Commission on
Integration&**Cohesion**

A THINK-PIECE FOR THE COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION

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This piece of work was commissioned by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, a fixed-term advisory body set up by the Communities Secretary in September 2006. It is being published alongside the Commission's final report as a piece of independent thinking. The findings and recommendations are those of the authors, do not represent the views of Ministers, or of officials within the Department of Communities and Local Government.

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1 Summary

This think-piece was commissioned to consider four inter-related factors: the extent to which people in Britain are now leading separate lives; the links between deprivation and cohesion; how we might challenge attitudes, perceptions and myths, and what might bring communities/people together.

I have a very simple argument to make, and it is this: through our human geography – where we live, learn, work, play and rest and how we move about the country – Britain is becoming a less socially integrated and cohesive society. Different social 'types' of people are moving slightly further apart from each other each year. This pattern of rising polarisation is true, in general, for most ways in which we can be typified such as by age, occupation, education, wealth or by our state of health. We are becoming less socially integrated in the distribution of our holding of housing wealth in particular; our suffering of poverty; our access to higher education; our differential labour market access, our exposure to risk of disease, inequalities in the general prevalence of illness; and growing inequality in almost all things that increase the likelihood of an early death for us or our children. However, critically, there is no convincing evidence that this trend over time is apparent across the country when considering the ways we are differently labelled by race, ethnicity, language or religion.

There is much good news; on our very rich island even the poorest of people have access to a material standard of living that would have been hard to imagine in the past. The material living standards of the richest people in Britain today would also have been unimaginable just a few decades ago. Despite this there is little evidence of general rejoicing over our collective affluence; we have conducted the natural experiment and determined that great wealth does not of itself bring elation. Instead, our current levels of social disintegration and the very low levels of social cohesion we are living with today are worse now than those considered at any decade since at least the 1930s. In Britain today, a child's chances in life are now more determined by where (and to whom) they were born as compared to any other date in the last 651 years. And, as is shown below, this generalisation is true across the board with reference to what matters in life chances:

1. It is true for our chances of holding or not holding wealth. Chances which depend now most on if, where and when we (and our parents) bought property. The divide between those of us with property and without; between those with cheap and expensive property; and between those with one and many properties, is greater now than at any time since the nationalisation of our stately homes (those 'given' to the National Trust).

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1 Sixty five years ago plans were being drawn up in Britain that in retrospect we can see altered life chances remarkably; further, sixty five years ago this autumn is when the course of the Second World War changed most clearly. At that time, if a baby born then survived its first few weeks of life, 65 was their probable life expectancy in the years to come (Dorling, D., 1995, A new social atlas of Britain: Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, page 148 – see page 164 just one example of why geography matters as much now as in 1942).

2. It is true for our chances of being born into poverty or not. Poverty was last reported to have been as geographically concentrated as it is now in the 1930s. Back then, researchers found that in relative terms the situation had worsened from that recorded at the turn of the century even though absolute material levels of poverty had fallen. The equality that came with the Second World War resulted in those same researchers finding a country radically transformed by the early 1950s.[2] Britain was still poor, and in many ways dingy, but no longer blighted by area disintegration through poverty. But, as documented below, slowly from then to rapidly now, the divisions between places returned. Areas again became labelled as places for the poor, for the average, or for the rich, and cohesion has been seeped away.

3. It is true for our chances of achieving a good education. Access to Higher Education in the 1930s was literally unimaginable for most people. Then, over a third of the twenty one thousand who did have access attended Oxford or Cambridge.[3] Now, more than one hundred times as many young people attend Higher Education. In 1933–34 a child who began his/her education in a fee-paying school was 110 times more likely to attend university when compared even to one who had managed to gain a free place in a secondary school.[4] Inequalities in access fell from such dizzy heights from then on, but as shown below these education inequalities are not falling now. And it is only now that such access has become a key for future life chances for so many people.

4. It is true for our chances of gaining and holding onto work. Access to the labour market in the 1930s was acutely influenced by where people happened to have been born and brought up. Special Areas Acts were first introduced by parliament in 1934. The plethora of area initiatives that followed, right up to our current 'New Deal' and various 'Pathways' areas, are their descendants and cover much the same places now as then. However, in between these dates there were times, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, when special areas did not need to be defined by government for intervention to aid access to employment. In 1935, more than a quarter of the insured working population of the West of Scotland area alone were unemployed.[5] Now across Glasgow more than a quarter of older adults (45–59) are reliant on benefits and in a few places this rises to more than a half (see Figure 10 below for the national map).

5. It is true for our chances of being ill and dying young. Inequalities in disease, illness and death were so acute in the 1930s that the country was split into three groups of places: those where (age-sex standardised) mortality rates were at least 15% below average; those where they were at least 5% over the national average; and a distinct group of places where rates were at least 20% over average. There were far fewer

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2   See the studies of Seebohm Rowntree made from surveys published shortly after fieldwork in 1901, 1941 and 1951 (titles respectively: Poverty, A Study of Town Life; Progress and Poverty; Poverty and the Welfare State). Among much else he wrote on rural poverty in 1913: How the Labourer Lives. Rowntree's estimates of how bad the 1930s were have never seriously been disputed although his estimates of poverty in the late 1940s have been revised upwards on several occasions since they were first published.

3   D.V. Glass and J.L.Gray, Opportunity and the Older Universities: a study of the Oxford and Cambridge Scholarship System, Chapter X of L.Hogben (Ed.) Political Arithmetic: A Symposium of Population Studies (1938, page 419).

4   Ibid page 468.

5   See R.H.Arthur, 1935, Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland: report for the period 21st December, 1934, to 30th June, 1935, London: HMSO http://www.bopcris.ac.uk/bopall/ref8455.html

average places then than there were places where health was normally good, or poor, or very poor. Since then, until most recently, places with the national average health distributions have been the most populous.[6] However, we are now again facing the prospect of polarising into two distinct nations by where we live, with fewer and fewer places being neither rich nor poor and with fewer places having national average health and life expectations.

Divisions by wealth, poverty, education, employment and disease define the key cleavages that run across contemporary social maps of Britain and which are all widening in one way or another. They are also all partly the largely unpredicted side effects of superficial success in many social policies: the spreading of wealth in the past allowing greater home ownership (rising dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s); the alleviation of gross poverty allowing living standards and expectations for everyone to rise; the growth of universities; the rising access to a safety net if deemed too ill to work from the 1930s; and great increases in our abilities to prolong life (but most for those best off to begin with).

It is important to reiterate that there are other general trends which are good news stories. Gradual increased tolerance of people speaking different languages; increased mixing of ethnic groups, initially defined to emphasise differences; greater intolerance by many of various levels of overt racism; and a general acceptance of a far wider range of religions than most folk knew existed in, say, the 1930s.

There has been greater integration in education with the abolition of the secondary-modern/grammar school apartheid. This, despite growing divides within comprehensive education recently, inevitably increased integration over the long term as also has the expansion of Further and Higher Education. As educational opportunities are opened up, children and young adults who would have been geographically separated in the past found themselves educated in the same buildings. This occurred most dramatically once separation of the population at age eleven ceased in most towns. Recent increases in social polarisation between schools[7] have often been linked back to the publication of school league tables in the early 1990s, and the slow down of university expansion in the 1990s (as compared to the 1980s[8]). Below the argument is made that a renewed and more serious commitment to widening and expanding access to university would dramatically reduce the polarisation between schools which is increasingly a symptom

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6 Such inequalities in health were last measured in 1939 and age sex standardisation of English and Welsh combined statistics only began in the lat 1930s. The distribution was transformed radically by 1950–53 by 1959–1963 and most equal in terms of the peak of population concentrated in areas with average chances in the period 1969–1973. Inequalities then rose throughout the 1980s and have continued to rise between places since (for the early figures see Dorling, D. (1995) A New Social Atlas of Britain, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons; Figure 5.31 page 164).

7 A statistically very small although politically very important part of the general social polarisation between schools is that schools reflected the spatial polarisation of the children of ethnic groups in Britain, and sometimes exacerbate and sometimes diminish that polarisation. The importance of this should be seen as much smaller than the general importance of involuntary residential segregation and of social polarisation in schools in general which is in general always higher where such polarisation is possible, when population density rises. This is true also of the most socially polarised of all schools – independent schools which are hard to maintain and establish in the least dense areas. Unfortunately data on these least cohesive and integrated of schools is often missing and so analysis tends to concentrate on state schools. For that see Burgess, S., Wilson, D. and Lupton, R. (2005) Parallel Lives? Ethnic Segregation in Schools and Neighbourhoods, Urban Studies, 42, 7, 1027–1056, and related analysis published later.

8 See: Students in the UK, cohort size and proportions, 1970–2000, Figure 2.3, in Dorling, D. (2005) Human Geography of the UK, London: Sage (page 22). Figure and data in excel sheet downloadable from: http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/hguk/chapter2.htm

of inequalities in access to Higher Education and the growing importance of access to Higher Education.

The importance of the key ways in which society in Britain is divided (and by which integration is prevented and cohesion is made so difficult) is often obscured in a national debate obsessed with race, religion, language, ethnicity and issues of immigration. Thus, over recent years the good and bad news stories on social integration and cohesion have been mixed up in popular imagination. This confusion has been exacerbated by official pronouncements on the success of internal social policy coupled with dossiers on rising dangers from overseas. Government in particular downplayed the ways in which we were becoming more divided.[9] This was almost certainly because many in government believed that these basic divisions would narrow as a result of their policies.[10] This is true of both this government and the previous one.

It is well worth remembering that Margaret Thatcher believed the same of her policies – that they would bring people together and reduce social divides and outcome inequality. That was why, in 1985, she signed the UK up to be committed to the World Health Organisation Targets to increase equality, integration and cohesion in health by the year 2000. However, as Mrs Thatcher demonstrated: belief in yourself and belief that your policies are just and will work, is not enough. Those life expectancy targets were not just missed, the most important inequalities of all actually widened and by as much as she said they would narrow.[11] She ably demonstrated how confusing a strong desire for greater social integration and cohesion (for there to be harmony where there is discord) with the actual achievement of integration can be very deluding.

It is difficult to admit that policy is failing while in government. Scapegoats are often needed; excuses are often made in place of rethinking basic beliefs. When there is doubt as to whether the policy is working there are often calls for a renewed faith in it. Imagined problems of racial integration and lack of some conception of ethnic cohesion provide just two of many opportunities to look away from those ways in which we truly are becoming more divided in our chances in life, in our material wealth, health and opportunities. Instead of confronting the error of our ways we turn to look towards people who we might suggest are not fitting in. We do this because it is much easier than acknowledging how we are failing to build a society where there is space for everyone to fit into fairly. Many of those of us who have the best chances in life, the greatest wealth and the most opportunities may also live under the misunderstanding that we have what we have because others do not (we need the poor if we are to be rich). While this may be true superficially at least of wealth, it is becoming increasingly

9   Dorling, D, Eyre, H., Johnston, R. and Pattie, C. (2002) A good place to bury bad news? Hiding the detail in the Geography on the Labour Party's website, Reports and Surveys, The Political Quarterly, 73(4), 476-492. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2002/dorling_et_al_bury_bad_news.pdf. See also Shaw, M., Dorling, D, Mitchell, R. and Davey Smith, G. (2005) Labour's "Black Report" Moment, BMJ, 331, 575. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2005/BMJ_letter.pdf

10   Dorling, D. (2006) Inequalities in Britain 1997-2006: the dream that turned pear-shaped. Local Economy, 21(4) 353–361. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2006/dorling_inequalityinBritain1997_corrected.pdf

11   Shaw, M., Davey Smith, G., Dorling, D (2005) Health inequalities and New Labour: how the promises compare with real progress BMJ, Apr 2005; 330: 1016 – 1021 http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2005/ShawDaveySmithDorlingBMJ.pdf. No politician argues for social integration and cohesion to reduce. Almost nobody, not even Mrs Thatcher, wished to see more people die young as a result of policy failure (at least not die young in Britain).

apparent that it is not true for health (everyone can live a little longer) or other opportunities in life, such as education (everyone can learn a little more) and enjoyment, for having a wide choice over where we all live and less worries, doubts and fears over our children's futures.

