Jim Rose Lecture 2008
Rageh Omaar on Identity and Homecoming

In the year that commemorates its 40th anniversary, Runnymede has celebrated the contribution of its founder, Jim Rose, in a lecture by Rageh Omaar, who took as his subject the theme of ‘Identity and Homecoming’.

Staged in late January at the Royal Society of Arts, the evening began with an address by Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of the RSA, who expressed his pleasure in collaborating with Runnymede in this event devoted to the work and memory of Jim Rose.

Dr Samir Shah, Runnymede’s Chair of Trustees, presided over the lecture and the subsequent Q&A session, and introduced the speaker, Rageh Omaar, a writer of Somali origin who is now a well-known presenter of television news and documentaries on BBC television and other stations. An edited version of his presentation follows.1

Identity and Homecoming
I wanted to call this talk ‘Identity and Homecoming’ for very personal reasons and talk about my own experience, and the experiences of my relatives, in becoming part of this diverse and multicultural society. Multiculturalism, and many of my friends and colleagues, have had a very torrid time over the last few years, especially since 7 July 2005. And it’s been quite an awkward situation for me because I’m very used to reporting events like July 7 and their repercussions and trying to analyse them. I want to use this talk to try and unpick some of that and tell the story of multiple identities and the sense of home in Britain that straddles colour, race and much else besides.

It’s also the story, I think, of hundreds of thousands of people like myself who can be British, can be Muslim, can be black and find no contradiction in that. The reason why I wanted to make it so personal and talk about my own community, the British Somali community, is that I think for all the wrong reasons we British Somalis have been at the centre of the argument swirling about the issue of multiculturalism.

Somalis are black, they’re Muslim, a huge number of them are asylum-seekers or have relatives who are asylum-seekers. The overwhelming majority of the community is impoverished and in the last three years the British Somali community has been associated, some would say, with some of the more high profile and horrific acts of violence from the failed suicide bomb attacks of July 21 to the shooting of PC

1 The full lecture can be listened to by visiting the Royal Society of Arts website at http://www.rsa.org.uk/events/detail.asp?EventID=2450
Sharon Beshenivsky and much else.
So I want to explore what many young Somalis of my generation and also of the next generation, feel are the failures and challenges facing us and often I think these failures and challenges aren’t aired and they’re often not understood.

When I arrive at Heathrow, returning from assignments, it always feels very much as though I am coming home. But it was a very different story for my father when he made the decision to emigrate to Britain back in 1972/3. I’m from a very privileged background, my father was an economist. It was really an optimistic time, when there was a huge sense of pan-Africanism on the continent but also a sense in which societies which had only recently thrown off the shackles of colonial rule were really going to take off, and my father wanted to be part of that. He’d been part of the independence movement from British colonialism in the north of Somalia, a movement that took many into politics subsequently. My father made a very conscious decision that economic development was really going to be the key generator that would change everything – the politics, the social outlook, the sense of freedoms – and would define the new political systems that would follow independence.

Somalia was a very small country, a sort of backwater in the horn of Africa. A chance conversation with a British colleague of his convinced my father to come to Britain. He did think, interestingly, about going to the Middle East, with which he felt a greater cultural affinity and Lebanon was the ideal that he had, just over one and a half years before the civil war began. But he came to Britain. This was a man making a very conscious choice – to say I’m moving, I’m not fleeing anywhere. But before he did that he took me – I was less than 5 years old at the time – with him and my mother, to perform the ‘Hajj’ to Mecca. I talked to him many years afterwards, asking him why that was the last thing he did before he started a new life in Britain. He said that although he wanted very much to be British, he felt he had another part of his identity that he wanted to maintain and performing the Hajj was his way of making that link.

I think what it also indicated for my parent’s generation was that they never really mentally ‘unpacked’, they were coming here temporarily. But it was very different in the 1980s as more and more Somalis began to emigrate to very different reasons – the civil war saw tens of thousands of Somalis seek and gain asylum in the UK. The exact figures are hard to come by, but it is thought that about 130,000 to 150,000 Somalis formed communities in virtually all of the UK’s main towns and cities. And this flow hasn’t stopped – each year there are around 3000–5000 Somalis seeking asylum.

For many years, I think it’s fair to say, the Somalis formed one of the least visible and at the same time one of the most deprived minority communities in the UK, at least until those horrific events of July 2005. And in almost every area – housing, literacy and especially health and educational needs – the Somalis were amazingly ill-equipped, culturally, to meet the challenges.

It was, and still is, a patriarchal society with a huge level of absentee men – fathers and elder brothers. And of course it’s economics that’s driving this, it isn’t just an inability to cope with a Western society. They’re absentees because many of them joined the huge globalized flow to seek work, often in the Gulf, joining many other Somalis and Sudanese who went there to find the money to meet financial needs at home. The burden of family life has inevitably fallen on the Somali women, who, being part of this conservative, patriarchal Muslim society, didn’t have the education or exposure outside of the home to give them the language skills to deal with the inescapable but crucial bureaucracy of the health and education systems.

The language barrier was and still is a huge obstacle to many young children who’ve just arrived, often having experienced truly horrific scenes, and joined the British education system not being able to cope. They seemed in my day to fall between a lot of different identity ‘stools’. They were black but they weren’t West Indian so they weren’t part of the Windrush experience, they were Muslim but they weren’t Asian, and there was, and there still is, a huge level of conflict and violence that affects young Somali boys and leads to a huge level of educational failure. This has largely resulted from feeling
that they were part of lots of different identities but didn’t truly belong to any of them.

It also opens up the whole generation gap between young Somalis, for whom this is home, and the generation of other Somali men who came here in the 1940s and 1950s who are struggling to put bread on the table, and are having to resort to long periods of absenteeism to make that work.

I think that a lot of the Somali experience boils down to a lack of resources and money, and one of the key aspects is this idea that, for a lot of Somali families, they have relatives still in Somalia who are hugely dependent on remittances.

The United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank have done exhaustive research into these money transfer or remittance companies. In 2005, the total remittances by Somalis living abroad are estimated to have been between 750 million and a billion dollars. This is a huge amount of money that far outweighs the overall bilateral and multilateral aid and development money that goes into Somalia. It’s estimated that 90% of the foreign exchange earnings of the country comes from remittances; two-thirds of the urban population of Somalia rely on remittances; and 80% of start-up capital for businesses comes from remittances.

So what you have is the young generation for whom Somalia is yesteryear, they won’t go back there, and they simply can’t understand why such a huge amount of money that is desperately needed here is being sent back to Somalia. I think what has happened is that many young Somalis have been drawn into crime just to try and help make ends meet.

One of my favourite quotes of Tony Blair’s is that arguing against globalization is pointless because it’s a reality. I think that pretty much the same could be said about multiculturalism in Britain. It has taken a huge number of blows within recent years but I think it works. I think the proof is in front of us. I’ve chronicled accounts of children who arrived 15-odd years ago, 5-, 6-, 7-year-olds who walked across the Ogaden desert and spent months in refugee camps, having seen relatives killed in front of them. They are now at university and many of them are working and feeling a part of the fabric of this country.

Britain is also a less racist country than it was 40 years ago. The model of racism as I understood it growing up – based on the duality of black and white – doesn’t work anymore. Much of the racism now faced by Somalis is not defined so much by the colour of their skin, but is more to do with the prejudice of being part of the Muslim community that is seen as having a religion and culture that is somehow alien to the freedoms and liberal principles of British society.

Also, ironically, the violence in which a lot of young Somali boys are caught up is often against other young black Britons – Somalis fighting African Caribbean and British Asian children. It’s a lot more than just about skin colour; and economics is very much at the heart of it.

Some would say that multiculturalism is a demographic reality. I wouldn’t pretend that it has been without huge problems and huge challenges, and there are major differences between having grown up on the Edgware Road and the problems facing British Muslims, say, in Dewsbury, where different sorts of economic opportunities define those areas of the British Muslim community where radicalism has taken a hold.

One last thing I want to say is about a danger that the debate around multiculturalism has become focused around the problems and challenges of the British Muslim community in the wake not only of the 9/11 events but also of July 7. Trying to react to the question of whether multiculturalism has failed on the basis of the problems faced by British Muslims would be a great pity, and I think that Britain would be a much lesser place for it.

‘I want to say I’m very very honoured to be asked to give the Jim Rose Lecture especially in the 40th anniversary year of the Runnymede Trust which he helped to found along with Anthony Lester. I was thinking just before coming here that the Runnymede Trust was born almost exactly at the same time that I was, and only a few years before my parents emigrated to the UK, so in many ways, the story of my life of growing up in this country from when I was 5 years old has been very much mirrored in the work that the Runnymede Trust has been trying to do in the last 40 years. It has in that sense directly and indirectly affected my life as someone who is black, who’s British, who’s Muslim and who has grown up here feeling that none of those identities is a contradiction, or at least one can say that one belongs to all of these identities and still finds Britain to be a home and believe that’s not a contradiction.’

Rageh Omaar giving the Jim Rose Lecture at the Royal Society of Arts, 31 January 2008
Question & Answer Session

Dr Samir Shah OBE, chair of the Runnymede Trust, moderated the Q&A session which followed Rageh Omaar’s lecture, and which is reproduced below in a shortened version. Samir is a trustee of the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture at the Victoria & Albert Museum, and was appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the BBC’s new executive board in 2007. He also holds a special Professorship in the Department of Post Conflict Studies at the University of Nottingham.

Q1. Do you feel that absenteeism among the male community has been helpful overall for Somali women in terms of being able to get out of the patriarchal system?

RO: I think that’s definitely been the impact. It certainly has given freedoms and opportunities and responsibilities to Somali women which were not there previously. They are suddenly the ones who have got to deal with school authorities, with the health system; they’re also the ones trying to make the family finances work.

Q2. Susanne Lawrence: Are there some specific things that you’d like to see the British government and the private sector do to help improve the situation?

RO: I think there are a large number of things that can be done but I don’t think they are going to be of any lasting value until there are partners for local authorities within the Somali community to say ‘these are our problems, these are our needs’. For example, the Somali community in Woolwich is tackling the problem of Somali children involved with the drugs trade, explaining to the police about the sensitivities of the community and making progress generally.

Q3. Colin Wright: Is it better, for what I might call cohesive multiculturalism, to maintain strong links with the originating countries or to break them?

RO: It’s a very good question. It is a fact that Britain has had waves of immigrants who have maintained links not just with their own indigenous or original countries but also with their various faiths, even if outwardly these faiths are seen as inimical to Britain’s liberal outlook. So I think maintaining those links has been one of the things that has defined what British history has been about; it also makes that link with Tony Blair’s comments about globalization.

SS: Before we move to another topic, I’d like to know what others feel about this area of cohesive multiculture – whether we should break ties with one’s home. Does anyone disagree with that? Would you like to comment on whether it should be broken?

CW: For the record I would like to maintain the links. I work in a totally global industry anyway, I’m in the shipping industry and I would totally support maintaining the links. There are of course other people who argue that you shouldn’t.

SS: Does anybody argue with that point?

I’m a Fellow of the RSA. It seems to me that one of the problems is that some societies are coming in and setting themselves apart.

RO: There is a widespread belief that there is a reluctance to integrate. That’s not the case with the vast majority of British Muslims. It’s true that a lot of the younger generation don’t want to integrate into British society or be a part of it. But I think that the experience of the overwhelming majority of British Muslims does not live up to this idea that they don’t want to integrate. If you look at the larger waves of immigration of Muslims in this country going back to just before the Second World War, there’s been a huge amount of integration.

Q4. Derek Harris, Fellow of the RSA. Can I push this right back to you as a very experienced media person. From what you’ve just said, the conclusion is that the reality and the perception are different, and much of this must be because of the way the media wishes to project it. Have you any possible solution to this?

RO: National newsrooms, I think you’ll accept, are not the most diverse places in the world, but they are places where a lot of colleagues have lived side-by-side with Muslims. After the shock of 9/11, I think there were some urgent questions that Britain and Western society had to ask itself about the violence being carried out in the name of Islam by Muslims who had been educated and grown up in the West.

Part of the problem is that we as British Muslims have not got up and explained who we are. When as a reporter you get sent out on assignments, you go to Finsbury Park mosque where a guy called Abu Hamza is preaching all of this kind of stuff. Abu Hamza was stopped from preaching inside the mosque and had to use the streets outside, but you’d be forgiven for thinking, looking at the evening news pictures, that he was preaching in that mosque, with its 20,000 worshippers.

In the wake of 7 July, as a British Muslim or as a Somali, you feel a surge of worry and fear and instability, but if you put the newspapers down and switch off the TV and go into wider British society, the reaction of British people across the board, whether they’re of any faith or no faith, has been way ahead of the politicians and the media.
But news is about the extraordinary, it’s about the sudden, it’s about the dramatic, and I think that is why militant voices and minority views get so many column inches.

SS: Let’s take two or three contributions together.

