. Sacks, *The Home We Build Together,* ch. 15.

37. Sacks, *The Home We Build Together,* pp. 181–182.

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Multiculturalism: a Christian Retrieval

Jonathan Chaplin

Recent years have seen an astonishingly rapid *volte face* regarding multiculturalism in Britain. Once political orthodoxy, it is now almost a by-word for segregation, exclusion and security threats.

In *Multiculturalism: A Christian Retrieval,* Jonathan Chaplin argues that in our haste to reassess multiculturalism in the light of evidence of its darker sides, we must not lose sight of its indispensable contribution to realising a just society.

Tracing the history of multiculturalism and clarifying precisely what is at stake in the debate, Chaplin offers a vision of "multicultural justice", drawn from the resources of Christian social thought but accessible and persuasive to those outside the Christian faith.

Armed with the idea of multicultural justice, he examines a range of modern policy ideas – from housing and education to public funding - and the question of citizenship, and argues that we should seek not to repudiate multiculturalism altogether but rather to *retrieve* it by reformulating it in a more modest, chastened and credible form.

Jonathan Chaplin is Director of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (www.klice.co.uk)

Commendations for Multiculturalism: A Christian Retrieval

"This is a superbly perceptive and constructive contribution to the debate about multiculturalism in Britain…[It] should be read by all who want civil society to flourish and the government to deal well with our multi-ethnic and multi-faith nation."

David F. Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge

"Jonathan Chaplin provides here a Christian theological response to the challenge of increasing cultural and religious diversity…His contribution is considered and important for people of faith and for government."

Atif Imtiaz, Academic Director, Cambridge Muslim College

"At a time when we hear so much woolly chatter about 'multiculturalism' and its failure as a state sponsored policy, it's refreshing to read Jonathan Chaplin's thought-provoking and insightful treatment of this emotive and controversial subject."

Dr R. David Muir, Director, Faith in Britain

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