A society that was easier to integrate into would be one where your chances in life were not so determined by where you were born and to whom; where wealth was not so easily amassed by those who had most to begin with and where privilege could not so quickly become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. A more cohesive society would not tolerate the emergence of large areas where over half the population is now poor. More children would attend their nearest schools and not be driven in separate directions each morning by parents. Access to Higher Education would widen in practise, more young adults would go to local universities[12] and elitism within the sector would reduce rather than rise. More university students would travel shorter distances and mix more with those around them if this were to happen, just as with school students.

A more cohesive society would understand why millions of working age adults are unable to work and would seek solutions appropriate to these times rather than crass coercion to labour and threats of abject poverty for those who do not conform. An integrated society would not consider itself so unless a substantial narrowing of the basic inequalities in our ability to enjoy life had occurred. The quarter of people who currently cannot, should be able to afford simple holidays, they should not be living under mountains of debt, and we all should not feel we need to work more and more hours each day. A cohesive society would not see politicians seeking excuses in past legacies as to why so many have to die so young. As compared to similar countries, too many people in Britain that make it into their 60s die, often having barely retired. This should not be tolerated.

We are currently a very long way away even from turning the tide towards becoming a more cohesive society of the kind just described. Yet that described is no utopia, many aspects of a more cohesive society currently exist elsewhere in the world in those nations which do not so routinely top international league tables of integration failure as we do.[13] Instead of concentrating on addressing the failures of some of our social policies and traditions (in comparison with those of other otherwise similar countries) we are in grave danger of becoming obsessed with myths we should not have allowed to grow and should certainly not be fostering concerning ethnic segregation, religion, integration and immigration. There are good news stories being missed that suggest that in some key ways social cohesion is growing and rates of isolation and *anomie* are falling. But it cannot be repeated too often that despite disintegration not being a new story (perhaps because it is such an old story), we are dangerously disinterested in the fundamental cleavages that continue to grow in British society. Social disintegration reduces cohesion and society is being splintered along the basic divides of health, wealth, work, poverty and knowledge. Recognising this is a key part of how re-integration can begin.

12 As in Scotland, Ireland, most of mainland Europe, the United States and Japan!

13 There are many that could be listed, but those concerning child poverty released by Eurostat, the OECD, or UNICEF have been amongst the most recent, and that before the rise in the numbers of children experiencing poverty in Britain reported in March 2007 (see next footnote).

2 Background

Over the course of 2006 and early 2007 a great deal of new work has been undertaken by many people to consider fundamental issues of identity, cohesion, equality, deprivation, lives separating, senses of belonging being lost, and attitudes, myths and perceptions being challenged. A very large quantity of new evidence for consideration in the debate is being released from this work during the present year. Some results are based on surveys that have been undertaken as long ago as 1968 and which can be compared to contemporary evidence. Others include comment related to data as recent as that released on rising child poverty rates this year.[14] In this think-piece, as well as discussing evidence being released on a wider range of issues than has been covered in similar reports on identity, integration and society in Britain before, I shall concentrate on two reports I have been involved with that concern issues of separate lives and cohesion and deprivation in particular.[15] However, much older work as well as this recent work and many other reports (usually referenced in the footnotes here) provide the fuller background for this think-piece.

Integration is not a word that is used in everyday conversations, or even one that is much favoured in the broadsheet press. Along with concepts such as social polarisation, *anomie,* social capital and "capabilities" it is one of those terms that appears precise and is not. For the very small minority in Britain lucky enough to have been shown how numbers work (up to the point needed to be able to understand how social polarisation for instance can be measured) the word "integration" has a very different meaning than that used in the particular debate that this think-piece addresses. Integration mathematically means the "sum of the parts", to bring together as a whole; and was something you needed to know to gain an advanced level school qualification in maths. I point this out only because a little maths is also needed to understand trends in social integration, the extent to which we are becoming more or less integrated, and in what ways.[16]

The integration debate needs to become much wider, not just to include actual measures rather than simply supposition and anecdote, but also to consider more generally how people are excluded by all kinds of superiorities. The effect of tuning in to Radio 4 is

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14 The official data on child poverty released in early 2007 caused widespread shock. Even the established church has, through related organisations, expressed its shock at trends revealed during the spring of 2007, while charity leaders have described the latest trends as being a moral disgrace: see: Getta Curtis, 2007, Church Action On Poverty Shocked by UK Child Poverty Statistics, Christain Today, March 28th http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.action.on.poverty.shocked.by.uk.poverty.statistics/10134.htm. And as the (Iranian) Islamic Republic News Agency reported, UK Barnardo's chief executive Martin Narey made clear: "It is now clear that what they meant was that they intended, not to halve child poverty by 2010, but to reduce it a bit," http://www2.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-16/0703277465194218.htm

15 Two reports that have concerned the author and colleagues in particular are due to be published in the summer of this year, (one under the auspices of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation). They are: "Poverty, wealth and place in Britain 1968 to 2005" by Danny Dorling, Jan Rigby, Ben Wheeler, Dimitris Ballas, Bethan Thomas, Eldin Fahmy, Dave Gordon and Ruth Lupton; and "Identity in Britain" by Thomas and Dorling. Both will be published by the Policy Press (based in Bristol).

16 In fact a lack of basic understanding of numbers may well have lead to some recent confusion in the national debate (personal communication, Ludi Simpson, see also for more information on innumeracy: http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/staff/Ludi/documents/UrbS_41_3_2004.pdf)

sometimes cited,[17] but I'll try and give you a different example as if you are reading this your probably do not find Radio 4 particularly alienating: Did that talk of maths a paragraph ago make you feel a little uneasy? Am I talking over your head, making assumptions about you, talking down to you? What do you know of integration, differentiation, curves and functions, indices of inequality and the like? Do you feel quite as much a part of this discussion as you may have done a couple of paragraphs or so ago? Social integration is as much about feelings and emotions, impressions and perceptions as it is about measures, charts, trends and maps. Not fitting in is one of the very worse situations to find yourself in: not being valued, understood, and integrated in some way.[18] Very few people enjoy social isolation. Thus integration sounds on the face of it to be a general good, but if the debate is used to make, or even accidentally results in making, large groups of people believe that they or others do not fit in, the effect of such a debate can be extremely harmful.[19]

Just as integration has a social as well as a mathematical definition, so cohesion has a chemical as well as a social meaning. Cohesion is a word that turns up first in many childhood years, not in citizenship studies but in science, as being the force that holds molecules together in a solid or liquid body. It is measured as the strength of the attraction between the constituent parts of a body of molecules. The analogy then is with how well bound together are individuals in a society.

It is possible with both people and molecules to have just the same aggregate level of social cohesion but for some parts to be more tightly bound together than others. Families, neighbours and other social groups are obviously differently cohesively bound, and rising cohesion in one dimension of peoples' lives – for instance getting on better with friends – does not necessarily increase cohesion elsewhere (for example with family). A limited capacity for cohesion may be as human a trait as our needs for integration[20].

This think-piece has been written to present a series of arguments that together hopefully make up one simple argument for the Commission on Integration and Cohesion to consider. It should be obvious from what has been summarised above that I think the Commission needs to take at least one step back from where it began in its thinking

17 It is often hard to explain to people who are at ease with pomposity why British "high culture" is so unnecessarily deeming to others and in general supercilious; and more importantly the psychological effect that this can have in making folk feel inferior. If you do not know what I mean then spend some time outside of Britain, you can go anywhere in the world, and after a couple of months tune into Radio 4 on the internet, or simply listen to a news report in which a Cabinet Minister speaks (the choice of Radio 4 in particular is thanks to a suggestion from Richard Wilkinson, see also Wilkinson, R. (2005) The Impact of Inequality, New York: The New Press).

18 That integration of this kind is key should be so obvious it has been labelled common sense: "This book is evidence for what common sense already knows. Children on free school meals, with no holidays to talk about, unable to afford the school trips, who never invite anyone back to a shabby home, painfully understand their place in the hierarchy from their first day at school. Adults know the same, noses pressed up against the window of lifestyle shows on TV. This is a book that puts the numbers to a psychological truth: inequality is the real enemy." Poly Toynbee's review of the book referred to in the footnote above http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/ politicsphilosophyandsociety/0,6121,1538844,00.html

19 It is not too strong to say lethal. Lethal either directly by helping to incite violence, or more commonly indirectly, for instance by contributing to a way of living in which suicide rates are higher (although see notes in recent trends in the penultimate section on suicide below) or to strengthening attitudes that make violent actions overseas more acceptable (see table and text references www. worldmapper.org map 361 for one antidote).

20 It is not sensible to call for a general rise in cohesion. To take the chemistry analogy further that would be like wishing to strengthen the bounds between all possible pairs of molecules in a liquid. Most people know only a few other people well, many more slightly, and will never say a word to most that live where they live (no matter how sociable they are). What matters are the patterns to cohesion – how much mixing of different groups occurs – not maximising an overall level of gregariousness.

before going forward. Some of the presumption upon which the Commission was set up does not hold; although this is only a problem if that is not recognised. The Commission was formed by government ministers because there is a current perception that the pace of social change has stepped up markedly in recent years; that patterns of immigration have changed markedly; and that debates around identities are revealing a growing crisis of confidence in what binds us together as a society.[21] However, our memories are short. The pace of social change and its changing direction was at least as great during the late 1960s and early 1970s and again in the early 1980s when patterns of immigration changed markedly and when there was just as strong a crisis of confidence in what we thought it was that bound us together.[22]

It is often and increasingly suggested that some fears of social change, of immigration, and a general crisis of confidence, result from a lack of confidence in Britain's own identity: that a particular British identity need be formed with particular shared values. Often these are values imagined to have existed from an unrepresentative and falsely-idyllic past.[23] It is certainly true that fears have risen, in so far as these fears are expressed to opinion pollsters or through voting. However, these fears have often been most evident, and voting for extreme parties has been raised locally most, where there has been the least social change – not the most social change. Outside of the fast-lanes of central parts of London for instance, and especially in areas to which the fewest people now wish to migrate.[24]

Given all we know it is increasingly obvious that such fears of race and immigration are caused by myths that once created, are quickly spread. So too with myths concerning ethnic minority segregation, lack of integration or any reduction in cohesion thought to rise as a result. These myths derive from a lack of understanding of why so many people leave and come to this island; or so few depending on your viewpoint.[25] They are also born of some aspects of fear of social change itself which may be well warranted – given that social change has brought about polarisation by wealth, rising poverty, and growing

21 Preface to Commission on Integration and Cohesion Interim Statement (published 21 February 2007), page 2: http://www. integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Interim_Statement.aspx. It has been suggested that the term multiculturalism belongs in 1967 and not 2007 (speech by Darra Singh Chair of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion at the launch of the Commission's Interim Statement: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/news/Speech_by_Darra_Singh_at_the_launch_of_the_Commissions_Interim_Statement.aspx (I was not around in 1967 to know but see next few footnotes below as to why it might be a little premature to commission the term to the past so quickly).

22 For many children of the 1970s that lack of cohesion was learnt most directly at school with the assistance of the National Front. It is also hard to think of a less cohesive society than that which was deemed not to exist in the early 1980s when there was "no such thing" and when the most socially cohesive communities were deliberately destroyed. Those of us within Britain are certainly not living in the worse of times now, see: Dorling, D (2001) Anecdote is the singular of data, Environment and Planning A 33(8), 1335–1340. http://sasi. group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2001/dorling_anecdote.pdf

23 English tolerance is as much a manufactured tradition as Welsh dress or the Scottish kilt, or the idea of a nation called Britain containing Britons itself. See (Sir) Bernard Crick, 2007, "Quest for national identity is mistake" Times Higher, February 23, page 14. And see below on similar mistakes being made in the United States concerning the misguided celebrations of four hundred year anniversary of the establishment of Jamestown and debates of American-ness.

24 Opinion polls of segregation, even when badly designed they tend to show the greatest fear in areas with the least integration, areas to which the lowest numbers of people have migrated, and places that are now so poor that the impetus to migrate to them is no longer there (poverty reducing integration again).