Q5. Itha Satchther from SOAS. I think we need to have some sharpness in definitions of integration versus assimilation. A second issue is how important is the Somali language in maintaining Somali identity as well as adopting British identities. A third issue is to do with the press. You may have read a national survey which found that 30% of people in Britain are willing to admit that they are prejudiced or racist. What does that say about the future of multiculturalism?

Q6. Janet Whitaker, Patron of the Runnymede Trust. When I was chair of Camden Council, some of the women that Rageh talks about were a very positive influence. They organized themselves, but they didn’t make that jump into political representation, and I think if they did that would make a big difference. Can you tell us how that’s coming along?

Q7. Ridwan Haji I’m a Somali freelance journalist. Somalia has been without an official government for more than a decade and most of the Somalis came here as refugees in order to get to safety. So I always try to get to the problems of Somali people when it comes to looking at why young people are killing each other and the lack of education, and why they believe that British society is making it difficult to integrate. So how can we solve these kinds of problems within the community?

R.O: First of all, in terms of the survey you quoted about the number of people who said they held prejudiced or racist views, I think it’s good that they said it; we know the numbers to target and change. I think that everyone’s view is changeable. I think it’s as much a political challenge as anything else. Your other point was about Somali language. Somali is an oral tradition and identity, passed on largely through Somali poems and songs; as a language it was only committed to an alphabet in the 1970s. We need to record the voices of the current generation, otherwise a lot of that will disappear.

Moving on to Ridwan’s point – it’s not only people’s minds that are back in Mogadishu, it’s their pockets and wallets too – and it’s to do with the extended family and the closeness and the openness of Somali society.

The level of non-participation in politics or democratic politics amongst the Somali community is staggering. There was a recent by-election in Ealing, and there’s no doubt that Somalis could be the decisive factor in determining who is the MP in Ealing, if they were to actually register. There must be at least 10 political seats where Somalis would have a huge impact if the organization, and education and registration were there.

SS: Thank you. Let’s take a few more contributions.

Q8. Sadiq Bakir. I’m from Germany and the topic of integration is also a topic in our country, very much because of the 3.5 million Muslim Turkish people living there, but I would like to ask you and maybe others in this room: What does integration mean? Integration into what? What is Britishness? What are British values? What is it that you want people to integrate into?

Q9. Shazia Vasia. I’m a GP in North London, and I’m a British Muslim. It really hurts when people from your own community are seen more as a liability than an asset and I just wonder what we can do to improve that situation and what factors in your own personal life have allowed you to maintain that balance?

Q10. Naz Coker, I’m a Trustee of the RSA. I think we need to have an open debate about integration versus assimilation. And I think there should be something called a ‘responsible media’. I didn’t know what an Islamist was, but now it’s used in everyday language. I think journalists and broadcasters like you, and people like me who buy the newspapers, have a responsibility for how the news is told.
R.O: In the last question, Naz said I’ve let my media colleagues off the hook. Two years ago, after Jack Straw’s comments about the veil – you remember, he’d asked a constituent to take the veil off because it created too much of a gap – and Tony Blair a few days later said the veil was a mark of separation. And there had been a case a week earlier, a woman called Ayisha Azmi who was a supply teacher at a school in West Yorkshire and she’d taken the school to court saying she’d been denied her human rights because she’d refused to take off the veil and the school had said you can’t really teach unless the children see your face. I was sent to cover this issue. So I went to Ayisha Azmi’s house and there was a big media stakeout. The reason why there were so many photographers there was at that time there had been a reward of £50,000 for anyone who could get a picture of Ayisha Azmi without her veil!

Jack Straw said he wanted to start a debate and the media had responded in this way, and two days later they left to follow another story. I think this issue of opening up to genuine debate shows the need to make a very important distinction and sharpen up definitions between integration and assimilation.

It seems to me that part of British tradition is to have a lot of suspicions about communities that have come in because their views and beliefs are not seen as being empathetic to Britain’s cultural outlook. They have integrated and become part of British society. They respect the laws, impuses and outlooks of British society and laws and politics. What they do in the privacy of their homes culturally should also be respected as well. But this idea that everyone is going to have an identical outlook strikes me as being absurd. British men are willing to blow themselves up, often in the cause of a country that they’ve not set foot in, be it Iraq or Palestine, and understanding where that comes from is vital for all of us. People talk about the message of Al Qaeda or Bin Laden and far too often we don’t listen to or read what Bin Laden or Al Qaeda are saying in their own language.

Why did Mohammed Sidique Khan, the ringleader of the July 7 bombers, choose the Edgware Road? It seemed to me and everyone else there that the Edgware Road represents exactly the thing that Al Qaeda and Jihadism despise – the idea that there can be an integration between the West and Muslims. So when you talk about integration and assimilation, you have to be aware that for better or worse, we are all on the same side of this argument.

SS: We’re running out of time so I’ll take two more quick contributions then I’ll ask Rageh to sum up.

Q11. Angela Rehman from the Learning and Skills Council. I’ve got two questions: first about Barack Obama and your thoughts about his message of hope to the American electorate; and second about the situation in Sudan, with the teddy bear being named Mohammed by the teacher.

Q12. Peter Smith. The question on the theme of identity relates back to this country where we’ve previously had a terrorist threat, which was the Irish terrorist threat. Crucial to resolving that situation was the fact that the Irish Catholic community ultimately never gave full support to, for example, the outrages that we saw in Omagh. How can we ensure that the link between identity and the justification for terrorism is broken?

R.O: What’s difficult about this for me is the accusation that, until every single person has stood up and said ‘I disapprove of July 7’, you are assumed to believe in it or must support it, which isn’t true. There is more that we can do, but I find it hard to know exactly what that is, other than each individual saying what they believe about it.

About Barack Obama – amazing and hopeful and very moving. Could he happen here? I don’t know. I don’t see why not, one day.

And as for the Sudan teddy bear row, here’s another bunch of people, the Sudanese government, the Nationalist Islamic Front, who again were paraded as speaking on behalf of Muslims. The greatest thing that came out of that whole affair was the teacher herself, who didn’t say ‘those mad Muslims’, but who said ‘I love Sudan, the people were very warm and welcoming towards me, and I’d go back at the drop of a hat’. She drew the distinction between a people and their terrible government.

The Chair thanked Rageh for his lecture and his contributions to the Q&A session. Thanks were also extended to the RSA and Matthew Taylor for organizing and hosting the event. Michelynn Laflèche, Director of the Runnymede Trust, concluded the proceedings with a brief address (see opposite) on the subject of Runnymede’s work in its 40th anniversary year.
Runnymede’s 40th Anniversary Year

At the 2008 Jim Rose Lecture Michelynn Laflèche, Director of the Runnymede Trust, gave a vote of thanks to Rageh Omaar for his speech and addressed the audience on the subject of Runnymede’s work from 1968 to 2008.

Forty years ago, Runnymede was founded to bring an objective voice to public debates on immigration and race equality. That objective voice was needed then to counter propaganda and misinformation in the press and within government regarding the impact of Britain’s changing diversity and to push for legal remedies to combat racial discrimination.

Runnymede’s founding Director, Dipak Nandy, reminded me on my first meeting with him some years ago, that Runnymede was meant to be a short-term initiative – for 5 years at most – an immediate response to an immediate problem. But 40 years on, the work remains as necessary as ever.

It’s not as if nothing has changed. Campaigners have campaigned, researchers have researched, government has legislated, and people have responded.

There have been:

- almost 40 years of anti-discrimination legislation;
- three decades of policy intended to address educational disadvantage suffered by Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups;
- 20 years of theory and practice developed to promote equal opportunities and diversity in employment;
- 10 years of directly challenging institutional racism in the police force and other public services; and
- 5 years of focusing on the emergence and effects of Islamophobia.

But many are still dealing with:

- high levels of discrimination across all social policy areas, being experienced, perceived and reported by BME groups;
- within the education system, under-achievement by, and a disproportionately high level of exclusion for, certain BME groups;
- at work, a very clear and measurable lack of adequate representation of BME individuals at the top of the ladder in the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- continuing adverse application of various crime detection and prevention tools (for example stop & search) against Black and Asian groups; and
- continuous and deepening expressions of Islamophobia across all sectors of our society.

Recent events have shown that the future is set to continue to provide major challenges for Runnymede. The government continues to enact legislation and implement policies that impact profoundly on the lives of Britain’s minority ethnic communities – evidenced not least in the recent publication of the Path to Citizenship Green Paper (Home Office) and the related sweeping reforms to immigration legislation and policy. And with the incorporation in October 2007 of the Commission for Racial equality into a single equalities organization – the Equality and Human Rights Commission – the need for a strong and thoughtful voice on race issues persists.

Our role of ensuring that law and policies are informed by the best possible research and our commitment to promoting a just and fair society are as crucial today as they were when Runnymede was founded 40 years ago.

Michelynn Laflèche, Director of the Runnymede Trust, addresses the audience on the Trust’s work from 1968 to 2008.
2008 is Runnymede’s 40th Anniversary. To commemorate this landmark we have devised a range of special Anniversary projects and events. Some look to the past and reflect on the changes since our establishment in 1968. Others look to the future and mark out the territory that we need to focus on. Still others offer opportunities for new audiences – and in particular, young people – to engage with our work through new media. We plan to devise:

- A mapping of ethnic inequalities in England and Wales today
- Our England – Our Community: a video art project for young people
- An oral history project on race equality in Britain over the last 40 years
- An essay/radio/broadcast competition for young journalists
- A conference on the new politics of belonging
- An Anniversary Lecture

These Anniversary projects and events are in development now and will be delivered during 2008 alongside our regular work programme of thought-provoking publications, briefings, seminars, conferences, and action research projects. To achieve this programme, however, we need to raise additional funding. The Trustees and Staff at Runnymede very much hope that you will be able to help by making a donation to our 40th Anniversary Appeal.

Our aim is to raise £100,000 with the help of our Friends and Supporters. A donation of any size will help us towards achieving our target and we would be grateful for whatever support you can offer. For donations in excess of £35 we are offering a one-year subscription to the Runnymede Bulletin. This subscription includes free copies of our main print-published reports and briefing papers mailed to your door.

If you would like to subscribe to the Runnymede Bulletin for this ‘Special’ 40th anniversary year, follow this link to our website: http://www.runnymedetrust.org/bulletin/subscription.html

A subscription taken out at any time during the calendar year will provide you with a copy of the Bulletin itself and all related paper publications.

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‘Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side’: A framework for inter-faith dialogue and social action

The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued a consultation for its policy on ‘interfaith dialogue and social action’. The consultation is clearly indebted to the Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (reviewed in the Runnymede September 2007 Bulletin); indeed, the DCLG have also recently published their response to that Report. For Omar Khan, considering these publications together raises larger questions about the nature of communities and the motivations for civic engagement. It also provokes consideration of the role of religion in public institutions and debate.

Communities as the way of achieving integration

The idea that ‘communities’ are important for responding to race equality, good relations and indeed other goals was explicitly endorsed when the Department for Communities and Local Government was created in 2006 with responsibility for those policy areas. Prior to that, however, the term was already in currency, particularly in the Cantle Report. This report was a response to the ‘disturbances’ in former mill towns in the north of England, which found that communities were living ‘separate lives’ and that ‘community cohesion’ was a necessary and appropriate way to bring people together; a view that gained currency following the July 7 bombings in London.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, reviewed in the September 2007 Bulletin, took this analysis forward.

Current government reports and policies aim to ensure that various communities are thriving and show support for their members. There are, however, a variety of interpretations of the meaning of a ‘community’, including local communities of place, communities based on shared political interests, minority ethnic communities facing discrimination, or religious communities. With all these interpretations, two key questions emerge. First, how do different sorts of communities interact with each other; and, second, how do such communities interact with wider society.

Concern for others: from face-to-face to ethical obligations

This second question involves a number of different concerns. Because this article focuses on government publications, it concentrates on one particular aspect of wider society, namely the role and nature of civic or public commitment. According to government policy documents, showing special consideration for members in our community or our neighbourhood is a good proxy or building block for getting people to care about their fellow citizens more broadly. So the government focuses on ‘neighbourliness’ and strong local communities partly in order to enhance integration but also to increase civic participation.

However, it isn’t clear that concern for a family member or neighbour is motivated or justified by the same sets of considerations as fulfilling our obligations to our fellow citizens. When we care about family members or neighbours, it is often based on our personal relationships with them – what philosophers call partiality. Partiality is justified or legitimate when the relationship in question has objectively meaningful features, such as friendship and family. Illegitimate partiality is the unfortunately common human tendency to elevate morally irrelevant relationships to a principle of human interaction, perhaps best exemplified in the case of racism. The key point is that we need to be clear about the particular reasons and motivations for why people care about others, and to admit that these reasons and motivations are neither all the same nor that they are all motivated by ethical principles.

In contrast to the idea of partiality, citizenship involves a relationship in which we don’t know most of our co-members, and in which we instead (ought to) express impartial ties to every other citizen. For example, while it is obviously acceptable to spend time reading bedtime stories to our own children and not to others, we shouldn’t be less concerned about a rights violation simply because we don’t identify with the person whose rights have been violated.