25 See how small Britain is on the world map of immigration and how it is much the same size on that of emigration: http://www. worldmapper.org/display.php?selected=15 and http://www.worldmapper.org/display.php?selected=16 in contrast to many other nations that have far more interesting balances of immigrants and emigrants.

inequality in health. These fears of change have by some been overtly[26] channelled into racist fears that other people are getting 'our' money, 'our' houses, making 'us' destitute, even spreading disease.[27]

In the light of persistent gross misunderstanding, our underlying perspectives need to be updated, reassessed and rebalanced. This has been highlighted in the interim report of the Commission in which the chairman has pointed out that:

"We may need to challenge what can be interpreted by some as an obsession with a narrow focus on minorities and think more "broadband". 39% of the population live in the 86 most deprived areas – that is 19.1 m people. Although 65% of people from ethnic minority groups live in these areas, the majority –over 16m – are white."[28]

This short review hopefully provides sufficient background for a think-piece which next attempts to provide a snapshot of what you see when you do take just such a 'broadband' approach. In particular this piece aims to show how old fears and new fears are connected. It is, for instance, disproportionately within communities that are becoming relatively poorer that change in the nature of the labour force is most rapid (from where most of the 'good' jobs have gone and are going); and it is in these areas that particular communities feel most under scrutiny (because they are); from where out-migration is most common (for those who can leave). It should also be acknowledged that there is a partial spatial overlap in at least part of the country between these areas and those places where immigration was most common to in the past and some areas of high poverty now. These are also many of the places where the label multicultural is most often applied. But it is old fears and inequalities, poverty and wealth which underlie most of our new fears.[29]

Finally, in background, when considering old fears over integration and cohesion, it is crucial to point out that this think-piece does not consider Northern Ireland. This omission is partly because of very different issues of cohesion and integration there. Those should, however, be borne in mind as a test of how crass many statements made about British-ness on the mainland are when viewed from the context of Northern Ireland. This danger of being crass is also great when the debate is viewed from separate contexts in Wales and Scotland, which are touched on below. To attempt some brevity this piece also omits consideration of integration and cohesion across Europe,[30] within the most similar world regions to Western Europe (North America and Japan), and integration in general worldwide.[31]

26   And perhaps by others more inadvertently, such as the Government Minster who on Thursday April 19th suggested that "Migration made the UK richer but had also unsettled the country". That more you suggest it might the more it will of course, as any minister talking a few weeks before local elections knows: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6566453.stm

27   There is a very long history to false disease claims associated with immigration – for many examples see Steve Cohen, 2006, Title: Standing on the Shoulders of Fascism: from immigration control to the strong state, Stoke: Tentham, Books. For overt attempts to raise and lower fears in Britain see a report in a Turkish Journal on anti-Semitism and racism in the run up to local election in Britain including a nasty little definition of social cohesion from the British National Party: http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=44341

28   Page 3 of Preface to Commission on Integration and Cohesion Interim Statement referenced above.

29   This is backed up most clearly by the Department of Communities and Local Government Citizenship Survey of 2006 that found that is was where deprivation increased fewer folk get on well together – not where diversity increase: Commission on Integration and Cohesion Interim Statement, page 16 (original source referenced above).

30   Due to lack of space but despite the obvious relevance given recent migration trends within Europe.

31   Another casualty of our lack of integration is that Britain is perhaps too divided internally for researchers here to see clearly the importance of worldwide social disintegration and comparative integration elsewhere on trends within Britain. Because we are so divided we find it hard to see what matters most as clearly as those in, say, Canada, or Japan, or Italy (let alone much of Scandinavia) can.

3 The trends towards living separate lives in two nations

Although racism is rife in Britain we are not sleepwalking into geographical segregation by ethnic group. We are seeing increasing geographical segregation by social group and the slow disintegration of many collective aspects of mainstream society. As is demonstrated below, fewer and fewer households are living in normal conditions. Increasing numbers each decade are excluded from the norms of society because they are too poor to partake; a very small minority find that they are so exclusively wealthy that they can afford to exclude themselves. And, as a result of this apparent rise in the wealth of some, more may begin to fear losing what they often see as hard-worked for material advantage. Different identity groups are differently affected by where they find themselves in that process, as has been the case for many decades. And groups can and (all) do appear to move across our divides – the most clear social migration in living memory being of British Jews from living in poverty as the norm following immigration, to now being usually better-off than average. This identity group, as with all others, has at all times been extremely heterogeneous in life chances. There are thus many British Jewish people that still suffer from poverty even though taken as a whole the identity group is more affluent. Jewish people have, of course, also been much maligned in the past as to whether they were integrating in Britain. In that context too it should be pointed out that:

> *"It is important to say that much of the current language about 'inclusion' and 'diversity' evades and obscures the reality of racism. It is also often a form of mystification. 'Inclusion' can often mean that groups and individuals who fit certain criteria are included, or simply that they are physically present though they play no significant role. 'Diversity' can be seen as an end in itself, while inequality and oppression remain unchallenged."[32]*

To grasp current trends well it is necessary to concentrate on integration in society more generally, how that is changing, and only then speculate on how groups defined by various types of identity are being affected by the current integration and disintegration of society in Britain. Given that, the key social trends mentioned above have to be included in any consideration of integration. First, though, we need to consider how the social geography of Britain is changing in general, as increasingly it matters less and less who you are, but instead it matters where you are living and who you were brought up with. Were you brought up and are you still living in a place no longer seen as profitable, or somewhere where it appears that everyone else also wants to be? Your answer to that question makes far more of a difference now than it has in many recent years and decades.

Different identity groups are increasingly finding their fortunes in Britain to wax and wane depending on where they are most concentrated. Poor (mainly white) communities in much of the north of England have generally fared less well than average, as also

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32   A very useful starting point is Ken Leech's book: "Changing Society and the Churches: Race" (London: SPCK, 2005) and here I have used it as my starting point on issues of racism, integration and cohesion as relate to living as separate groups. This quotation is taken from page 44.

have people of Pakistani origin in northern towns. In contrast groups (mainly white) that located in the south have generally done much better, but not that much better than those from what is now Bangladesh who migrated to the very cheapest parts of London.

In hindsight it was lucky for Bangladeshi immigrants that it was London that so many came to, even if the capital was in population decline when most first came from those particular parts of Bengal. National and regional social divides within Britain must not be ignored, and there is ample evidence of their widening[33]. So for instance, which side of the north-side divide a group finds itself on now will have as much to do with their future life chances as how well qualified members of any group associated with immigration were at the time of immigration. Where you are living in Britain is thus a key part of the story of what underlies issues around rising or lowering of tensions, tolerance, integration or cohesion.

Over recent decades social segregation has increased for many groups. University graduates have become increasingly concentrated in London and the South East, as have the wealthy and those who are least likely to face serious illness before their old age. This is not to advocate that every area should be identical, or even that people would be happier if we strove for this (young and old adults may both be happier not to be sharing the same streets), but we do need to know why there is a trend year after year for ever greater socio-spatial fragmentation: "… for those measures that could be compared from 1971, 1981, 1991, to 2001, the numbers of people who would have to move to make every area similar rose from 9.9% to 10% to 12.1% to 13.3% of the population, respectively."[34]

That fragmentation of people into different places where they are increasingly living different lives – separate lives – becomes most apparent when we consider what it now means to be *normal* in different parts of the country.

Having established above that we need to consider a wide variety of life chances when thinking about integration it then makes sense to consider how much normality now varies between places. It also makes some sense to consider this at different stage of life. With a colleague[35] I have considered this recently, categorising 1282 areas of the country according to what kinds of living is normal in each place at each of seven stages in life. The result is summarised in the distribution shown in the graph below which we hypothesise to show a country now split by neighbourhood into two nations (coloured here dark and light).

33   A summary is available from: Dorling, D (2004) Two Nations?, The House Magazine: The Parliamentary Weekly, 29, 25. See http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2004/dorling_two_nations.pdf. See also Dorling, D and Rees, P.H. (2003) A Nation Still Dividing: The British Census and Social Polarisation 1971-2001 Environment and Planning A, 35(7), 1287–1313. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2003/Dorling_and_Rees_nation_still_dividing.pdf. Dorling, D and Rees, P.(2004) A nation dividing? Some interpretations of the question, Environment and Planning A, 26, 369-373 http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2004/dorling_and_rees_nation_dividing.pdf

34   Page 369 of http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2004/dorling_and_rees_nation_dividing.pdf

35   Thomas, B. and Dorling, D. (2007) "Identity in Britain: a cradle to the grave atlas", Bristol: Policy Press.

Figure 1: Neighbourhood in Britain counted by their (dis)advantages

Number of neighbourhoods on Y axis, advantages by life stage on X
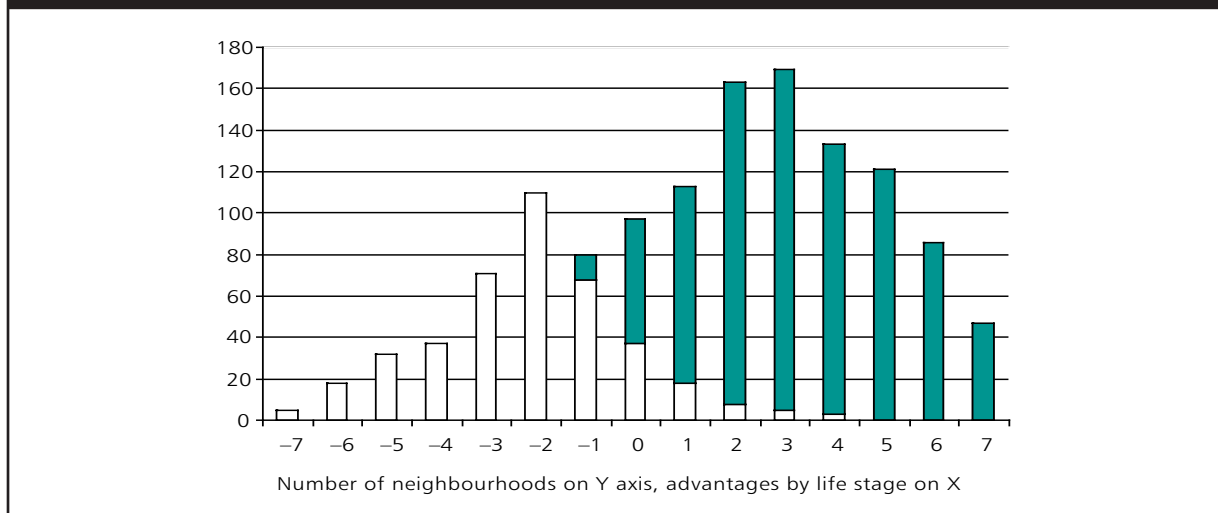
On the right hand side of the graph those neighbourhoods represented by bars coloured black in the diagram are where the local people tend to have more advantages than disadvantages in life (3 more such advantages, net on average by life stage). On the left hand side of the graph are those neighbourhoods where it is normal for most people to live lives where aspects of disadvantage are more often the norm. On average at least two more additional stages of life are characterised in these places as being associated with material disadvantage than with advantage, hence the white bar's distribution peaks at –2 (2 more disadvantages to living there than advantages, net). The height of each bar shows how many neighbourhoods of each aggregate type there are, and the dip between –2 and 3 shows how there are currently fewer neighbourhoods where people now have average life chances than there are where folk are generally either advantaged though most years of their lives if they live there – or conversely disadvantaged though living where they live. The measures we used to produce this graph are shown in the table below. Different measures could have been used at each life stage – but much the same distribution would have been found regardless.

Table 1: The score-card for how being normal varies across Britain by life-stage

Ages	Title	Issue	Disadvantage (-1)	Normalcy (0)	Advantage (+1)
0–4	Infancy	Number of cars household can access acceaccess	None	1 car	2 or more
5–15	Childhood	Average housing wealth to inherit	Less than £20,000	£20,000 to £54,000	£54,000 or more
16–24	Young adulthood	Chance of having gone to university	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	More than 40%
25–39	Midlife	Modal social grade of occupation	D or E	C1 or C2	A or B
40–59	Maturity	Modal tenure of those not buying	Social Renting	Other Renting	Owning
60–74	Old age	Modal health status	Poor	Fair	Good
75+	Elderly	Modal age of death	Less than 80	80, 81 or 82	83 or above
Data sources: 2001 population census, land registry, and mortality records.					