While it is therefore clear that the justifications for caring about other people vary, so too do our motivations. Caring about family members and friends is motivated by strong ties and emotions that are arguably lacking in the case of citizenship. This doesn’t mean, however, that citizenship ties are poorly motivated; on the contrary, they are motivated by the ethical ideal of impartially treating every human being as an equal. Citizenship is a particular status in which everyone’s rights should be protected, and we are motivated to defend those rights not in virtue of a personal connection, but on grounds of justice.

Consider a real world example. Are those who are most likely to visit their neighbour for a cup of tea more likely to engage in civic behaviour, show respect for their fellow citizens, or agree to redistributing resources fairly among others? Such behaviour is of course commendable, but we need to be clearer about why people invite neighbours into their homes. While some may do so based on a wider sentiment of fellow-feeling for all citizens, it is more likely that we invite close friends based on personal relationships. Again, there is nothing at all wrong with these sorts of neighbourly sentiments, but they aren’t based on the same motivations that cause us to care about

all of our fellow citizens. After all, we can’t invite everyone over for a cup of tea, but we still ought to care about the well-being of all citizens. In the government’s view, neighbourliness is a good proxy for community cohesion and civic engagement, but this doesn’t seem right. The reasons that we care about other people vary, and civic responsibilities are not really analogous to our partial—but important—ties to friends, families and neighbours.

Inter-community relations: religious groups

Among inter-community relations, the question of different religious (or ‘faith’) groups is perhaps the most difficult. In fact, the role of religion in British life has in the past few years become a much more prominent question. While issues related to British Muslims—from Shariah law to cartoon controversies to perceptions of terrorism—are perhaps the most controversial, the issue extends to other religious groups, including Christians. In particular, there is a growing divide between people who think that religious concerns are sweeping into areas where they ought to be excluded, and those who think that secular intolerance is marginalizing religious believers. Both groups are prone to cast themselves in the position of a victim, excluded by religious (or ‘faith’) groups is perhaps the most difficult. In particular, there is a growing divide between people who think that religious concerns are sweeping into areas where they ought to be excluded, and those who think that secular intolerance is marginalizing religious believers. Both groups are prone to cast themselves in the position of a victim, excluded by the cartoons was refused to print others in society to see that as a reason for them to agree.9

Religion and the public: understanding the background

The role of religion in Britain somewhat curiously begins with the establishment of the Anglican Church. This is ‘curious’ because few Britons reflect deeply on this status, and in reality British public life and debate is considerably more secularized than that of states with no established religion, from the United States to India.10 Part of this may be explained by the ecumenical liberalism of Anglicanism, but part of it is also down to the liberal strain in the development of British democracy.

Liberalism endorses the capacity of individuals to decide for themselves what matters in their life, including whatever religious or non-religious principles they choose to guide them. Such a stance, however, necessarily implies that a liberal society will have multiple and diverse— and sometimes competing—sets of beliefs. In fact, the institutionalization of secularism and its defence by liberal philosophers gained steam in the context of just such diversity and antagonism in 17th-century Europe. The damages wrought by the principle that rulers and people must share one universal church led philosophers such as Locke11 to endorse a secular public space so that religious claims wouldn’t lead to state-sponsored or widespread violence.

Religion and the public today

Today, however, few would argue that we are in danger of witnessing religious groups violently take up arms against each other across Britain. Nevertheless, an increasing number of religious and non-religious people have become interested in the role of religion in public life. Whether we are inspired by Christopher Hitchens6 and Richard Dawkins,7 or agree with The Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster’s endorsement of allowing more scope for faith in public life,8 more of us are now engaged in this seemingly academic dispute.

To understand this debate, we need to clarify a seemingly obvious but poorly understood point—why should (or do) we have a secular public space? The answer derives from the status of religious belief, namely its claim to have identified the best way for all individuals everywhere to live their lives. Now everyone—religious and non-religious—believes that there are better and worse ways of living one’s life, but according to secular liberals, we should bracket those concerns and try to engage with others in public life without reference to those views. This is because such views are not only diverse, but also potentially in conflict. Furthermore, whatever beliefs a person holds, they ought to be respected by democratic government, and such protection is based on public commitments that are universal.

On the other hand, in a democracy we also expect people to engage on the basis of ethical commitments. To exclude religious beliefs then seems to block important considerations from being heard in public debate. The liberal response is that while religious believers can of course advance their principles in public, they can’t expect others—either the non-religious or believers in other religions—to understand why those religious beliefs should induce them to agree with a religiously-justified position. For example, if an evangelical Christian tells me that we should prohibit homosexuality because his interpretation of the Bible requires him to do so, he can’t expect me to accept that as a reason to support him (unless I too am an evangelical). Or, alternatively, if some Muslims argue for banning the Satanic Verses or particular cartoons because the Quran prohibits insulting or portraying Muhammad, they shouldn’t expect others in society to see that as a reason for them to agree.9

These are fairly extreme examples. But the general point is that political debate is usually about convincing others, and to do so we need to advance reasons that they can understand and support. In fact, many religious beliefs can be easily translated into non-religious language, and justified to others on those grounds. Liberal philosophers such as Rawls argue that flourishing democracies require a particular sort of public sphere in which citizens try to defend their view based on reasons that we can all accept.12 More ideally, it requires citizens to be motivated by public concerns.

Differentiating group-based ties: the case of religious groups

The recent government consultation on interfaith dialogue and social action fudges this distinction. According to the DCLG consultation, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, and the government’s response to that Commission’s report, religious communities have a central role to play not only in ensuring community cohesion, but in furthering participation in public life. The consultation adopts Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’s concept of ‘side-by-side’ interaction to explain this participation as ‘collaborative social action (including participation in local democracy) involving different faith communities and wider civil society, which brings about positive and concrete change within local communities.’ (p. 8)
This turn of phrase is slightly ambiguous on an important question: is ‘collaborative social action’ geared towards interacting in public institutions, or is it limited to cooperation in civil society? On the one hand, the above citation affirms that collaboration is to take place in ‘wider civil society’ and so seems to suggest that it doesn’t involve public institutions. However, the parenthetical reference to ‘participation in local democracy’ suggests that religious groups can and should engage in changing public institutions.

The question then arises: is the rationale for why religious institutions provide public services or indeed increase participation based on public or civic reasons? Even if it is true that religious (and other) organizations are filling a vacuum left by inadequate state provision, does the religious believer’s concern for other individuals spring from a impartialist commitment to defend the rights of all citizens, or from a narrower consideration to benefit co-members?

These are not only difficult, but also extremely controversial questions. We’re not saying that religious organizations can never be motivated by public considerations, nor are we suggesting that they are the only bodies that may fall foul of such a standard. For example, many independent schools resist the requirement to show that they provide some public benefit, a benefit which explains their tax rebate. The deeper point is that we need to distinguish more clearly both the justifications for and the motivations behind different sorts of group-based ties. If we don’t, we have no way of differentiating valid interpersonal connections (such as citizenship) from invalid ones (such as racism), nor can we understand that some ties of partiality can come into conflict with our universal obligations to all.

Religious groups are not unaware of this difficulty. As mentioned above, religious affiliations are not merely questions of blood ties, but based on a definite and clear commitment to a particular ethical tradition. Especially in their internal organization, but also in terms of the relationship to outsiders, religious groups have reasons to exclude those who mock or contravene principles they find important. But to the extent that religious organizations deliver public services, or are funded through public taxation, those religious precepts do not really apply. This explains why some religious organizations have been wary of further provision of public goods and services. To the extent that religious groups need to maintain their own distinctive practices, and elaborate their own aims and standards, public scrutiny may not be in their best interests. Again, this is not to say that religions can never pass that standard, nor that other groups don’t fall foul of this principle as well, but given the prominence of truth and moral claims at the heart of all religions, they may find it more challenging to base their activities on public standards that may not match their own beliefs.

**Interfaith dialogue**

Before concluding, we need to address the important and difficult question of how different communities – especially those with competing aims and motivations – can cohabit civilly and effectively. The DCLG’s concern here is admirable. Interfaith work is now well developed in Britain, and we commend those organizations that have worked hard to make sure that genuine differences don’t lead to misunderstandings and conflict. We’re sure that they will respond positively and meaningfully to that aspect of the consultation.

Interestingly, the government recognizes that they have a limited capacity to further interfaith dialogue. In their consultation, the DCLG admits that it can’t force different religious groups to interact, and that much interfaith work must take place in civil society. While it is of course important that people get along at a fundamental level, and community organizations are fostered, public institutions – and indeed organizations that are publicly funded – have to meet a different standard.

**Conclusion**

The reasons why people care about the well-being of others vary. Some ties are based on our legitimate sense that some people matter more to us than others. A parent or friend who failed to recognize the objective reasons that we should care more deeply about their own child or friend would be considered a bad parent or a bad friend. But citizenship obligations aren’t of that sort. Civic engagement and participation is (or should be) motivated by a particular kind of consideration for others that isn’t based on our personal or face-to-face ties. A good example is the right to a fair trial. We should be upset when any citizen has this right abridged, whether or not they are our neighbour, a fellow believer or indeed a member of our ethnic group.

At the same time, however, religious groups in particular seem to be criticized more than others for failing to recognize the obligations they owe to all citizens. While this may be understandable where faith schools function as de facto public institutions, this isolation of religious groups is unfair on two grounds. First, not all faith activities receive public funding. Where faith groups don’t receive such funding, they have very wide leeway to organize their internal institutions and deploy their resources in whatever way they see fit (as long, of course, as they don’t violate principles of human rights).

Second, religious groups are not the only or even the most prominent source for obscuring the reasons why civic participation matters. Rather, the government have done so in two ways. First, they have adopted an underspecified notion of ‘community’ and failed to differentiate the motivations and justifications for why people care about others. Second, they have introduced private sector involvement in the delivery of goods and services without requiring those companies to meet adequate standards of public justification.11 In so doing, the government has emphasized the importance of choice and efficiency, but perhaps not adequately defended the principle that all citizens should be treated as equals in the provision of goods and services. If we are experiencing a democratic deficit, we would do better to buttress public institutions and measures rather than hope that voluntary and community organizations – institutions that must meet no public benefit test – will fill that gap.

Omar Khan is a Research Analyst at the Runnymede Trust.
Identities, Achievements and Complementary Schooling of British-Chinese Pupils

British-Chinese pupils have earned a reputation as high achievers in British schools. In this article, Becky Francis, Louise Archer and Ada Mau explain how their latest research has delved into an exploration of the social and learner identities of pupils in Cantonese-Chinese complementary schools.

Our previous research looking at the high achievement of British-Chinese pupils in British schools (Archer and Francis, 2007) established the very high value placed on complementary education among some British-Chinese pupils and (particularly) parents. Complementary Chinese schools were seen by these respondents as providing a pivotal role in the transmission of Chinese language and culture, and in their provision of an additional source of learning. In this sense, these parents and pupils portrayed complementary schools as contributing to the educational achievement of British-Chinese pupils, and enhancing their sense of ethnic identity. We therefore followed up this study with one that aimed to document the practices of Cantonese-Chinese complementary schools and to explore the social and learner identities of their pupils.

‘Complementary’ schools

‘Complementary’ schools have a wide range of purposes, from educating pupils about their cultural origins, history, language, and so on, to supplementing mainstream education (Rutter, 2003). They have a long history in Britain, and The Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-Tongue Schools lists over 2000 of these schools across the UK (RUSMTS, 2005). The existing literature has indicated the diverse benefits of complementary schooling for minority ethnic children. Such apparent benefits include: provision of social networks; space to negotiate identities; transmission and celebration of aspects of culture; ‘space’ from racism; and additional education (in community language and/or other subjects and skills). Yet this body of work has, as yet, paid little attention to perceptions of the purposes and benefits of these complementary schools among the user populations – with the pupils’ views often being the least consulted. Our research sought to make a distinctive contribution by addressing these gaps, and relating our findings to mainstream schooling.

Chinese complementary schooling is particularly long-established in the UK. As the majority of Chinese migrants to Britain arrived from Hong Kong and the New Territories in the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of Chinese complementary schools focus principally on teaching in Cantonese rather than Putonghua. It might be assumed that as these schools are ‘Mother-tongue’ institutions their sole purpose is to perpetuate the Chinese spoken and written language in younger generations. However, a diverse international literature asserts a range of other purposes and benefits. These include for example the replication of ‘culture’; the provision of educational capital in relation to mainstream schooling; and a shared community space to facilitate intra-ethnic interaction.

The project sought to provide an understanding of the populations and practices of Chinese complementary schools; to investigate user and practitioner perspectives on the purposes of the schools; and to explore pupils’ experiences and their impact on pupils’ social and learner identities. Our findings draw on analyses of data from ethnographic observation at six Chinese complementary schools in England, and interviews with 60 pupils, 21 teachers and 24 parents.

Key contributions

Children’s experiences of complementary schooling can still be pinpointed as an under-researched area, and identity issues within this sector especially so. Our findings make a significant contribution to documenting the practices of Cantonese-Chinese complementary schools and, in particular, the social identities of their pupils. Our analysis draws out the many benefits of these schools. But, in addition, our post-structural approach has elucidated the complex and often stereotypical discourses around ‘nation’, ‘race’ and ethnic identity that circulate in Chinese schools. Reflection on these complexities has allowed us to interrogate concepts employed in post-colonial studies, and to extend a discourse-analytic approach to the production of social and learner identities within Chinese complementary schools.

Main findings

1. Population and practices

   • All schools were under-funded and under-resourced. Staff and pupils complained of the impact this made on the quality of service provided. Facilities were often limited, and this persisted as an issue even where Chinese schools are located on mainstream school premises. Policies encouraging partnership between mainstream schools and community services appear to have had little impact to date in the case of complementary schools: ‘partnership’ remains unequal and one-sided.
   • The population of Cantonese-Chinese schools overwhelmingly comprises second-generation pupils. Third-generation and dual-heritage pupils appear to
be almost entirely absent from the schools, as they were from our sample. It may be
that expectations of certain levels of Cantonese proficiency at some schools, and/or
different views of ‘Chineseness’ or of the relevance of Chinese schooling, is deterring members of the
next generation.
• The key practice of Chinese schools remains the teaching of Chinese language and
literacy, with additional classes being offered in traditional activities related to Chinese
eritage. There is little evidence of Chinese schools offering academic support with regard to
mainstream education (as in the case of Chinese schools in the US: see Zhou and Li, 2003).

2. Purposes and benefits
• There is a contrast between pupils’ and adults’ constructions of the purposes and benefits of
complementary schools: pupils overwhelmingly articulate the key purpose as to be taught or
to learn the Chinese language, whereas adults – particularly teachers – are equally
concerned with the replication of ‘Chinese culture’. Pupils’ constructions of the purposes of
Chinese school did not appear dependent on social class or gender; although there was
some evidence that boys were less likely to attend Chinese school, or to attend of their
own volition.
• Pupils saw a range of secondary purposes and benefits of Chinese schooling in addition to
learning the Chinese language. These could be categorized as: (a) language as contributing to
various forms of social capital; and (b) language as supporting (and often as constitutive
of) identity. Pupils tended to produce language and the ability to speak Chinese as integrally
bound up with ‘authentic’ ethnic identity.
• Adults, particularly teachers, tended to convey a somewhat essentialized view of Chinese
culture as inevitably beneficial and replicable.

3. Pupils’ experiences in relation to social and learner identities
• Pupils tended to say that they learnt better in mainstream schools than in Chinese
schools. However, this was predominantly explained as due to the shorter duration
of complementary schooling. Pupils also identified a range of beneficial aspects of the
teaching and organization in Chinese schools: in particular, they appreciated the ‘holistic’
pedagogic approach adopted by many teachers.
• The construction of Chinese schooling as ‘additional’ by some pupils appeared to
facilitate adoption of more ‘playful’ learner identities in Chinese school, in relation to
their reported (more diligent) attitudes to mainstream schooling.
• Concerning social identity, pupils were divided as to whether attendance made them feel
more ‘Chinese’. Those who felt that the schools did bolster a sense of ‘Chineseness’ cited the
key reasons for this as being linguistic competence and the provision of a ‘critical mass’ of
British-Chinese young people. The latter is especially significant given that the British-Chinese
often constitute a ‘minority of minorities’ within mainstream schooling.
• Young people constructed a range of ethnic identities that evoked more complex notions
of identity and ‘Chineseness’ than those of their elders. The young people’s constructions of
ethnic identity were far more likely to draw on contemporary, diasporic, youth-cultural
formations than the more ‘traditional’ perceptions of adult respondents.

4. Connecting with broader issues
• Pupils identified a range of practices within Chinese schools that they felt supported
their learning and fitted with their learner identities. These included: the ‘holistic’
approach to language learning; the competition and reward culture; closer relationships
between teachers and pupils; small-size teaching groups; and a
notion of the school as a ‘pure’
learning space in which pupils
can indulge an intrinsic love
of learning. These perceptions
were not dependent on social
class or gender.
• Half of all pupils felt that
Chinese school made no
impact on, nor established
any connection whatsoever
with their achievements in,
mainstream schooling. The
current level of separation
between mainstream and
the emphasis on revision and memorization in Chinese schools and the way these helped build confidence and motivation to learn.

References


complementary schooling means that the effects of complementary schooling are systematically marginalized. However, some pupils argued that their complementary schooling did help their wider learning and achievement. The most popular explanation was that learning Chinese helped them learn other languages at school. Other benefits included

**New Developments for the Real Histories Directory**

Following the success of the ‘Topic of the Month’ feature introduced in 2007, Real Histories Directory has seen more developments and initiatives this year. Naoíse Mac Sweeney, a recent Runnymede intern, introduces the ‘Website of the Month’.

The ‘Website of the Month’ page is designed to help teachers, parents and students navigate the Directory, which is being expanded and updated continually.

The ‘Website of the Month’ page works by featuring a different online resource each month; outlining the scope and content of the resource, and suggesting practical ways it could be used in the classroom. The page also explores the history of each resource it features, including interviews with website founders and managers about each website’s philosophy and aims. Finally, the page also links the featured resource with others contained in the Directory, and with forthcoming events that are listed in the Directory’s ‘Events’ pages.

Our first featured website was DimSum, a site serving the East Asian community in Britain. We highlighted the potential for using DimSum’s many articles, discussion forums and opinion pieces in a variety of educational contexts; from Citizenship and Geography classes to Art and Drama courses. DimSum was chosen as the website for February to coincide with Chinese New Year celebrations, and many seasonal features on the website were relevant to events taking place across the country at the time.

The featured website for March is Football Unites, Racism Divides (see below). Racism in sport and the global nature of football are two issues that have recently received a great deal of media attention, and that offer educational opportunities besides. We focus on how Football Unites, Racism Divides can be used as a resource for Citizenship and History, as well as Physical Education, and indicate more generally how sport can be used to encourage young people to engage with pressing social and political questions.

We believe this feature adds an exciting new dimension to the Real Histories Directory, helping visitors access the resources in a more directed way. Continually changing, the new ‘Website of the Month’ page aims to present an easy-to-use and topical entry point for Directory users, and to reflect the constantly evolving nature of the Real Histories Directory itself.

Naoíse Mac Sweeney will shortly be taking up a Fellowship at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.
A Fair and Equal Inclusion

Activists for anti-racism and anti-discrimination at the workplace have long been working to get equality issues taken seriously as integral parts of an organization’s routine activities. John Wrench, from the perspective of his recently published book, discusses diversity management in the light of how business self-interest is bringing equality policies into the mainstream of business practice.

With the spread of diversity management, major business corporations, instead of needing to be persuaded to do so for moral reasons or for fear of anti-discrimination law, are voluntarily mainstreaming policies for a fair and equal inclusion of black, immigrant and ethnic minority workers on the grounds of business self-interest.

In my recently published *Diversity Management and Discrimination* I cast a critical look at the development of diversity management in a European context, and in doing so raise a number of questions about diversity management ideology and practice for those who are concerned with issues of employment equality and racial discrimination.

In the US and Canada diversity management has been embraced enthusiastically for many years as a strategy to get members of excluded groups better represented in employment. Most commonly, policies define diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation and disability. Diversity management emphasizes the necessity of recognizing cultural and other differences between groups of employees, and making practical allowances for such differences in organizational policies. The idea is that encouraging an environment of cultural diversity where people’s differences are valued enables people to work to their full potential in a richer, more creative and more productive work environment. Its many stated advantages range from reducing costly labour turnover to accessing new markets.

Two questions dominate my book:

1. Is diversity management to be seen as a valuable new way of mainstreaming anti-discrimination measures, or, alternatively, should it be regarded with scepticism as being a ‘soft option’, intrinsically weak on combating racism and discrimination in employment?

2. Will the development of diversity management in Europe follow a relatively uniform trajectory because of commonly experienced demographic, economic and market pressures, or will the historical, cultural, political and institutional differences which exist amongst EU countries (and between the EU and North America) have a determining impact on the adoption and character of this particular management practice in Europe?

Diversity management as a business practice was first seriously discussed in European companies at the beginning of the 1990s. Although, compared to North America, it is still a relatively uncommon practice in Europe, interest in recent years has been expanding noticeably, and examples are now being found in a steadily increasing number of EU countries each year. Diversity management consultants predict that Europe will follow the US and Canadian trend. Common external forces – globalization, continuing post-industrial migration, demographic shifts, the decline of manufacturing and the growth of the service sector – mean that European firms too will increasingly need to turn to diversity management techniques in order to survive.

The missionaries of diversity management draw on various positive metaphors to explain its advantages. The old organizational analogy of the ‘melting pot’, with its overtones of assimilation and ‘sameness’, is firmly rejected and replaced by metaphors such as the ‘mosaic’, the ‘salad bowl’, the ‘orchestra’ or the ‘patchwork quilt’, all part of what one American writer calls the celebratory and harmonious imagery which aims to convey how the whole is enriched by the differences of its component parts. However, the enthusiasm with which
such images are embraced often masks a conceptual slackness around the use of the concept of diversity management. There is some genuine confusion about what the term covers, particularly in the European context, where the term ‘diversity policy’ is in some cases simply adopted to refer to any policy at all which relates to the employment of immigrants and minorities.

The potential misuse of the diversity management label is one of the themes of the book. One chapter presents an overview of the various critiques of diversity management that have been advanced by both academics and equality activists. A common criticism concerns the fear that diversity management will be used to prioritize ‘soft’ rather than ‘hard’ equal opportunities practices. There is a continuum of equal opportunities measures in organizations, with at the ‘soft’ end measures such as the recognition of cultural differences at work, and at the ‘harder’ end the setting of targets, and the use of positive action. There is already evidence that anti-discrimination components can be forgotten in the drive for diversity management, particularly so in countries which until recently have had little or no experience of anti-discrimination law and practice.

Another criticism concerns the replacement of political and moral arguments for equal opportunity activities by business ones. Anti-discrimination legislation and the legal endorsement of positive/affirmative action were introduced as means of social engineering by governments, in order to produce a more equitable society. In contrast, diversity management is an organizational policy with business motives. Its primary rationale is one of improving organizational competitiveness and efficiency, driven by business purpose and market advantage. If it is adopted widely it may indirectly produce a more equitable society as a side consequence of the actions of individual companies, but there is no guarantee of this.

Furthermore, the book shows that many of the alleged intrinsic benefits of demographic diversity have been overstated, and also that in some sectors of work a diversity management approach is completely irrelevant. Thus it is clear that you cannot always rely on the ‘benefits’ of diversity management policies alone to deliver fairness and inclusion at work. Whilst some people welcome diversity management as an acceptable substitute for more ‘political’ interventions such as affirmative action, others see this as a more worrying development which reflects a broader trend at a societal level, namely, the intrusion of the market into areas where previously there was action by democratically elected governments.

The book also scrutinizes the assumption by diversity management advocates that the new ideology and practice can be transferred painlessly across the Atlantic into the various EU countries, and suggests variables of national difference which may have implications for the form, content and dissemination of diversity management practice in Europe. There are ideological, cultural and institutional features of many EU countries which are not characteristic of the US and Canada, the home of diversity management. Key elements of diversity management practices which are relatively unquestioned in North America, such as counting ethnic origin to measure the impact of policies, or making allowance for cultural and religious differences in clothing, canteen menus and holidays, are still highly controversial and strongly resisted in some EU countries. Also, countries historically built on migration, like the US and Canada, have traditionally seen immigrant workers as taking their first steps on the road to full equality as citizens. In contrast, many EU countries are more inclined to keep immigrant workers constrained in a legally inferior status, and some are making citizenship even harder to achieve. This does not form a particularly sympathetic context for the ideologies of a diversity management approach. On top of this, the xenophobic, anti-immigrant and ‘anti-cultural diversity’ discourse of populist politicians in some European countries actually makes it harder for business people to promote diversity management in their own arenas.

It may be that, in the long run, diversity management will become normal in business and public sector organizations in EU countries, perhaps expressed through characteristically European variations, and it is also possible that properly constituted diversity management policies will produce identifiable benefits for members of previously excluded and under-represented minority groups. However, there is already some evidence that early European examples of ‘diversity management’ in reality constitute little more than initiatives to recruit ethnic minorities and immigrants using feel-good multicultural slogans, and contain very little in the way of concrete elements for combating racist attitudes or discriminatory practices within organizations.

I conclude my book with the observation that new diversity management policies should not be allowed to become vehicles for undermining the gains already made in anti-discrimination measures, and those still necessary for the future. Equality measures and anti-discrimination strategies must be made the central components of diversity management in Europe, and not be replaced by it.
‘Youth’: Making space with the social other

Malcolm James critically reviews how New Labour policy depicts young lives. The article challenges the racist stereotyping and gender typecasting in New Labour policies by engaging with structural inequalities and the everyday, hybrid and diverse ways in which young people make their lives.

‘Degeneration’, ‘violence’, ‘gangs’, ‘the inevitable downward spiral’, ‘the street’. These are all terms we popularly associate with descriptions of ‘youth’.