To understand the table: an area is advantaged at all seven life stages where most infants live in households with access to two or more cars; most children can expect to inherit £55,000 or more in the future; at the very minimum two out of five 18 and 19 year olds go to university; most young adults (25–39) have a job in occupational classes A or B; of those without a mortgage the majority of older adults own property outright; most people aged 60–74 have good health and the minimum modal age of death is at least 83 years. There are 47 out of 1282 neighbourhoods in Britain where all seven of these conditions hold and thus the right-hand bar in the graph above has a height of 47. In interpreting these distributions it is very important to realise that the limits shown in the table above are what divide the advantaged from the normal and disadvantaged. They are not what the average levels are within the extreme groups – which vary far more than shown here. The map of separate lives, of how each neighbourhood scores on this fifteen point scale from –7 to +7 looks like this:

Figure 2: **Neighbourhoods in Britain by Net life-stage weight of social advantages and disadvantages**
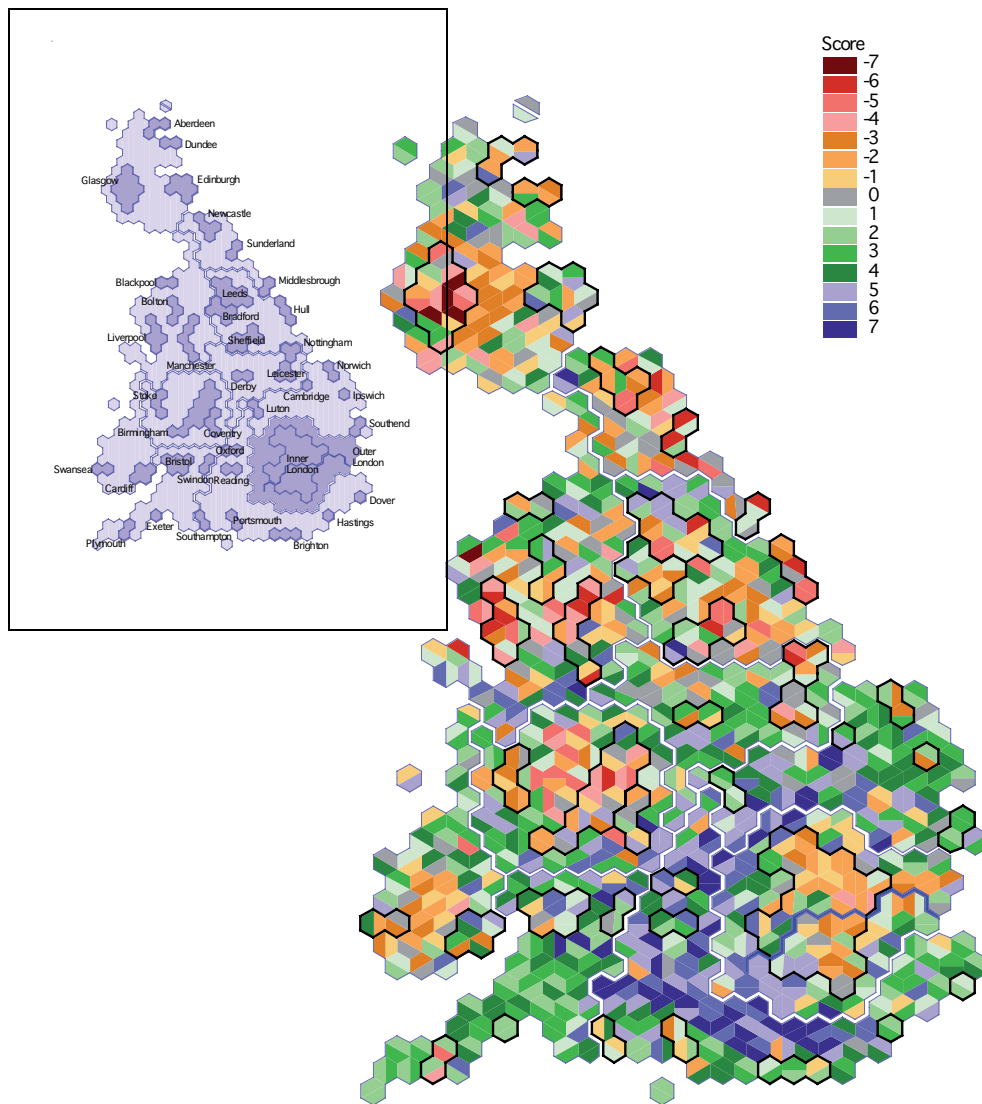
Note: average neighbourhoods are shaded grey and very few are average. Advantaged neighbourhoods are shades of green or blue depending on the net number of the seven stages of life at which folk who live there tend to enjoy advantages over others in Britain. Disadvantaged neighbourhoods are shades of oranges and reds similarly.

The map is a cartogram in which each neighbourhood is given equal area. A key to large towns and cities is above.

4 The trends towards increasing deprivation reducing social cohesion

There may not be many average neighbourhoods in Britain but hasn't that always been the case? In this section new evidence that we have seen a rapid fall in the number of average areas in recent years is presented. More areas are now either rich or poor and this is a trend which reduces social cohesion. That cohesion is reduced not just by increasing deprivation, but also by a growing group of people being superficially wealthy, and a smaller group of people holding so much wealth that they are able to exclude themselves from the norms of society by dint of their wealth. Year on year the wealth required to be so exclusive rises and so the cost of maintaining an exclusive group such as this is extremely high in simple money terms – let alone the damage such wealth divisions do to social cohesion.

When talking of rising deprivation reducing social cohesion we often forget that in Britain today we are living in one of the wealthiest nations on earth at a time when its riches have never been more abundant. We also often forget that it is the richest members of society in Britain which are usually the most socially excluded. Below I present new evidence that it is the richest who mix least with the rest, both geographically and socially. The richest of all are the group who because of their wealth are able to exclude themselves from the norms of society and by doing so they, even inadvertently, reduce our general sense of cohesion – the sense that we are "all in this together", or that we need to "look out for each other", because we have a common interest.

The most exclusively wealthy people in Britain are not born in the same hospitals as those in which most of the rest of the population enter into this world; or if they are, they are quickly moved to a private room within the building following birth. There is no point in calculating indexes of educational isolation for the richest members of British society. They have their own separate schools. Debate over school segregation nowadays rarely mentions this and independent schools are usually excluded from quantitative analysis. However, in recent decades it has become mandatory for all but the least able of the children of the very rich to gain a university education and so, for a brief three years, the richest rub shoulders at least[36] with the almost as rich. From then on the closest most of the most wealthy of people in Britain will come to achieving a sense of general social cohesion and general understanding of society is through what they learn if they talk to their cleaner, or au-pair, of the ramblings of their taxi drivers, or from radio, television and the larger format newspapers.

In case you think these statements are a little alarming, consider the implications of the housing wealth per child being raised 20 times more in the best-off tenth of areas in

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36   if little else…

Britain as compared to the worse-off tenth of areas between 1993 and 2003.[37] Some identity groups have benefited from the vagaries of the housing market – principally if they were able to buy in and around London in recent decades. That is often partly an accident of time of immigration for those born abroad. Other groups who have not been able to take part in this bonanza are now suffering from growing up in some of the most acute concentration of "poverty-social-exclusion" seen for decades, especially when they live in central London and rent. To give the most simple of examples, given that above the fifth floor of tower blocks in England most children are not white, and that most children living above the fifth floor in England live in central London – it is not impossible to work out who has been most affected by this concentration of poverty amidst such rises in affluence.[38]

Spatial coincidences stack up strongly if you begin to look for evidence that rising deprivation[39] leads to increasing social disintegration in Britain. For example, there are more than five hundred parliamentary constituencies in England and Wales, yet it is within the constituency with (by far) the lowest average incomes that one of the latest major riots took place in Birmingham. In large parts of the media that riot was blamed on tensions between two minority groups. Almost no mention was made in the media to that the riot took place in the most income-poor enclave of these two countries.[40]

People in Britain in a recent study have been divided into five "cohesion" groups according to the assets or lack of assets available to their households. Only two of these five groups are integrated into the norms of society: those that are neither rich nor poor, and those that have assets that make them rich, but not so rich that they can and do easily exclude themselves from the norms of society. These five groups were derived through a research project sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that I was part of which drew on data that includes: breadline, poverty, social exclusion and other surveys 1968, 1983, 1990, 1999, 2004/5 and the 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 censuses. The general definition of poverty used for this work was that of Peter Townsend. The breadline poor are those whose "resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities"[41]. In other words they are not part of a cohesive society. Add to them those who are in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns by virtue of their exclusive wealth and a measure of how cohesive society is as a whole can be obtained (how many people are not socially excluded). In between 1981, 1991, and 2001 the proportion of households in Britain excluded from society by dint of their

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37 This calculation was made in work with Bethan Thomas using the same 1282 neighbourhoods as refered to above and first published by Shelter in 2005 as: "The great divide: an analysis of housing inequality"

38 D. Dorling, B. Wheeler, M. Shaw, R. Mitchell, 2007, Counting the 21st Century Children of Britain: the extent of advantage and disadvantage, 21st Century Society, forthcoming.

39 Rising relative deprivation is coincident with and created too by growing inequality in general (part of which is due to increasing concentration of wealth amongst the exclusive rich).

40 The data on incomes was released on the web from the 100% records of a major bank that monitored the payments made into its customer's account – it was not the result of some model or survey. High street banks and disaffected young men are equally effective in identifying the places where people have least and are getting (relatively but not absolutely) less each year. This is no recipe for integration.

41 For more details of the methods and background see Dorling, D., Rigby, J., Wheeler, B., Ballas, D., Thomas, B., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D. and Lupton, R., 2007, "Poverty, wealth and place in Britain 1968 to 2005", Bristol: Policy Press.

poverty or wealth rose from 24.0%, to 24.8% to 32.6% each decade; and by 2001 only half of all households were neither rich nor poor. The graphic below shows how the population is divided up by these five cohesion groups. The poorest of the poor are separated off – the core poor – a group consisting now of roughly 11.2% of households. This has been done to illustrate how even this subset of those excluded from the norms of society by poverty is itself almost twice as large a group as compared to the 5.6% who are exclusively wealthy.

In the study of who is least integrated into society in Britain, the core poor are those households which are (using thresholds determined objectively) especially income poor, consistently materially deprived and also all subjectively poor (readily describing their living conditions as living in poverty). The exclusively rich are again determined by those living beyond objectively determined thresholds, but in this case based in theory on how large their homes are, how many cars they have and how much they spend on new cars, on overseas air travel, on private health care, on private health insurance, on private school fees, on private domestic services and servants, and on second and subsequent homes. Only when such (conspicuous) expenditure clearly separates the exclusive rich from the rest are they included within the category 'exclusive wealthy' below. In contrast, the breadline poor includes all those similarly excluded from the norms of society through their lack of wealth (in most cases their debt). Finally the rest of the "asset wealthy" are those whose housing wealth indicates that they might be subject to the inheritance tax threshold were they not to spend more than they receive in pensions prior to death (if current trends continue most will spend more and so not be inheritance taxed). The exclusively wealthy are a subset of them – many of whom will avoid inheritance tax on all or some of their wealth through various means. In contrast to the merely wealthy, many of the exclusive wealthy will pass on a significant amount of their large wealth to their children.