BBC London recently reported on the death of Bob Litambola. Bob ‘was a role-model for other young youngsters in Newham . . . proof that it was possible not to succumb to the downward spiral of a life of crime’ (BBC London, 2007). The reporting of his death became all the more resonant for confirming that for young Black men there is no escape.

‘Problem youth’ is intimately wound up with notions of gender and ‘race’. Young men are deviant whereas young women are at risk. Rates of teenage pregnancy occupy a different slot within the nation’s moral compass from that which noting young men inhabit. The ‘street’ and the ‘gang’ are largely discussed as a male domain, with female participants valued in relation to their male counterparts rather than on their own terms.

The category ‘youth’ is also inseparable from ‘race’. Young working-class white men may have been the object of moral panics in post-war Britain, but today it’s young Black and Asian men who preoccupy the nation’s consciousness.

This all reflects on the way we perceive young people as ‘other’ – other, that is, from an adult, middle-class, white, law-abiding, probably heterosexual and mainly married norm (Griffin, 2004: 14).

To deal with this ‘other’, and respond to the attendant media obsession with sensationalist reporting of young people’s behaviour, New Labour has come up with a number of policy initiatives. Here I’d like to comment on two of these – Respect and Community Cohesion – by discussing how these policies distort the concept of youth and how they use race and gender stereotypes to convey their messages. Then I look at more humane interpretations of youth, those which correspond to a sense of how young lives are really made.

**New labour and youth**

The construction of youth as a problem is a common feature of New Labour rhetoric. The conflation of youth, problem, race and male is probably best captured in the post-2001 New Labour policies on community cohesion and respect.

**The Respect agenda**

Launched in January 2006, the Respect agenda is a strategy ‘to tackle bad behaviour and nurture good – and so help create the modern culture of respect’ (Respect, 2008). This vague statement is shored up only by indications of where this bad behaviour might exist. It cites the family, home and school as locations of intervention, and it calls on us (adults) to monitor young people for signs of ‘problems’ (Respect, 2008).

The Respect website is a one-stop shop for identification of and action against the ‘youth problem’. You can see what it looks like and read what it feels like. If the archetypal gang image presented on the website (young men huddled in hoodies) corresponds to your particular gripe, then you can take a stand; find out how you too can apply for an ASBO.4

Such initiatives turn young people, the rowdy degenerates as opposed to the flute-playing angels, into criminals long before they get saddled with that first ASBO. The Respect agenda encourages and justifies the labelling and criminalization of young people.5

The agenda emphasizes the role of the individual, the community, the family and the school in creating a culture of respect. Reminiscent of wartime propaganda, the website reminds us that ‘the only person who can start the cycle of respect is you’ ( Respect, 2008).

By concentrating on the failure of individuals to create a culture of respect the government draws attention away from its own responsibility to address structural factors such as poverty, deprivation and racism. To the young people who protest ‘ey you, there’s like nothing to do around here innit’ (cited in James, 2007: 31) it would seem that an ASBO is more likely to be forthcoming than extra facilities.

Lucky for some then that such moral judgement doesn’t fall evenly. Remember that disrespectful

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1 This article is based on a presentation given at Cumberland Lodge on 27 January 2008.
2 For example, 1969 Children’s and Young People’s Act (OPSI, 2008) gave powers to magistrates and social workers to respond if girls were seen to be in moral danger. Moral danger was often interpreted as inappropriate sexual behaviour (France, 2007: 22).
3 Class is also a central feature in the construction of youth identities. This will be explored in forthcoming work.
4 See Isal (2006) for more detail on anti-social behaviour legislation.
5 For a more detailed review of the Respect agenda see Khan (2007).
long-haired kid making the ‘wanker’ sign? I’d encourage you to look up the URL because he turned out to be Prime Minister.\(^6\)

**Community cohesion**

Although it had existed prior to 2001, community cohesion policy was largely developed in response to the northern disturbances in the summer of 2001 and the attack on New York’s World Trade Center.

In the reporting of the disturbances, Asian gangs were depicted as the epitome of ‘wanton violence and destruction’ and ‘sheer, mindless violence’ to use the then Home Secretary David Blunkett’s own words (cited in Alexander, 2005: 201). Images from the disturbances (BBC, 2001; BBC Online, 2002) provided the UK public with the visual representation of the ‘Asian’, gender (male) and surrounding scenery (the night, the flames, the streets, the violence) that we are meant to associate with the youth problem.

These powerful images of parallel lives, based on skin colour, language, religion and a propensity for wanton acts, were subsequently patched onto representations of the archetypal Muslim terrorist that became the principal target of community cohesion policies.\(^7\)


Community cohesion policy-making has reacted to this notion of the problematical cultural ‘other’ by calling for it to return to an imagined and pure British ‘us’ (Lewis and Neal, 2005; Schuster and Solomos, 2004). Like the Respect agenda, community cohesion discourse emphasizes dysfunctional individuals and communities for whom either punishment or soul searching is proffered as the solution to their dysfunctional behaviour. Once again this is detached from a history of structural inequalities, racial discrimination and repressive policing (Alexander, 2005: 201; France, 2007: 20).

As Gilroy argues, what surfaced in the aftermath of the northern disturbances was a clear message: young Asian men were seen as alien because they rioted and rioted because they were alien (Gilroy, 2004: 134).

**Challenging the misrepresentation of ‘youth’**

For the last 20 years the misrepresentation of young lives and the power relations which ascribe meaning to the categories of youth, gender and race have been challenged.

Amartya Sen has already raised the question: are we actually watching young deviants or something that looks like young deviants to the determined seekers of deviance (Sen, 2006: 43–4)? But are we not looking at something far more ordinary and mundane too?

When we freeze-frame race, masculinity and youth in the context of government policy or media imagery, we can see young people being denied both their place in history and their right to real-life, subtle and fluid forms of identity. We can also see that what is being created is an entity we can feel comfortable about criminalizing. Just recently, I moved from a building where tenant hysteria had resulted in the placing of skull-and-crossbones warnings inside the hallways to alert ‘insiders’ to the youth hydra they might encounter outside. At this address, as at many others, young people were being seen as criminals long before the police might be called.

Evaluating young people in this way condemns swathes of the population regardless of specific local and historical contexts. The task then, for all of us, is to confront this oppression and restore humanity to young lives.

**Making space for young lives**

To make space for young lives we need to understand the reality of these young lives in the UK today. We need to understand how young people make their social spaces.

It is not possible to do this in an isolationist or nationalistic way. Britain as a national space is formed by, and made up of, global connections and interactions both within and outside its borders. By appreciating the vastness of these connections we can fundamentally challenge youth stereotyping that revolves around notions of normal and other, us and them (Brah, 1996, 2007).

Through understanding how young people make their social spaces we can appreciate how they participate in the very real and very diverse, local and global politics of identity formation. We can think about how the everyday linguistic and cultural practices of the inner city come into being. We can understand the Desi scene, British hip-hop and dub step. Harris (2006), in his account of language use in London, has skilfully explored how young people make hybrid social spaces through the use of London, Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi, Jamaican and global African-American and Australian vernaculars.

Recognizing how young people make their own spaces does not mean placing them in some kind of Marxist struggle against a dominant society or seeing them as spectacular urban objects or expendable freak-shows. Making space is an everyday activity. It challenges attempts to consign young lives wholesale to the realm of the ridiculous, the deviant, the culturally dependent or the gender determined.

Making space is a profoundly political process. It asserts reality and breaks away from the inhumane categories established for it. In her seminal study of the Asian ‘gang’, Alexander (2000) shows how the
relationships of a group of young people, popularly believed to be racially bounded, were actually made around everyday loyalties and friendships; relationships we can all relate to.

However, in recognizing these everyday processes we must not lose sight of the fact that youth space is not only made by the young people themselves, but also by racism, poverty, deprivation and discrimination. From the friendships or exclusions of a youth club (Back, 1996) to the homeliness of an ‘austere’ landing in a shared building (Back, 2005: 35) structural forces shape how youth lives are made.

Conclusion
Youth policy cannot be made on the basis of narrow, distorted and inhumane perceptions of youth. Pandering to racist stereotyping and gender typecasting not only unfairly limits young lives but also limits our own humanity. We need to affirm the hybrid and diverse reality of young lives; we also limits our own humanity. We need to affirm the hybrid and diverse reality of young lives; we need to recognize the impacts of structural inequality; and, we need to engage with the specific contexts in which these occur.

Finally, if we really want to understand young lives we need to be open to them. Young people will tell us what is real, but not if we have already decided on what is ‘true’.

References

A Runnymede Perspectives report, entitled Re(thinking) ‘Gangs’, will be published in May 2008. In the wake of apparently spiralling youth gun and knife crime, and the recent spate of teenage murders, the past 2 years have seen fears of ‘gangs’ on the streets of Britain’s cities being voiced by the public, media and politicians alike. In this Perspectives report Claire Alexander, who has researched and written on black and Asian youth identities and ‘Asian gangs’ in Britain for the past 18 years, takes a step back from the current furor to reflect on what ‘the gang’ is, and what are the consequences of ‘thinking gangs’ in this current climate.
Race and Its Effects on Voting Behaviour

The topic of race and elections is one on which Runnymede has been reporting regularly over the years. With media attention focused on the struggle for the US Democratic nomination, yet another chapter is being written on how race affects elections and voting behaviour. A Runnymede research project, led by Rob Berkeley and Omar Khan, with assistance from Matthew Ross, will shortly begin work towards producing Runnymede’s next ‘State of the Nation’ report, this time on ‘Race and Elections’. Omar Khan briefly introduces the project.

The debate in the US regarding Barack Obama’s candidacy, the ongoing under-representation of Black and minority ethnic (BME) candidates in UK elections, proposals for all-BME shortlists, and the commitment of all the major parties to become more representative of the ethnic diversity of UK society, mean that the way in which race impacts on elections and voting behaviour remains a crucial issue in delivering democratic participation for all. Our latest ‘State of the Nation’ report aims to encourage further debate in all the major political parties about how to match reality to their aspirations.

Background
The place of ‘race’ in British elections has changed in the 21 years since the first post-war black and minority ethnic MPs were returned in the 1987 election. First, the composition of Britain’s minority ethnic groups has altered considerably. Not only is the population much more diverse, but it is also much younger, meaning that the full impact of BME voters may yet be one or two elections away. And even within the more ‘established’ BME communities, there is an increasingly diverse set of experiences and indeed political values to be encountered. Now is therefore a good time to investigate the relationship between race and elections.

Second, all political parties are now fielding more BME candidates in local and general elections and indeed have had some success in getting these candidates elected. Furthermore, political parties and indeed the general population expect better representation of black and minority ethnic Britons in our political life. This success is obviously to be welcomed and we congratulate all of the parties on their clear commitment to deepening democratic participation for all.

However, BME representation remains relatively low compared to population levels. We have therefore been investigating the role that race does and does not play in elections.

Our research focus
As part of our research on this question, we will be interviewing prominent public figures, national and regional officials, and activists from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. In preparing our final report, we will also draw on electoral statistics and Runnymede’s research archive on elections and race over the past 40 years.

Politics varies significantly at a local level and we look forward to hearing how people currently think race does (or doesn’t) influence candidate selection and voting behaviour during elections. This is a timely and important issue that doesn’t have to be addressed in a party political way. Furthermore, the situation in Britain today is very different from what it was as recently as 25 years ago, and now is a good opportunity to work together to ensure improved representation for all and so to strengthen our democratic institutions.

Five research questions
While we expect to take our cue from the contributors to our research, there are five particular questions we intend to address.

Our first question is:
How have political parties responded to significant BME populations in certain constituencies? The patterns of settlement of BME communities in Britain are not uniform, and there are particular areas of ethnic clustering. These patterns of settlement coincide with our constituency-based, first-past-the-post political system such that BME voters can make a significant impact in some constituencies. Certain groups also have different needs and interests, or at least different political opinions on a variety of policy areas. Voters don’t simply vote for people who look like them, but for candidates who genuinely understand their legitimate
needs and interests. If we can appreciate this for rural constituencies, we can do so for areas with large or indeed small BME populations as well.

A second related question is: How can or should selection processes increase BME representation, while remaining embedded in party structures and traditions? The three main parties have different histories in responding to and representing BME Britons and we know that there are lively debates in each party about how to enhance their current position. While the Labour party has the longest history of BME involvement, institutions such as black sections are now much less prominent and the role of unions – historically sometimes ambivalent about promoting BME candidates – has also changed considerably. Now too there are discussions on how to increase the number of BME women candidates, and there have also been tensions surrounding the relationship between all-women shortlists and the selection of BME male candidates, to say nothing of the idea of all-black shortlists.

Promotion of the ‘A-list’ by the Conservative party is in part a way of increasing BME candidate numbers and ultimately MPs but it raises questions (for all parties) about how far candidates need to be ‘local’ in order to successfully represent or understand their constituency. Although the Liberal Democrats have rejected such instruments, they know that they cannot continue to operate without a single BME representative in the Commons. Like the Conservatives, the LibDems have historically struggled in areas with high BME voter concentration, though their success in Brent East and, of course, that of Simon Hughes in Southwark and Bermondsey, suggests their position is strengthening. For both parties, however, their safest seats remain those in areas of low BME populations and, therefore, where it is extremely unlikely that a local BME candidate could be selected. At the same time, British politics seems to have decisively moved on from the ‘Cheltenham’ effect, and it is good to see BME representatives in places like Cleveland, Windsor and Gloucester. Nevertheless, our constituency-based model means that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats may have to ‘parachute in’ BME candidates for their safe seats, at least in the short term. We hope we can have an honest discussion with all parties about these issues that are now hotly debated in various party forums.

The third question is perhaps the most difficult to discuss: How does the spectre of far-right activity impact on election campaigns? In the 2005 election the BNP made significant gains at the expense of all the major parties. While this is a harmful development for British democracy generally, it raises particular concerns for BME Britons. A sensitive issue, it relates to other concerns, including those of deprivation, community cohesion, residential clustering and competition for scarce public resources. We again seek an honest discussion about the attractions and dangers of the BNP and what the major parties can do to forestall the growth of far-right activity within democratic institutions.

Fourth: How far was the Iraq war a significant factor in the voting behaviour of BME (in particular Muslim) voters during the 2005 Election, and what are the longer-term consequences? The 2005 General Election was distinctive for a variety of reasons, but the issue of the Iraq war has – rightly or wrongly – been one that clearly included the direction of Muslim voters, among others (see the MCB’s ‘voter card’). Labour’s vote share in the largest Muslim constituencies dropped much more than their national or regional swing, and if George Galloway’s victory in Bethnal Green and Bow was the most surprising result, another trend was the growth in support for the Liberal Democrats, in many instances displacing the Conservatives to earn a strong second-place showing.

Finally: What can we do to ensure that our voting procedures are robust and not vulnerable to tampering? This relates to the perception of vote rigging or – less controversially – vote banks among particular ethnic groups. South Asian groups seem more likely to be identified as engaging in such behaviour, and we want to debate this issue carefully but seriously. If it is important to ensure that voting methods and procedures are transparent and impartial, it is also vital that we don’t assume some groups are less likely to follow those standards and inadvertently alienate them from democratic processes and institutions.

Conclusion
Our research on ‘Race and Elections’ obviously touches on wide-ranging and in parts controversial concerns. However, we believe that public life in Britain is now more than capable of tackling these issues honestly, and that more can be gained by open debate than by ignoring the possible impact of race and ethnicity in British Elections. We look forward to working together with all the parties to ensure greater BME participation and representation as part of a broader challenge to make our democratic institutions meaningful and responsive to all.
Multiple Discrimination

From the adoption of two anti-discriminatory directives in 2000 to the 2007 European year of equal opportunities, the European Union (EU) and its member states have developed their anti-discrimination legislation and initiated programmes of discrimination awareness. However, as the EU has recognized, tackling anti-discrimination on a singular level does not go far enough to address the multifaceted and complex patterns of inequality experienced by many individuals. In an effort to address this imbalance, from January to May 2007 stakeholders from Ministries, National Equality Bodies and NGOs were invited by the European Commission to investigate the concept of Multiple Discrimination. The results of this research were presented in the report Tackling Multiple Discrimination: Practices, Policies and Laws,1 and the process/outcomes are outlined below by Sharon Yemoh.

In today’s multi-ethnic and diverse society few people neatly categorize themselves by means of singular identities. Within groups there are diverse identities. Individuals may identify themselves as Black, African, Female and Muslim, and their experiences are likely to be shaped by more than one of these identities at any given time. As a concept, multiple discrimination addresses this important but often unrepresented reality; a person may be subject to discrimination on more than one ground.

Multiple discrimination was identified and defined in the 1980s by African-American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. With other scholars, Crenshaw identified the approach of Critical Race Theory, calling attention to the many ways in which race and gender interact to shape the experiences of Black Women. Crenshaw argued that individuals can belong to several disadvantaged groups at the same time, and criticized the use of single grounds of discrimination for neither presenting the full reality nor providing enough protection for these individuals. Many scholars and activists have since criticized the single-ground approach. As Gay Moon asserts, taking only the single-ground approach, when other grounds of discrimination are also cited by the victim, may be a form of discrimination in itself.2

This year’s Jim Rose lecture, entitled ‘Identity and Homecoming’ and delivered by Somali-born journalist Rageh Omaar, provided a good example of the need for a more complex and comprehensive anti-discrimination vocabulary and practice.3 Using the example of the Somali community in London, Omaar explained the multifaceted nature of a Somali’s identity. Somalis are Black, but unlike most African-Caribbeans they are overwhelmingly Muslim. Traditionally, the Muslim community in Britain is thought of as Asian not Black. Omaar’s example shows that the current identity debate needs to go much further than simplistic notions of Black and White. The debate surrounding identity is ultimately paramount to the anti-discrimination agenda. How groups are seen and portrayed indicates the various ways in which they are vulnerable to discrimination. Consequently, understanding the complexity of multiple identities goes hand in hand with understanding multiple discrimination.

Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam provided the EU with a legal basis to combat discrimination on the six grounds of race and ethnic origin, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age. In line with Article 13, the report focused only on these six grounds, but a broader account of multiple discrimination could also take into account how these grounds intersect with economic and class status. Any combination of discriminatory grounds can intersect, but the study particularly noted that ethnic minority women are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination. Other intersectional groups identified in the study as vulnerable to multiple discrimination were disabled women, elderly women, young ethnic minority men, disabled LGBT people and elderly people with disabilities.

The shortfall

In 2001 the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia and Related Intolerance formally recognized multiple discrimination and adopted actions against the phenomenon:

We recognicethat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin and that victims can suffer multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on other related grounds such as sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status.5

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2 RuNNymede’S QuaRteRly BulletIN maRCH 2008
3 A full-length audio version of Rageh Omaar’s lecture can be heard at http://www.thesra.org.uk/events/lecturedetail.asp?ReadID=1255; and a summary may be read in the opening pages of this Bulletin.
5 European Commission, op. cit. p. 15.
After the Durban Conference the concept of multiple discrimination was increasingly recognized in different anti-discrimination and human rights forums. This has yet to be transferred into explicit legislation or anti-discrimination frameworks on a large scale. The present anti-discrimination legislation at both EU and National level does not meet the needs of victims of multiple discrimination. The findings of the report revealed that whilst EU anti-discrimination and equal treatment legislation does recognize that different protected grounds can intersect; there is currently no explicit prohibition of multiple discrimination. In a study carried out in 2007 the European Network of Legal Experts identified that only Austria, Germany and Spain directly address multiple discrimination in their anti-discrimination laws. EU law does not prevent member states from legislating against multiple discrimination, nor does it require them to legislate to outlaw multiple discrimination.

In the past, within the UK, a few cases were successful in arguing intersectional discrimination and having two grounds recognized as operating together,6 case law has now ruled out this possibility. As stated in a recent briefing:

In 2004, the Court of Appeal in Bahl v the Law Society7 ruled on the correct way to deal with intersectional discrimination. This ruling now binds the lower courts. In this case an Asian woman claimed that she had been subjected to discriminatory treatment both on the grounds that she was Asian and on the grounds that she was a woman. This judgment made it clear that each ground had to be separately considered and a ruling made in respect of each, even if the claimant experiences them as inextricably linked. This led to Ms Bahl failing to prove that discrimination has occurred, as she could not identify which aspect of her claim related to only one characteristic.8

With the lack of recognition of multiple discrimination as a legal concept many multiple discrimination cases are often argued on the basis of a single ground for practical reasons. It is extremely difficult to prove cases of Multiple Discrimination in a court that does not recognize the concept. Finnish scholar Timo Makkonen attributes the current single-ground approach to the way in which different issues such as race, gender, and disability were created by single-issue movements. He argues that the historical development of these issues in isolation from each other has shaped current practice, policy and anti-discrimination legislation.9 The lack of research, registered complaints and cross-sectional data also contribute to the obscurity of the phenomenon on the anti-discrimination agenda.

**Good practice**

In order to move beyond the single-issue approach, two key methods were identified as good practice: inter-organizational cooperation and promoting multiple-ground NGOs. To address multiple discrimination, multiple-issue organizations like the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) with its combined mandate should help with the development of this agenda. Bringing together the work of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission, the EHRC will also have responsibility for the equality areas of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. This will put the expertise on equality, diversity and human rights all in one place, which will help multiple-discrimination cases to be tackled much more effectively.

A 2003 study by Stonewall showed that people who are prejudiced against any ethnic minority are twice as likely as the general population to be prejudiced against gay or lesbian people, and four times more likely to be prejudiced against disabled people.10 These findings show the need for more inter-organizational cooperation.

The example of the Danish Institute for Human Rights Equal Treatment Committee was identified as an exemplary model of good practice in inter-organizational cooperation. Established in 2003, the Equal Treatment Committee is made up of civil society, governmental organizations and independent experts representing the six grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender, religion and belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. The committee seeks to create a platform whereby members can find a common ground to promote equal treatment and combat discrimination from a horizontal cross-ground perspective. The committee explored the status of equal treatment in Denmark, and hosted a series of awareness-raising seminars, workshops and conferences. Similarly in the UK, the Equalities and Diversity Forum (EDF) was established in 2002. EDF is a network of national organizations committed to progress on age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and broader equality and human rights issues, which brings together organizations working on different areas of discrimination, allowing them to identify areas of common concern, including issues of multiple and intersectional discrimination.

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8 EDF (no date) Multi-dimensional discrimination: Justice for the whole person. EDF/Justice Briefing.
Towards Active Citizenship for Young European Muslims

Within the last decade there has been concern that many young European Muslims are on the fringes of society and are marginalized as citizens. Barriers between themselves and the wider society as well as within their own communities can lead to disaffection and alienation. There is growing recognition that these individuals need to be engaged with in a way that allows them to become fully involved in mainstream active citizenship initiatives. Such engagement can lead to these youths feeling empowered to rise above barriers which may have originally prevented them from accessing their rights, or which had stopped them from participating in their responsibilities as European citizens. However, although there is much dialogue amongst academics and policymakers, very little seems to have been done to actually encourage or appeal to the daily concerns of ordinary young Muslims.

In 2006 the UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN) initiated a project which addressed these issues. Titled ‘Towards Active Citizenship for Young European Muslims: A Guide for Leaders’ the project aimed to promote active citizenship for young Muslims in a way that resonates with them, by developing a toolkit to support the work of young leaders, youth workers, teachers, faith leaders and parents. The project has divided into two key phases. Phase 1, completed in July 2006, was a two-day roundtable discussion where three Muslim thinkers on citizenship – Professor Tariq Ramadan, Professor Tariq Modood and Emel Algan – were brought together with participants from six EU countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and the UK). The purpose of this phase was to clarify the project’s understanding of the leading theories on citizenship at national and European level, and identify its deficiencies and possibilities with regard to young Muslims.

A report from Phase 1 contained suggestions for topics, themes and activities for the intended toolkit, particularly ideas about Islamic citizenship frameworks to complement current national European ones.

UKREN is now working on the second phase of the project, which aims to consult further with Muslim youth leaders in preparing the final toolkit. We have done this by organizing focus groups in Birmingham and London. Each focus group brought together 20 Muslim youth leaders to draft the toolkit, which will be published in April 2008. Making good use of this additional input, we are currently drafting the toolkit, which will be published in April 2008.

For further information on this project, please contact Sarah Isal, UKREN Programme Director, by letter or by emailing her at s.isal@runnymedetrust.org.
Race, Violent Crime and the Press

Runnymede’s latest Perspectives publication is an analysis by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson of how the media’s approach to reporting violent is influenced by notions of race.

The year 2007 was remarkable for its intense media coverage of violent teen-on-teen crime. From south London to north Liverpool, teen-on-teen murders were highlighted and scrutinized by journalists and editors both nationally and locally, spurring a debate in which even prime ministers felt they needed to partake.

In itself this is a good thing – the violence carried out between teenagers on the streets of Britain should be highlighted and solutions debated. However, in the midst of such a media frenzy – especially on a topic which has a long and well-established history of fostering racialized stereotypes – there is good reason to pause and look at how the media understands and makes sense of such events.

Runnymede’s latest Perspectives paper, A Tale of Two Englands – ‘Race’ and Violent Crime in the Press, analyses newspaper articles over a two-month period, and identifies clearly differential patterns for press reporting on violent crime. These patterns are strongly informed by notions of race.

When Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair accused the media of institutional racism in January 2006,2 the media responded with a categorical denial of any hint of a racial bias in their reporting. This has become something of a running theme in media responses to criticism, especially in terms of race and diversity. It is undoubtedly true that the tone of the critique often levelled at the media too relentlessly and unfairly singles it out as the main culprit. Indeed, the media is an easy target, and other institutions are quite capable of arousing stereotyped images of the ‘black community’ as well as over-representing minority-ethnic groups in particular categories of offending. For example, gang, gun and knife violence are conceptualized as ‘cultural’ phenomena, albeit pathological subcultures distinct from and in contrast to the moral values of the law-abiding majority. In its most obvious and crass expression, black youth culture is seen as the source of a variety of criminal subcultures, most notably gang culture and gun culture. However, other minority-ethnic groups are also depicted as ‘communities’ with distinct criminal elements in their own ‘cultures’.