Figure 3: **Proportion of households in Britain by five 'cohesion groups, around 2001**

All the breadline poor (including core poor) and the exclusively wealth are socially excluded by definition.
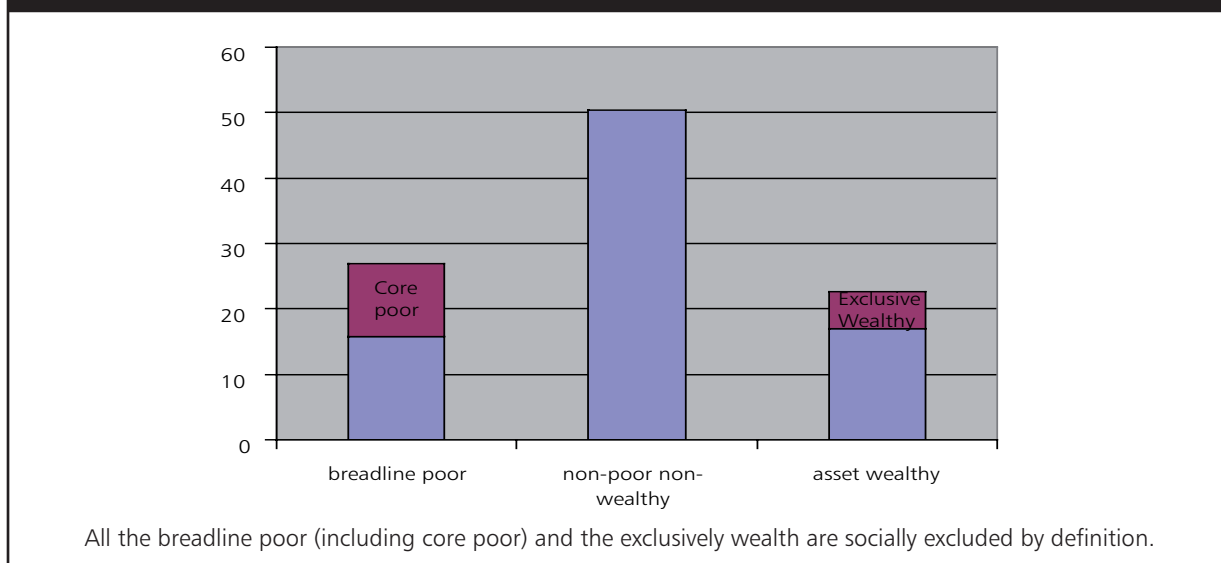
Because the exclusively wealthy are such a small group, it is increasing deprivation that is most important in driving the absolute rise in the numbers of people and households which are now not well integrated with the norms of society. However, in terms of

the amount of money that would be required to be part of what would enable re-integration, the exclusively wealthy hold far more than all of the breadline poor and the non-poor non-wealthy put together (groups into total consisting of around 77% of all households). In fact, if all forms of wealth were included they very probably hold more wealth than the remaining 94% of all households in Britain. This is just one of the reasons why it is important not to ignore the exclusively rich when considering problems of social cohesion. It does not take a great leap of imagination to work out where the interest payments on the debt that most of the poor now pays goes to via the holding of shares in those institutions which either finance or underwrite that debt. And interest from debt is just one of a myriad of ways in which wealth is constantly redistributed from the breadline poor the exclusively rich in Britain today.

Figures 4 and 5 which follow show, using the example of the West Midlands, how social cohesion has been damaged by increased deprivation coupled with the rising concentration of wealth elsewhere in that region (and there is nothing particularly special about this region). In 1970 less than a fifth of households were excluded from the norms of society in most areas shown on the first map in Figure 4, and nowhere were two fifths or more so poor[42]. By the year 2000 almost everywhere that was anywhere near the built up area, at least a fifth of households were poor, excluded from the norms of cohesive society, and in a cluster within Birmingham the majority were excluded through poverty.

Figure 4: **Breadline poverty in the West Midlands conurbation, 1970 to 2000**
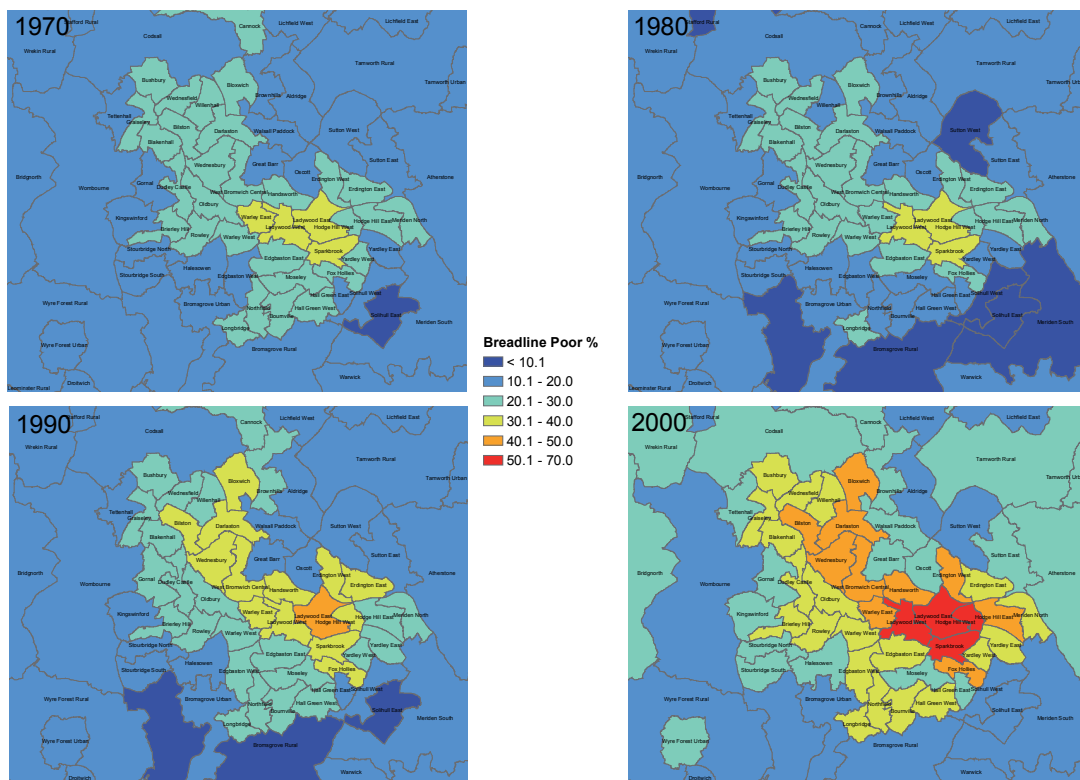
The same areas are mapped at each point in time using consistent measure of poverty. Full details are in the published JRF report: "Poverty, wealth and place in Britain 1968 to 2005", Bristol: Policy Press.

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42   Given the general topic of this think-piece it is worth pointing out that despite this it was within particular parts of this region that voting in the 1960s had swung against the national trends following the speeches of Enoch Powell.

In contrast, as Figure 5 below illustrates, in very few parts of the West Midlands were more than a third of households asset wealthy in 1980. By 2000 large rural swathes contained a majority of such households although the proportions within most of the built up areas remained below a tenth. A river of wealth has flown around Birmingham, bypassing a city within which poverty has risen greatly when measured in terms of social exclusion and lack of cohesion. The region and the rest of the country are now more divided than at any point in this series of decadal (and mid-decade) snapshots. The next detailed picture will be taken in 2011, but already the signs are that the socio-spatial polarisation of the 1980s and 1990s is continuing almost unabated past 2005.

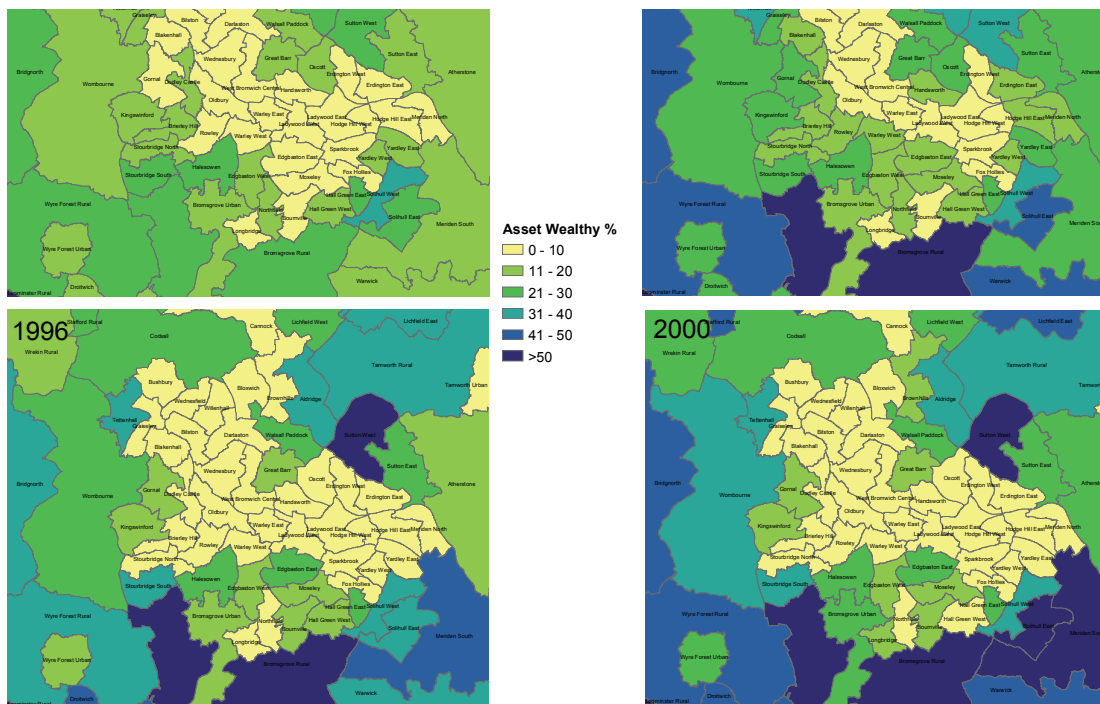Figure 5: **Asset wealth in the West Midlands conurbation, 1980 to 2000**

The same areas are mapped at each point in time using a consistent measure of asset wealth. Full details are in the published JRF report: "Poverty, wealth and place in Britain 1968 to 2005", Bristol: Policy Press.

Table 2 below shows for the whole of Britain how these five groups of households have become more spatially concentrated or de-concentrated. De-concentration has occurred most notably for the core poor since 1980. There has also been an ever so slight de-concentration[43] for the exclusive rich most recently. However, despite this slight fall, three fifths of the exclusive rich would have to move home were they to be evenly distributed across the country. The poorest of the poor are the most evenly spread out group – there are some very poor people almost everywhere. The table below represents a first attempt to estimate the proportions of households by 'cohesion category' if equal numbers were to be found in each neighbourhood of Britain – a kind of feudal village in every small district (with the rich in their manor house and the poor not far from their door). It is

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43   It is so slight it is certainly within the limit of error, but it does highlight that ever growing concentration is not inevitable.

vital to note that such an arrangement would not be cohesive – it would contain just as many people excluded from the norms of society – they would just be living closer to one another[44]

Table 2. The Index of Dissimilarity for each of the five cohesion categories				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Core Poor	12.3%	15.6%	15.3%	14.1%
Breadline Poor	14.7%	16.7%	17.1%	18.3%
Non-poor, non-wealthy	*	15.4%	16.7%	19.8%
Asset Wealthy	*	34.9%	34.5%	40.1%
Exclusive Wealthy	*	43.6%	60.6%	59.7%
*Small-area estimates of asset and exclusive wealthy households were not available for 1970, meaning that non-poor-non-wealthy households could also not be estimated at this time. Details of calculations are in the published JRF report: "Poverty, wealth and place in Britain 1968 to 2005", Bristol: Policy Press.				

As the ranking of the five cohesion groups by their degree of spatial segregation in 2000 makes clear, it is the exclusively wealthy who are most segregated, followed by the asset wealthy in general, then the non-poor-non wealthy households, the breadline poor and then the least segregated of all: the core poor. Rising deprivation does decrease social cohesion, but is does so most dramatically by encouraging the rich and especially the very rich to cut them selves off geographically from the rest of society ever more strongly than before. Popular perception is that there are poor "ghettos" most cut off from the rest of society, and people mix best in rural villages which include many mixed areas. However, measure rather than guess and you find the opposite to be the case. There are exclusive areas (not yet quite ghettos) that are home to most of the exclusively rich. The rest of the wealthy mix a bit better than they do; average folk much better; but best mixed amongst all the rest at the level of the neighbourhood are the breadline and core poor. The poor are everywhere. More concentrated in some places than others, but there are always people who live nearby who are not part of a cohesive society, who cannot take part in what is seen as normal in society, who are excluded. It is our continued collective tolerance of a small group being very wealthy, and of a large group living in poverty and growing relative poverty, reflected through increasing deprivation, that by the very definitions of poverty and extreme affluence is reducing social cohesion.

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44 And it could be argued that it would be unlikely that such high rates of breadline poverty, or exclusive wealth, would be tolerated nowadays if different groups did live nearer each other which is one possible reason as to why they don't.

5 How we might challenge attitudes, perceptions and myths

The third area this think-piece addresses is the challenging of misleading attitudes, perceptions and myths concerning integration and cohesion. By far the best way to do this is to turn attention to what is really happening and what matters most. This is because often confronting a myth can unfortunately help sustain it by implying that there is a debate to be had, that is worth having when in fact there are far more serious debates that are not being aired. Often, the airing of debates over myths can in part raise incitements to increased racial hatred. It is certainly the unspoken (because it is illegal) intention of some involved in such debates to increase such hatred. For instance, a 'debate' about immigration can help propagate a myth of a 'problem' of immigration. Similarly the lack of a debate on poverty, wealth, and social cohesion and integration can help sustain the myth that poverty and wealth have little to do with integration and cohesion.

In the light of these concerns this section has been restricted to considering the two related, but in my view false, "problems" of immigration and language (issues which are in turn related to debates over ethnicity, emigration, race and religion). What I aim to do is raise again the very real problem of racism that underlies much of the myths concerned with the debates over immigration and language. As emphasised above, only when the key issues of current trends in social integration and disintegration are understood, does it then make sense to look at the intersection of those trends and issues of immigration, emigration, ethnicity, race, language, religion and much more. There are some very basic truths that are not realised. So let's realise some: firstly, who do you think form the largest groups of immigrants in Britain? And, secondly, whose migration has had the greatest detrimental effects on local culture, by not speaking the local language for instance?

Within Britain the largest and socially most divisive group of "foreign born" immigrants in terms at least in their effect on language and understanding are the English migrants to Wales. This is not to claim that English immigrants in Wales have gone to the north and west of that country with the deliberate intent to reduce social integration and cohesion, to avoid learning the local language and to avoid integrating in society. It is to say that before looking at anywhere else within Britain to find any possible detrimental effects of immigration, it is these parts of Wales which need to be considered first. This is true for issues of both immigration and language.

Take the map of foreign born children shown below (Figure 6). The map shows the country of the second largest group of foreign born children in each large neighbourhood in Britain. It is drawn in this way because in all but three cases, the largest group of children were born where most now live. Those three exceptions

are neighbourhoods in Buckley, Connah's Quay and Rural Montgomeryshire, where a majority of children were born in England despite these areas all being in Wales. Concerns about housing are often raised when immigration is discussed and yet the effects of English immigration on pricing local people completely out of the housing market in much of mid and North Wales is not part of this debate, as neither is the effect of English immigration on Britain's second most popular language: Welsh.
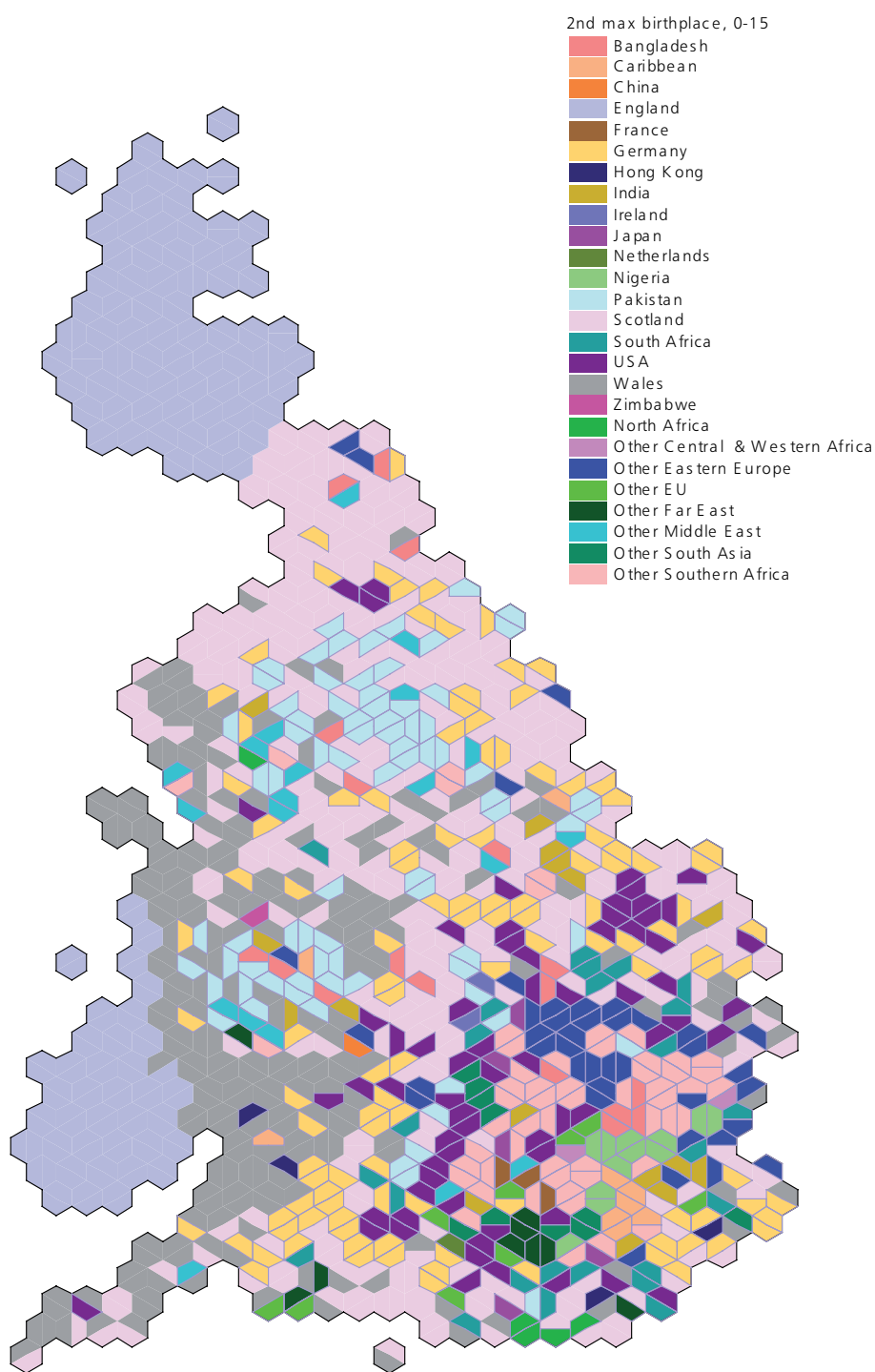
To continue with the map of foreign born children in Britain, outside of Wales the highest concentrations from any one country are found in Chelsea, Hyde Park, Kensington, Mildenhall, and Walton. The local cultures in some of these places have been altered fundamentally due to the immigration of those children and their parents. In some cases entire towns have been transplanted, stores and customs from abroad introduced. In other areas this immigration to England has made local housing completely unaffordable and these immigrants dominate the local businesses of banking and finance. These most concentrated of immigrant families have come with a very different culture and quite[45] a different language. Although we perhaps should be tolerant of their refusal to learn English properly (they can usually be understood) we need perhaps be a little less tolerant of the weapons of mass destruction brought in by some of them, or their use of our airspace and airports for some of their activities that are certainly illegal. They are over here in greater numbers than all but one other immigrant nation. And their presence is never mentioned in debates over immigration. They are Americans.

On the map in Figure 6, and not counting the countries of the island of Britain, the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th most popular countries of origin for children who are immigrants to this country are Pakistan, South Africa, India and Bangladesh. The 7th to 13th: France, Australia, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Hong Kong, Nigeria and Japan. The 1st and 2nd are Germany and the United States of America. Fewer children living in Britain were born in Pakistan, South Africa, India and Bangladesh than in the United States and Germany. Fewer again from all of France, Australia, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Hong Kong, Nigeria and Japan combined. And who are these German immigrants? Many do not even think they are immigrants at all, such is our collective ignorance! Most of them returned from Germany when their parents were withdrawn from military duties around the Rhine. This immigration is often highest (and often their parents have returned) to areas to which it would appear almost no other group now wishes to migrate.

Figure 6 presents what could be interpreted as a rainbow mixing of children's countries of origin in much of England at least. However, it would be misleading to interpret it as this, as in many areas the vast majority of children are born in England. This is despite Britain being home to one percent of the world's adults, but only one half of a percent of its children. The definition of Community Cohesion most widely used by Local Authorities suggests, among other things, that cohesive communities are ones in which people from different backgrounds have similar opportunities; strong and positive relationships; and

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45   They don't for instance understand something as simple as the meaning of the word "quite", quite.

Figure 6: **Country of birth of the second largest group of children in each neighbourhood in 2001**

2nd max birthplace, 0-15

- Bangladesh
- Caribbean
- China
- England
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- India
- Ireland
- Japan
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Scotland
- South Africa
- USA
- Wales
- Zimbabwe
- North Africa
- Other Central & Western Africa
- Other Eastern Europe
- Other EU
- Other Far East
- Other Middle East
- Other South Asia
- Other Southern Africa

Source: Thomas, B. and Dorling, D. (2007) Identity in Britain: A cradle-to-grave atlas, Bristol: Policy Press. See chapters on infants (aged 0–4) and children aged 5–15 and aspects of their identity in Britain.

in which their diversity is valued; and in which there is a common sense of community for all communities within such a cohesive community[46]. All these four parts of the definition presuppose that the community in question is made up of people with diverse

46   Page 2 of: Geoff Elliot, Reporting Diversity: How journalists can contribute to community cohesion, Cambridge: Society of Editors and London: The Media Trust. http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/401/ReportingDiversity_id1502401.pdf

backgrounds. For much, if not most of Britain this is not the case, and it is not the case when most forms of identity are considered other than gender (there are only a few communities that are predominantly male for instance – most are military).

As the map in Figure 6 shows, when counting by children (who consume most of local services such as education and who pay no taxes) most people in Britain would fail to mention the two countries that most immigrant children are from. Our levels of ignorance of immigration, and of the spatial segregation of those who are immigrants and their descendents, is almost as woefully high now as it was half a century ago. We are still just learning that we have no ghettos. Of course, there is nothing new in the fear of supposed ghettos and repeated claims of social "indigestion" of strangers (see below). In one form or another current day expressions of concern are expressions of fear and ignorance which was as prevalent in the recent past as it is now.

Fears of immigrants were widespread amongst supposedly stalwart Bishops of the Church of England in the 1950s and directors of the Institute of Race Relations and its offshoots since the 1960s (up almost to the present day). Parallels to past debates in our current debate need to be drawn so that we can see where we are still going wrong, even if the lineage of these ideas causes some discomfort to many current protagonists. For instance, remember that just fifty years ago a review of comments on race by bishops in 1955 showed that the dominant themes were the supposed absence of any colour bar, the danger of 'Little Harlems' in Britain, and the supposed wrongness of 'mixed' marriages[47]. Or that just over forty years ago it was claimed that: it (was) essential to cut down the number of immigrants 'until this mouthful has been digested', or so said Philip Mason, Director of the Institute of Race Relation[48]. He also "referred to areas in which over 20 per cent of the population were (black) immigrants even though the 1961 Census had shown that there were few enumeration districts in which black people formed more than 15 per cent"[49].

People (all of us) need help to overcome their (our) fears. Pandering to those fears merely feeds them. We need to try to understand what we are frightened of. These fears resurface time and time again, often with new targets, but old concerns. And this repetition occurs decade after decade after decade. The elite may use more coded language now but they express as much fear as anyone else. Left untended or encouraged by pandering, the fears can change our collective behaviours; for instance, in patterns of voting in Wolverhampton in 1966 – repeated elsewhere in the extremely distinctive pattern of voting seen in the 2005 general election. Note also that the word racism did not enter English dictionaries until the 1960s although the doctrine is a little older, so these fears are old, but in their current form not that old.[50]

The fear when sown, encouraged and grown is palpable and often results in violence. The violence occurs when the naïve but supposedly well meaning concerns and mistakes

47   Details given in K. Leech (Changing Society and the Churches: Race", London: SPCK, 2005) p.104.
48   The Guardian, 1965 (referred to by Leech, ibid, page 55)
49   Ibid (Leech) page 61.
50   Ibid page 3.

of those with some power are translated into more alarmist language as news headlines. Then, twisted a little more and in more nasty ways by other types of media, eventually they help incite the very acts that those who first expressed their fears hoped could be averted. The current fear was created and nurtured only within the span of most of our lifetimes. But its origins are reflected in much debate today. There is a fear that a multicultural diverse society may be hard to reconcile with a cohesive society. It is a fear that those that have described themselves as progressive in politics propagate when they suggest that there is some need to reconcile multicultural diversity with social cohesion.