The problem with this discourse is that the connection between criminal cultures and communities leads to a logical fallacy. The claim that culture is the source of violent crime necessarily

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1 A copy of this Perspectives paper is circulated with this issue of the Bulletin.
Out in the Open: Providing Accommodation, Promoting Understanding and Recognising Rights of Gypsies and Travellers
Diane Diacon, Hannah Kriteman, Jim Vine and Silvia Yafai
Coalville
London: Building and Social Housing Foundation, 2007
Pp. 56; £5.00; ISBN: 978 1 901742 02 2
Reviewed by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

Gypsies and Travellers continue to find themselves one of Britain’s most marginalised ethnic groups. Discrimination against them is widespread, both amongst the public as well as the authorities. In order to shed light on the most pressing issues facing Gypsies and Travellers, the Building and Social Housing Foundation held a consultation at Windsor Castle in June. The deliberations of the consultation were published in their report Out in the Open.

The report provides a distressing account of the many manifestations of discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers, but identifies the three most pressing issues as: (1) the need for provision of adequate and appropriate sites for accommodation on the one hand; (2) tackling prejudice and negative attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers; and (3) recognising their rights as laid down in law.

What is striking in the report is how little – in terms of housing and planning policy – is needed to find a solution to the problem. The authors make a series of recommendations, most of which are perfectly feasible. The main thrust is how a small amount of land would make a big difference:

Less than one square mile of land would be needed in the whole of England to provide every homeless Gypsy and Traveller household with a permanent pitch; this is roughly the equivalent of one football pitch per local authority district. (p.8)

Viable solutions, they state, are achievable in the long term, but may take 5–10 years to realise. In the meantime, local government can provide ‘best practice’ examples of how to respond to urgent accommodation needs in the short term. The difficulties of gaining accommodation reveal deeper issues than merely finding suitable land, as the report unambiguously states:

The factors that make it so difficult to deliver appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers are not primarily housing or planning issues; they are much wider and more deep-seated, relating to the prejudice and negative attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers in the wider community. (p.21)

Again, the recommendations made to promote understanding of Gypsies and Travellers are not only sensible but very viable, and easily supported by existing frameworks.

A large part of the problem is that rights stipulated in law are often overlooked or ignored where Gypsies and Travellers are concerned. For example, only a small minority (28.6%) of local authorities mention Gypsies and Travellers in their Race Equality Scheme, in spite of the fact that over 90% reported their presence in the local authority area (p.33).

The authors are concerned that the folding of the Commission for Racial Equality and the subsequent advent of the Equality and Human Rights Commission will make these concerns more pressing, as ‘there are wider concerns as to whether the new, larger body will continue to interact with Gypsies and Travellers at all’ (p.33).

The report is an excellent piece of work, which highlights in a poignant but straightforward manner the uphill struggle to achieve equal rights for Gypsies and Travellers. Logistically, the solutions are simple and already present in legislation. The real battle is to challenge the lack of political will – both at a local level as well as national – to combat the widespread and deeply held prejudices, discrimination and negative attitudes directed towards Gypsies and Travellers.
Recent developments in government policy have provoked many existing community and voluntary organizations to ‘take stock’ of their mission and aims. In particular, organizations working with an ‘equality strand’ have had to respond to a variety of government programmes and initiatives, perhaps most prominently the creation of a single Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to address inequalities based on gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief.

In many ways this is desirable. Not only does it encourage organizations to work together to tackle inequalities and discrimination occurring on multiple and various grounds, but it also encourages those organizations to think again about why they are needed. Furthermore, it can lead to a sharing of ideas and policy measures. For example, when Trevor Phillips suggested in his first speech as Chair of the EHRC that he would consider supporting a class-action suit for women who continue to be denied equal pay, he backed a measure that many people in the race sector have been requesting for a long time. So while the EHRC seems to recognize that there are continuing concerns that affect particular ‘strands’, it also represents an opportunity to defend policies such as positive action that would benefit many individuals in British society.

However, the move to a single equality commission is taking place against a backdrop of other policy concerns, notably integration, cohesion and security. If the EHRC provides a potentially positive and undoubtedly coherent way for equality strands to work together on the basis of a shared commitment to pursuing equality and combating discrimination, these other policy frameworks pull in a different direction. That is to say, if equality strand organizations must be justified primarily for their contribution to integration, cohesion and security, then it becomes more difficult to understand why equality strands exist in the first place. In the pursuit of offering ‘generic’ services, the government should not forget that the reasons ‘strand specific’ services exist is because there are still discriminatory practices and institutions in our society. For this reason, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion went too far when it recommended a presumption against what they called ‘single group funding’.

The report’s background and methodology
This is the context in which the Women’s Resource Centre has produced its insightful report ‘Why Women-Only?’, which has as its subtitle the main argument of the report: ‘The value and benefits of by women, for women services’. The report is both informative and well-researched, and has implications for other equality strands, including race, and explicitly affirms the need for continued women-only funding. Significantly, it provides good justification for women-only funding and services, a point that needs underlining because too many critics misidentify the reason why women-only organizations exist – and their important aims.

First, however, it is worth outlining the background and methodology of the report. Four key questions are addressed: (1) Why do women-only services exist? (2) Do today’s women want and need women-only services? (3) What are the benefits and value of ‘by women, for women’ services? and (4) Are women’s organizations facing specific challenges because they are women-only? To answer these questions, the research canvassed widely, conducting surveys of 101 organizations, holding 20 in-depth interviews, hosting seven focus groups and contacting a random sample of over 1000 women in the UK.

The poll findings affirmatively answered the second question, namely whether women in fact want the choice of women-only services: 97% agreed that women should have the choice of women-only support if they had been a victim of sexual assault, 90% believed it was important to report sexual or domestic violence to a woman, 87% thought it important to be able to see a female health professional about sexual or reproductive matters; 78% wanted the choice of a woman for counselling or personal support; and 56% would choose to go to a women-only gym.

Such findings strongly support the need for women-only services. But as the report emphasizes, this resource and source of expertise is increasingly finding it difficult to get funding. Fully 70% of organizations felt that being women-only made it harder to access funding, against only 3% who felt it was made easier. And while only 1.2% of central government funding to the voluntary sector went to women’s organizations, they constitute 7% of registered charities. The report further charts how major government funding streams either fund no women’s organizations, or provide them with very little funding.

Perhaps most remarkable in this context is how support to victims of sexual offending is funded. While funding of ‘generic’ organizations has increased by 6.6% year on year, funding of women’s organizations in the same field actually dropped by 20%. It should be obvious enough why victims of sexual violence might feel uncomfortable discussing their experiences with men, and why they might need women-only spaces to access counselling and support in an effective way.

Justifying women-only services
This then leads to the most significant contribution of the report, namely its justification of why women-only services are valuable. To do so, they distinguish between the benefits that women get from such services (section 8), and the benefits to everyone in society (section 9), a framework Runnymede has also adopted in its defence of positive action.
(see the December 2006 issue of the Bulletin, pp.19–21). The executive summary explains these benefits clearly.

**Benefits for women:**
‘Safety, both physical and emotional, is a key benefit of women-only services… They become empowered and develop confidence, greater independence and higher self-esteem. They are less marginalised and isolated and feel more able to express themselves. Women using these services feel that their voices are heard and listened to. Through sharing their experiences with other women … they develop a sense of solidarity’. (p. 8)

**Benefits for everyone:**
The above citation already suggests how women-only services can benefit everyone in society, and since this may be a more controversial claim, it is worth explaining further. Section 9 reports the research’s seven ‘themes’ for how everyone benefits from women-only services. These are:
- Supporting women supports families
- Economic impact
- Raising awareness
- Giving something back
- Challenging the under-representation of women
- Social change
- Community cohesion and integration
  - (pp. 72ff.)

These first two themes require neither a feminist nor an egalitarian ethos but they focus on practical consequences of supporting women-only organizations. The other five themes are equally important, but perhaps need greater specification. Raising awareness is not some vague ambition, but is instead about making clear the continuing discrimination faced by women and the corresponding needs that remain unmet. For the state this is a particularly challenging problem: to maintain democratic legitimacy, the state must respond equally and fairly to the needs of all. And because of continuing discrimination in society, state (and indeed private and voluntary) institutions haven’t always responded to the legitimate interests of and the needs that women in particular experience.

Focusing on the themes of ‘giving something back’ and the ‘under-representation of women’ explains how our public institutions and political life more generally can be improved by women-only services. This is because they make our public institutions more receptive to the needs of everyone and they include everyone in public debate. In Runnymede’s argument for positive action, we focused on how those measures can benefit all by improving the **kinds** of political institutions and debates we’re accustomed to in Britain; including more women in those institutions and debates would clearly do this. In fact, the Women’s Resource Centre Report extends this recommendation to include the kind of society we should aspire to live in. To spell out this point they cite the view of one particular respondent:

> ‘We live in a highly unequal society and we as a women’s organisation have a duty to promote women, children and young people. It’s not about individual men and women. It is about how society is right now. We, as a society, have the duty to promote a safe and non-violent environment for women, children and young people and I think that we can most effectively do this right now by preserving and promoting our women-only spaces.’ (p. 78)

**How single-group funding promotes community cohesion and integration**

Explaining how women-only resources and organizations benefit everyone is key to understanding their justification, especially because so many critics miss out on these crucial points. Critics discuss the issue of community funding and organizations in the context of terms such as ‘ghettoization’, ‘sectarianism’, ‘segregation’ and ‘Balkanization’. Not only do such words invoke normatively irresponsible comparisons between unjust discrimination against disadvantaged groups and single-group funding, but they also fail to recognize the benefits we all receive when disadvantaged groups participate as equals in our society. As the Women’s Resource Centre suggests, these critics can only press those comparisons if they think that discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief no longer exists. That is to compound an empirical error with a moral misjudgement.

However, criticisms of single-group funding as separatist are widely held, government policy included. For example, annex D of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion advised that such funding should be ultimately abolished, and the Women’s Resource Centre explicitly rejects that recommendation. This leads to the final universal benefit the report identifies – cohesion and integration. Interestingly, the report focuses on BME-led women’s organizations as being particularly effective in contributing to cohesion and integration:

Organisations led by and for minority women are necessary in addressing social exclusion and community cohesion. They enable integration through empowering and building the confidence of their service users, and by helping women who are often on the margins of communities to access opportunities that many other people take for granted… These women-only services are often able to reach women who would not otherwise engage with services, either in public or third sectors (p. 9)

**Justifying community funding through community studies**

The reviewed report provides not only good evidence of the need for women-only funding, but also solid justifications for it. We can extend those same reasons that support women-only funding to enhance our understanding of why single-group funding for some minority-ethnic groups may be necessary. Not only does it contribute to community cohesion and integration, as suggested in the last section, but it also encourages individuals to participate in wider society. This, in turn, benefits all of us by improving the quality of public institutions and debate in Britain. It is good for all of us when our institutions respond to the needs of all citizens and when people from all backgrounds participate. If certain groups are unable for whatever reason to access opportunities for participation in public services more generally, we need to think of ways to encourage them to do so.

However, this is not simply a philosophical point. Like the Women’s Resource Centre, Runnymede has empirically researched the question of how particular communities experience Britain today. In our ‘Community Studies’, we’ve considered how groups such as the Bolivians, Vietnamese and Romanians understand and engage with life in the UK, and have tried to determine if they have any needs in particular. Having now published seven such studies, we’ve identified a number of key themes. Most relevant to this review is the observation that most of these...
groups use community organizations and services because they don’t have the confidence or knowledge of how to engage with major British social institutions. Single-group organizations are in many ways a ‘one-stop shop’ for people who may either lack the confidence, language skills or knowledge of how to activate some of the basics of UK life, from opening a bank account to getting a driver’s licence, from accessing English-language training to passing a citizenship test.

To call such funding ‘separatist’ is to miss the key reasons why black and minority (ethnic?) people engage in those institutions. By building confidence, many individuals are able to access wider social and political institutions and so engage fully in our society. That is to say, interaction within community spaces provides an excellent stepping-stone towards community cohesion and integration. While it may indeed be possible that some such groups engage only in their own community organizations and use them to insulate themselves from the rest of British society, we haven’t so far encountered this attitude when researching our Community Studies. Furthermore, we haven’t seen much evidence that the more settled BME groups who engage with single-group communities are less cohesive or integrated than those who don’t.