Figure 7: **Talk of "adult conversations"**

RENEWAL

Progressives need to develop a narrative that is relevant at the start of the twenty-first century. What was right in the 1960s is not right today. We need to have an adult conversation about diversity, its implications and how to reconcile it with the aim of building a cohesive society.

Source Renewal: The Journal of Labour Politics, Front cover, Volume 14, number 4, 2006

I'll give just one example based on an article published recently that referred to the need to have an "adult conversation" (see Figure 7). In the article, directly after making the claims reproduced on the front cover of the journal, as shown in the Figure above, the author went on to say that birth rates in India and China were rising. In neither case is this true, but suggesting this creates fear – a fear of swamping. It was a simple mistake made[51] – but the debate is so littered with so many simple mistakes such as this, and such widespread maligning of others who do not agree with you (so they are considered by implication if they do not agree with your point of view to be having childish conversations) that a series of basic facts need to be recognised. These are facts about trends such as in fertility rates worldwide, as well as about who is coming here (and where we are going when we emigrate). We are all capable of making mistakes – even when trying to be helpful, but if we care, we will not continually propagate myth and we will learn from our mistakes. Many mistakes need correcting, myths are been sown, and generalisations are being made that do not hold. If you are concerned about immigration then begin with the English in Wales, the Americans everywhere, and ask why there are so many German born in this country and why they are living where they are living.

51   The author confirmed to me that he had made a simple mistake (personal communications.)

As my second example, take language – an issue closely associated with immigration:

"Language is also a central fact in everyone's social life. People's attitudes and most deeply held beliefs are at stake, for it is through language that personal and social identities are maintained and recognised. People are judged, whether justly or not, by the language they speak."[52]

There are many languages in use in England other than English, until recently most were largely ignored:

"The other languages of England are all those languages apart from English that are ignored in public, official activities in England. They are the languages that constitute unrecognised social skills among a large proportion or our urban population"[53]

"Nearly all"[54] people in England who speak a language other than English also speak English. And almost all these bilingual individuals were born outside of England or had parents who were.

The maps in Figure 8 below show the extent to which in an earlier study[55] it was estimated that people spoke another language as well as English. This was estimated for each Local Authority District in Britain[56]. It was estimated both for the year 2001 and for how that propensity had changed since 1991. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland the censuses asked of people aged three and over their knowledge of the national languages: respectively Welsh, Gaelic and the Irish language. To produce the map shown below people who probably have any knowledge in the relevant language, not merely those who could speak it were included. The minority languages of Britain are strongest in the most remote and rural areas of Wales and Scotland[57]. And we should not forget that this is despite those "social-cohesion" policies of earlier times that discouraged the use of national languages, such as the use of the "Welsh Not" schools.[58] Those policies to promote the use of English and to try to discourage bilingualism led to a decline that has only recently, apparently, been reversed.[59] It would be a tragedy if the same were to occur with the more recent minority languages of Britain.[60]

In the maps and cartogram shown in Figure 8 below are plotted the changing proportion of the population who are expected to have one or more skills in a language other than English. Almost all shown are also skilled in English. We expected this ability because these are the people born in a generally non-English speaking country. Most people in

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52   M. Stubbs (Ed.), 1985, The Other Languages of England: linguistic minorities project, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; page xi.
53   Ibid page xiv
54   Ibid pages 5 and 30.
55   Dorling, D. and Thomas, B. (2005) People and Places: a 2001 census atlas of the UK, Bristol: Policy Press.
56   And, incidentally, Northern Ireland is shown too here where in places some people speak Irish as well as English.
57   Historically, English became the lingua franca in the more industrialised areas, such as the South Wales valleys where there were large numbers of immigrant workers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact the second largest number of immigrants in the world at the time came to South Wales (the largest numbers flocked to the gold rushes in California at that time). As always social cohesion such as that found in South Wales and California was built upon the labour of past communities of immigrants.
58   A punishment administered to those children caught talking in a language other than English at school.
59   Higgs, Gary, Williams, Colin & Dorling, Danny (2004) Use of the census of population to discern trends in the Welsh language: an aggregate analysis. Area 36(2), 187–201. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2004/higgs_et_al_welsh.pdf
60   And a tragedy bordering on a farce if it were a Commission supposed to be concerned with integration and cohesion that contributed to such discouragement. Especially given how awful are the language skills of the vast majority of people born in England (most understanding only English).

England who are bilingual are bilingual as a result of migration.[61] Also included are those who can understand Welsh, Gaelic or Irish. Below, the maps are explanations of the assumptions and observations required to draw the maps.

What the maps in Figure 8 show is that across all of Britain, it is, ironically perhaps, in particular Scottish districts that are found the smallest proportion of people who know any language other than English. This is in and around those districts that have suffered from some of the earliest and most prolonged deindustrialisation. It is always a bad sign when so few people in an area can speak more than one language as it implies that there has been little reason for many to come there for some time (and that the older languages of the area and its culture were destroyed long ago). In contrast, its is in Wales, together with the London boroughs of Brent and City of Westminster that the highest proportions of bilingual speakers are found.[62] The highest increase since 1991 in being able to speak a language other than just English has been mainly in Wales and in the London boroughs of Newham, Southwark and Harrow, while decreases in the propensity to speak other languages and found only in parts of Northern Ireland and in Oadby and Wigston in the East Midlands.

The left hand side map and cartogram beneath it show the proportions estimated to be able to speak at least one other language in the year 2001. These vary by district from just 0.6% of the population to up to 73.5% of all people living there (as we assume children under age three can speak no language the actual maxima will be a little higher).

The map and cartogram on the right hand side of the diagram show the range of changes in the proportion of the population who are bilingual. Rates have only declined in those areas shaded orange.

To produce the map of bilingual language ability shown in Figure 8 we treated each constituent country of the UK separately.[63] In Wales 0.8 million people, some 27.5% of the population, claimed that they had some ability in the Welsh language in 2001, compared to 0.5 million, 19.2% of the population in 1991, an increase of 8.3%. Note that the wording of one of the language questions in Wales was altered a little between the censuses and this may account for part of that rise. For Scotland, the proportion of people who could read, write or speak Gaelic rose by half a percentage point to 0.1 million in 2001, 1.9% of the total population, this was compared to 0.07 million, 1.4 %, in 1991.[64]
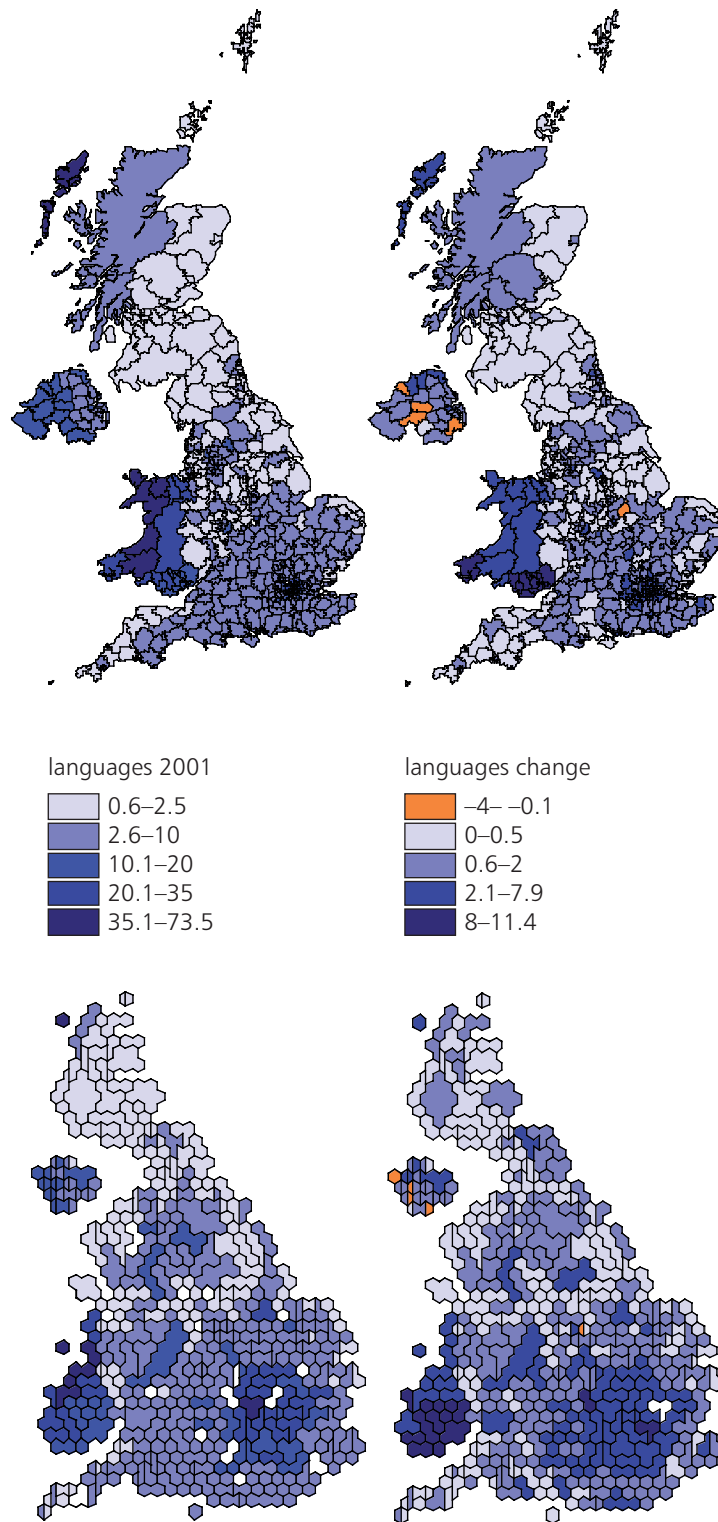
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61   Not everyone born in a non-English speaking country will speak a language other than English, but hopefully this inherent over-estimation will compensate for part of the underestimation of assuming almost complete monolingualism amongst the English-born.

62   The areas with the lowest proportion who we estimated to speak a language other than English are: East Ayrshire, Midlothian, Fife, Dumfries & Galloway, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Falkirk, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, Aberdeenshire, East Lothian, North Ayrshire, and West Lothian. Those with the highest proportion are: Westminster, Newham, Denbighshire, Brent, Conwy, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Isle of Anglesey, Eilean Siar and Gwynedd.

63   These details are given in D. Dorling and B. Thomas, 2005, People and Places: a 2001 census atlas, Bristol: Policy Press (pages 151 to 152); but reproduced again here for clarity.

64   The comparable figures for Northern Ireland showed only a slight increase from 0.14 million users of the Irish language in 1991 to 0.16 million in 2001, from 9.0% to 9.9% of the population living there.

Figure 8: **Proportion of People bilingual 2001 and 1991–2001**

languages 2001

- 0.6–2.5
- 2.6–10
- 10.1–20
- 20.1–35
- 35.1–73.5

languages change

- −4– −0.1
- 0–0.5
- 0.6–2
- 2.1–7.9
- 8–11.4

Source: D. Dorling and B. Thomas, 2005, People and Places: a 2001 census atlas, Bristol: Policy Press (note Oadby and Wigston is possibly the most interesting district in Britain in terms of immigration trends – but space is lacking here to go into detail).

The last two censuses revealed that the traditionally Welsh speaking areas of north and west Wales were experiencing the lowest increases while the eastern Anglicised Welsh districts have shown the greatest increase in reported use of Welsh.[65] Welsh has been compulsory for schoolchildren aged up to 14 since 1990, and to age 16 since 1999. Nearly a quarter of secondary schools in Wales are defined as Welsh speaking schools where the curriculum there is delivered through the medium of the Welsh language. The distribution in Wales reflects where children and young adults who have received education in the Welsh language (and older people) tend to live.