**Conclusion**

The Women’s Resource Centre report effectively answers the four questions it sets for itself. Importantly, it shows that women in the UK continue to see a need for women-only funding. Just as significantly, however, it provides clear and ethically attractive justifications for that funding. By distinguishing the benefits that women derive from women-only organizations from the benefits extended to everyone in society, it explains to critics why such organizations are valuable. In this review we endorse those justifications and why they’re particularly significant for enhancing public participation and the quality of democratic debate. Our seven Community Studies tell us this isn’t simply a theoretical point, but one that motivates members of many different communities in Britain.

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**EU8 Migrants in Edinburgh**

As the debate about Eastern European immigrants to the UK rages on, the Scottish government publishes the latest addition to our growing knowledge on the subject. The report – *A Community Profile of EU8 Migrants in Edinburgh and an Evaluation of their Access to Key Services* – may not offer new and original insights, but it does add a valuable piece to the jigsaw puzzle of EU8 migration into the various parts of Britain.

The focus is employment, access to services, and housing, with a subfocus on homelessness. The discussion and conclusions echo and confirm much of what previous studies have demonstrated: the overarching point is that EU8 migrants have made the journey to the UK to find employment. The prominent argument is that they contribute more to the UK economy than they take from it.

Two features of the report’s data are striking. (1) The overwhelming majority of EU8 migrants have instrumental reasons for wanting to integrate with life in Edinburgh, as integration facilitates access to the labour market – the primary reason for migrating to Edinburgh in the first place. (2) Informal networks of family and friends are used by EU8 migrants to gain access to various parts of mainstream society, such as housing and employment.

This raises serious questions about the tone of the current public discussion about not only EU8 migrants and their impact on services, but community cohesion as well. Firstly, much of the public debate about Eastern European immigrants describes them as placing an excessive burden on public services, disproportionate to their contribution to the public purse. It is therefore good to see yet another study undermining this tabloid mantra. Secondly, and with ramifications well beyond EU8 migration in itself, is the implications of the research results for the community cohesion agenda and the connected discussion surrounding single-group funding. The report thus provides a good example of why funding should be made available to migrant groups with specific needs. Indeed, ‘provision of support to EU8 community groups’ was one of the main recommendations arising from the research.

As Omar Khan argues in his review of *Why Women Only?* (this Bulletin issue), the logic is simple and makes sense: new migrants face particular barriers to economic and social participation, many of which can be particular to their ethnic group; many new migrants rely on informal networks of friends and family – i.e. compatriots – to gain access to the labour market and other social institutions; as economic and social participation is vital to a cohesive society, providing new migrants with a springboard to participation in a wider life in the UK is essential; single-group organizations are often the most apt and effective springboards available. As is clear from this report on EU8 migrants in Edinburgh, community organizations that cater specifically for the needs of EU8 migrants – by facilitating participation in life in Britain – would not lead to self-segregation but increase social cohesion.

The debate is far from over, but the Scottish government report adds a valuable contribution to the discussion. Slowly but surely we are gaining a more comprehensive picture of EU8 migration to various British regions.


**Distinctively Nepalese**

The Brigade of Gurkhas has been considered the fiercest of fighting forces, and has been part of the British Army for almost 200 years. Since the handover of Hong Kong to China, Gurkhas have been stationed in the UK and have recently secured the right to permanently settle here upon retirement. While not a distinct community in Nepal, they have already started to form a distinct community of Nepalese residents in retirement in the UK. Jessica Mai Sims, having taken the Gurkhas as a starting-point for her enquiry, presents some initial findings from her forthcoming Nepalese community study.

At the time of the last (2001) Census nearly 6000 people who were born in Nepal were living in the UK, of whom 75% lived outside London. The men outnumbered the women by approximately two to one, which may be largely attributed to Gurkha recruitment being open only to men. At any point in time there are approximately 3000 Gurkha soldiers stationed in the UK, who account for almost one-third of the British Army’s foreign personnel.¹

In 2004 retired Gurkhas who have served for more than 4 years won the right to settle permanently in the UK.² The new regulations allow for further eligibility for citizenship after 12 months of UK residence. Most likely taking advantage of the new regulations, there was a substantial rise in grants of settlement to Nepal nationals. The numbers rose from 3095 in 2004, to 3610 in 2005, until by 2006 Nepal ranked fourth among the top ten countries grated settlement, with 6940 grants.³

Alongside grants of settlement, grants of British citizenship give an indication of the size of the settled Nepalese population in the UK. Since 2004, grants of citizenship to people from Nepal have been mostly due to fulfillment of residence qualifications, and between 2004 and 2005 the numbers rose dramatically, by over 300%, from 195 to 655, with a further 915 grants of citizenship made in 2006.⁴

Areas in Hampshire, North Yorkshire and Kent are assumed to host concentrations of Nepalese people because of the presence of military bases. In Hampshire, approximately 6000 Nepalese people live in the areas of Farnborough and Aldershot, near to the Aldershot Garrison.³ Folkstone, Kent is home to the Royal Gurkha Rifles – there are an estimated 200 families in this area.⁵ These families may have arrived in the area because of the Army, but any decision to stay on after retirement would be because of the small Nepalese community that has formed.

Between 2002 and 2007 over 1700 new National Insurance numbers were allocated to people from Nepal in the Kent County Council area.⁶ While this does not equate to a settled population, it does show that Kent has a steady inflow of migrant workers from Nepal, who have featured in the top ten countries for new NI numbers every year from 2002, with the exception of 2004/5.⁷ Taking these circumstances into account, it is not unreasonable to assume that the 2001 Census figures underestimate the current Nepalese community in the UK quite significantly.

In October 2007, the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen’s Organisation UK (GAESO) held a meeting jointly with the London Borough of Hounslow in order for the local Nepalese community to communicate some of their concerns to the council. It was also a chance for councilors to meet the local community and tell them what Hounslow Council can do for them. The meeting was attended by retired Gurkhas, their wives and their children, approximately 300 people out of an estimated 350 families in Hounslow.

After a presentation from Cllr Paul Lynch (Chiswick, Riverside) on the council’s services, the families dispersed into groups to discuss key issues facing their community. Issues ranged from benefits, employment and training to community safety, with a significant focus on children and young people’s services. Parents who attended the meeting expressed anxiety about their capacity to keep their children safe from racial and sexual harassment and intimidation. Concerned about the impact of demanding work schedules on their daily lives, the parents felt that the odd shifts and long hours they worked were interfering with their ability to maintain strong relationships with their children.

Because most young people in the community were at secondary school and in further education, the most pressing issue for the group was the residency requirement to qualify for EU home tuition fees at university. The adults argued that the residency requirement for home fees was inconsistent with the special settlement rights for retired Gurkhas and their families, and that international fees were too expensive for many families. These inconsistencies also applied to their children’s ineligibility to join the British armed forces – if their children were in Nepal they would be able to join the Brigade of Gurkhas, but as Nepalese nationals in the UK, they are unable to join the military.

The concerns of the Gurkha families may be similar to those of other Nepalese families in the UK, but it’s possible their special immigration status gives them an advantage over other Nepalese migrants. During the meeting in Hounslow, one of the questions raised was whether Gurkhas and their families form a distinct community, to some extent apart from a broader UK Nepalese community many of whom will have arrived as asylum-seekers, students and working professionals. In our forthcoming Community Studies report, we will be exploring the impact of these different backgrounds on a broader conception of the Nepalese community, and also seeking the opinions of young people on what they see as the future for Nepalese people living in the UK.
Spouses, Settlement and ‘The Path to Citizenship’

Two government consultations on foreign spouses and a Green Paper on citizenship combine to potentially raise the entry requirements for those entering the UK as marriage partners, writes Jessica Mai Sims.

During December 2007 to February 2008 two consultations were issued by the Borders and Immigration Agency. Both consultations related to foreign spouses seeking to join British citizens and settled persons in the UK.

The first consultation dealt with a pre-entry English-language requirement and the second was concerned with forced marriages and abandoned spouses. While the proposals address two important issues, enabling migrants to integrate into British society and protecting the vulnerable, they also represent further steps by government to limit who may settle in the UK.

Consultation 1 on English-language Requirements
The consultation ‘Marriage Visas: Pre-entry English Requirement for Spouses’ deals with the requirement that all foreign nationals (with the exception of EEA nationals and dependants) who seek to join their spouses in Britain need to demonstrate knowledge of the English language prior to arrival. This proposal would extend the existing requirement to demonstrate knowledge of English introduced in 2005 for those applying for citizenship, and in 2007 for those applying for indefinite leave to remain.

The three objectives of the proposal were to enable foreign spouses to integrate into British society, improve their employment opportunities, and to prepare for the Life in the UK language test when applying for settlement. However, while knowledge of English is indeed useful and often vital for a full understanding of the complexities of obligations, rights and entitlements in the UK, the proposed requirement would not necessarily lead to a better process of integration into British society for foreign spouses.

Drawing on the findings of our recent Thai Community Study, we note that many Thai women, even with the ability to communicate in English, felt that discrimination was the main barrier to integration they encountered. In place of a pre-entry requirement, free and widely accessible English-language classes would be a more effective method of language learning for migrants. Subsidies for learning English – or at least a waiver of the residency requirement for home student tuition – would better demonstrate the government’s commitment to equality, integration and the maintenance of cohesive communities. Another important point to keep in mind when assessing the appropriateness of the proposal is that it risks breaching Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (the right to respect for private and family life) and, in certain circumstances, Article 12 (the right to marry and found a family) when read with Article 14 (right to enjoyment of rights and freedom).

Consultation 2 on Spousal Protection
The second consultation, ‘Marriage to Partners from Overseas’, attempts to address the issue of forced marriage through immigration policy. While the paper is concerned with protecting British nationals from being forced into relationships with foreign nationals, it could directly affect all marriage relationships with foreign nationals to give confidential information about their sponsors; introducing a code of practice to assess whether a sponsor is potentially vulnerable to exploitation, leading to a rejection of the sponsorship if the sponsor is assessed to be so; introducing greater powers to revoke indefinite leave to remain if the foreign spouse abandons the sponsor or if the marriage has been used by a foreign national to gain entry to the UK. While to some extent safeguarding potential victims of forced marriage, these proposals could impinge on marriages to overseas partners – the vast majority of which are not cases of forced marriage – by virtue of increasing legal powers to revoke indefinite leave to remain after it has been granted. From research into the Thai community, we found that British spouses have been known to use the threat of revoking leave to remain in order to intimidate a reluctant partner into remaining within a failing marriage. Marriage migrants are already in vulnerable positions as they have no recourse to public funds.

Instead of offering a thorough and strategic plan for preventing forced marriages, the intent of the consultation paper seems to be to reintroduce a type of Primary Purpose rule for foreign nationals married to British nationals – that a couple would have to prove that the partner’s entry into the UK is not for the primary purpose of British residency.

Green Paper on Citizenship
Related to these consultations is the new green paper ‘The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System’, launched by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary together on 20 February 2008. The green paper outlines the government’s plan to reform the immigration system with two objectives in mind: creating an immigration system in which migrants ‘earn’ their right to citizenship, and developing a clearer, streamlined and simplified immigration system.

Runnymede will be developing and drafting a formal response to ‘The Path to Citizenship’, and during the consultation period we would like to hear others’ concerns about and responses to this green paper with a view to developing further joint responses. Please contact us, marking your response ‘Green Paper on Citizenship’, at The Runnymede Trust, 7 Plough Yard, Shoreditch, London EC2A 3LP (fax: 020 7377 6622; e-mail: info@runnymedetrust.org).
**Video ART Postcards:**

**Lesson Plans**

Manifesta and the Runnymede Trust launched the Video ART Postcards’ Lesson Plans for Citizenship, Key Stages 3 and 4 in London on 3 April 2008. Several of the short films were screened at the launch.

These new materials for teachers, youth workers and others working with young people have been devised by two experienced teachers and curriculum writers, Professor Chris Gaine and Cristina Bennet, using the Video ART Postcards short films made by young people aged 14 to 19 during the summer of 2007. The films are key elements in lesson plans developed specifically to help teachers meet some of the requirements of Key Stages 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum’s Citizenship module. All the lesson plans are detailed with step-by-step guidance and are all planned to last one hour. They are aimed at group responses, rather than personal ones. It is hoped that some lessons will inspire teachers and students to develop their own multimedia responses. All the films can be seen and the lesson plans can be downloaded free of charge at the Runnymede Trust website at [http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects/video-art-postcards.html](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects/video-art-postcards.html). A full report of the launch event will be carried in the June 2008 issue of the Bulletin.

Video ART Postcards is devised and led by Manifesta with the Runnymede Trust.

For more information, or to talk about how you can screen these films, please contact Marion Vargaftig, Manifesta Director: marion@manifesta.org.uk

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**RUNNYMEDE TEAM**

Michel Lafféche

Director

Robert Berkeley

Deputy Director

Sarah Isal

Senior Research and Policy Analyst

Debbie Weekes-Bernard

Senior Research and Policy Analyst

Omar Khan

Research and Policy Analyst

Jessica Mai Sims

Research and Policy Analyst

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

Research and Policy Analyst

Savita Vij

Research Associate

Vastiana Belfon

Real Histories Director

Robin Frampton

Publications and Website Editor

Rebecca Waller

Administrator

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