In contrast, the only Scottish district where over 10% of the population knows Gaelic is Eilean Siar with 71.6%, which has also seen the greatest increase: of five percentage points.[66] Knowledge of Gaelic reflects those remote Scottish areas where the elderly tend to live. It is the elderly who are also most likely to actually use these languages in the Celtic fringe.[67]

For England we mapped the proportions of people whose birthplace was in countries where English is not the national language. The number of such people rose from 2.4 million, 5.2% of the population of that country in 1991, to 3.5 million, 7.1%, in 2001.[68] As would be expected, these people are mainly found in London and the South East, together with significant numbers in the cities of Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford, Leicester and the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge. Much of the increase has occurred in these same areas together with Bristol, Coventry, Sheffield, and Newcastle. These tend to be areas where young adults live and thus in England more people may actually be using more languages rather than simply know how to partly use them. This is especially the case for languages from the rest of Europe.

If this representation is at all a fair picture of the languages understood by people in the UK, then more people can understand a language other than English in the southern half of the country, especially in Wales and London. Almost everywhere there may be slightly more people who understand a language other than English than there were in 1991. However, it is quite possible that fewer people understand other languages as well as in the past, can speak them as fluently, write them or read them easily. We know very little about bilingualism in Britain.

65 Under 15% of the population of Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Torfaen know Welsh; these districts show the greatest increase of over 10%. Over 50 % of the population of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Isle of Anglesey, and Gwynedd have some knowledge of Welsh; the smallest increases of under 7% are in Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Flintshire and Carmarthenshire.

66 The Scottish districts where fewer than 1% know Gaelic were: East Ayrshire, Midlothian, Dumfries and Galloway, Falkirk, Fife, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Aberdeenshire, East Lothian, North Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Lothian, Angus, Dundee City, Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands. The smallest increases of under 0.4% were in: Fife, East Ayrshire, Midlothian, Dumfries and Galloway, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, and West Dunbartonshire.

67 The Gaelic language is in great danger of largely dying out when the eldest generation of speakers dies. There is a similar if less extreme potential problem with Irish, where it may be known but is not much used. No district in Northern Ireland has more than 20% of their population knowing Irish and Northern Ireland is the only country to show a decrease in the proportion of national language users in some districts since 1991. The Northern Irish districts with the highest proportions tend to be where young adults live and may reflect where Irish Medium Education schools have been more recently established. Almost all other Celtic languages associated with the British Isles are either extinct or close to be so. There remain a few speakers of Cornish and Manx. English, of course, was the language of later waves of immigrants to the Isles.

68 Ealing, Tower Hamlets, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Newham and Brent have over 30% of people born in non-English speaking countries, while at the other end of the scale are Knowsley, Derwentside and Easington with 1%. The districts which heard the greatest increases were: Redbridge, Merton, Hounslow, Lewisham, Hackney, Ealing, Tower Hamlets, Brent, Harrow, Southwark, and Newham with rises of over 7%; those with no change are Easington, Staffordshire Moorlands, Cannock Chase, West Somerset and Richmondshire, while Melton had a decrease of -0.1% over the course of the decade.

We do know that very high numbers of people who are bilingual can also speak at least a third language. More than 40 per cent of bilingual respondents to what remains the most authoritative survey could[69]. The majority of bilingual people in England are able to understand and speak English well. Almost all of those who cannot are recent arrivals and they almost all then quickly learn[70]. When last surveyed, Polish speakers, along with Turkish, Gujerati and Greek had the best oral-aural skills in English (of all whom were bilingual). Further, despite the fact that many now bilingual residents in England did not learn English until coming to England, a majority have never used a translator or anyone else to interpret for them, and for those that have, it has mainly been to aid their interaction with local government, health services and schools where interpretation has been needed, almost never interpretation by a paid professional.[71]

Most of the world's population and most school systems in the world are bilingual. Bilingualism is celebrated amongst the affluent in Britain.[72] Private nurseries teach French to children aged three (the age we first ask about Welsh speaking). But when poorer groups are bilingual their language ability has often been blamed for problems that are not really about language. "Of course it makes sense for anyone living or settling in Britain to learn English. Any help and assistance for those who need it to do so is welcome. However, issues of integration have far more to do with matters such as racism, discrimination, poverty, access to institutions and services and inequality than the single matter of speaking English."[73] And, as the Home Offices official guide to 'Life in the United Kingdom' makes clear[74], it makes sense for new comers to Britain to try to ascertain, for instance, what languages local General Practitioners speak.

There is a great danger with language that if you ask the banal question: "does it help to speak English to be English?" – you will receive banal answers. To get more interesting answers I asked a Welsh identity group what their take was over the supposed need for everyone to learn English even more than they already do. What follows is a paraphrase of their argument.[75]

The Welsh language advocates had been cautiously sympathetic to statements made by Gordon Brown about the need to learn English – cautious because there were obvious parallels with arguments they make over the need to learn Welsh. However, they were

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69   M. Stubbs (Ed.), 1985, The Other Languages of England: linguistic minorities project, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; page 182 (excluding Greek speakers in London who mostly could 'only' speak Greek and English).

70   Ibid page 187. The main exception in this survey was recent Chinese speaking migrants to Bradford who also often found speaking English difficult as they were recent arrivals. Many spoke Kaka or Vietnamese as a well as Cantonese. They were a slightly over studied group: 'they've been interviewed so often since they arrived in the U.K. that they think surveys are a major feature of the British way of life'!, ibid page 173).

71   Ibid page 189.

72   Ibid page 377.

73   Lord Herman Ouseley, former Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, News Release, National Assembly Against Racism, 21 February 2007. (Personal communications info@naar.org.uk).

74   The Home Office, 2006 (eleventh impression) Life in the United Kingdom: a journey to citizenship, London: TSO. Admittedly it is not made clear until page 89 that you might enquire of the language skills of general practitioners, and that long after the introduction by the then Home Secretary in which he suggested that all migrants should get a better knowledge of "our language and our way of life" (ibid page 4). Presumably no one had told Mr Blunket that we had more than one language and that there was more than one way of living. In the light of this conflicting advice from the Home Office, and the general discussion above, it may be worth reconsidering some of the claims made in this interim statement: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/news/Not_speaking_english_is_the__single_biggest_barrier_to_successful_Integration.aspx

75   They have a range of material available online – www.cymuned.net is a good starting point, and they've also got a booklet addressing concerns for Welsh-speaking areas at www.YnyFro.com. See also http://www.notlikeus.com/

increasingly frustrating to read these kinds of comments presented in ways which quite clearly do not recognise the existence and legitimacy of other 'native' languages in the British Isles. They had for instance known Argentineans who could speak Welsh but not English and had no problems becoming fully functioning members of Welsh-speaking communities in Gwynedd.

For Welsh speaking advocates, the key point, that language competency increases opportunities for social interaction, is of course valid – and, every bit as valid for (mainly English) non-Welsh speaking migrants into Welsh speaking areas as it might be in England. The standard disclaimer that 'the Welsh all speak English anyway', is partially misleading – it may simply not be true of the very young or the very old, and it may certainly be at a significantly lower level of fluency than their use of Welsh, which clearly has implications for social interaction (and Welsh speakers who don't feel comfortable speaking English will be significantly less willing to engage socially with non-Welsh speakers).

Over immigration of the English (specifically non-Welsh speaking migration to parts of North Wales), economically, they say it's a mixed bag, because there are examples of people bringing businesses into the areas and examples of retired/non-working inward migrants, but socially and linguistically it's very clearly destructive. Consequently they think that the current debate in England is a very important one. They believe that if Government shies away from complicated issues around integration and community cohesion, it gives fuel to far right groups and the politics of hate – whereas if practical, long-term solutions can be found for strengthening communities and making them sustainable, everybody wins.

To end they give Switzerland as an interesting example. Despite the fact that only three or four cantons are officially Italian-speaking, there is no threat to Italian as one of the languages of Switzerland because of the levels of devolution to the cantons. They believe that getting as many decisions as possible devolved to the most local level is perhaps the most single important political development they face for the next 20 years. Switzerland of course is no panacea and may not be a particularly welcoming place for those people not viewed as integral to parts of the longest spans of its history, nor a place that is particularly well integrated with its neighbours. However, if this level of tolerance of a diversity of languages is possible in Switzerland, then surely the most popular, say, four languages of Britain could be better tolerated here. One or two of those most popular four are likely to change generation by generation.

Our inability to celebrate a diverse range of languages and the links to that of a fear of immigration are not unique failings. For instance, in talking about the myth in the United States of America that first significant settlement was in Jamestown, an authority very recently wrote how misleading this is and how severe the ramifications of myths such as this are when they spread to issues of seeing certain languages are more useful than others, and certain immigrants as undesirable. The Jamestown myth is to the fore this

year with the four hundred year anniversary of the founding of the settlement being celebrated in May this year. In Britain we can learn from the experience that, as a white minority of Americans use the anniversary to celebrate their version of "American-ness" the myth that this particular colony was a particularly important milestone can cause great harm:

"Yet the enduring power of the Jamestown myth is palpable. You can sense it in the hostility to Hispanic immigrants, whose historic claims to a place on US soil are incontestable. You can detect it in the widespread adhesion to a monoglot Anglophone culture, on which – otherwise rational and intelligent Americans will tell you – the essence and unity of the country depend. You can observe its effect, I think, in the abiding diffidence of black Americans, who still seem unable to believe society is unprejudiced against them."[76]

Turning from myths of American-ness to the myths of British-ness,[77] to place our new evidence within the history of this debate we need to turn to the real problem of racism that underlies so much of our attitudes. When the history of today's debate is written it will be very difficult to distinguish much of what is currently being said and written about Muslims in Britain from that which was said and written in not so recent years; from before even the Jews were being vilified in the 1890s; or when Labour cabinet ministers in the midst of those supposedly idealistic 1960s muttered on the inconvenience of those "coloureds"; or the resonances between the words of Enoch Powell then and much of what is being said on the "progressive" left today. The three quotes below were first uttered over forty years ago, and in the first case over one hundred years ago. But haven't you heard similar words spoken more recently?:

- "In face, instinct, language and character their children are aliens, and still exiles. They seldom really become citizens." Revd, S.G. Reaney, 1892[78]

- "the country has been taking in coloured immigrants faster than they can be assimilated.", Frank Soskice, Labour Home Secretary, 1965[79].

- "I am certain that not only the Conservative party but the overwhelming majority of people in this country are of the same mind, and wish to see coloured immigrants integrated into the life and society of what is now their homeland." Enoch Powell, 1965.[80]

The people – that the Reverend Reaney thought had faces that did not fit (in Bethnal Green in 1892), or that Frank Soskice thought could not be assimilated in 1965 or that the Conservative party and the people of the country were reported to be of "the same mind" over later in that year – have always become citizens, their children have not been aliens, they have never remained exiles. But our ability to learn from (or collectively

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76   Felipe Fernández-Armesto, Prince of Asturias professor of history at Tufts University in the US, The Times Higher, April 13th, 2007, page 11.
77   "Ironically, the elements of society most attuned to feeling British are new immigrants, for whom 'Englishness' poses too great a barrier". Michael Lynch, research fellow at Edinburgh University, The Times Higher, April 20th, 2007, page 13.
78   Ken Leech's, 2005, "Changing Society and the Churches: Race", London: SPCK. Page 73.
79   Ibid page 56.
80   Ibid page 62.

remember) our history – of when we were, and when we were seen as, aliens, exiles, having faces and languages that did not fit – is extremely poor. Nevertheless we are not destined to continue to repeat the mistakes of the past.

To avoid making the mistakes of the past we must not forget that there are whole counties in Britain where state education does not take place in English. We must not forget Northern Ireland in talking about integration and assimilation because there we would not be so crass (even us English). We also must not forget in debates about "British-ness" the Victorian failure to assimilate, integrate and ultimately re-label the Northern British (Scots). And we must recognise that we have a current obsession with counting concentrations of people with darker skins. That will change soon to a new obsession. See bbc.co.uk/bornabroad for an atlas of maps from which to choose the next victims of this debate so that they too can be blamed for swamping "our" country especially by the less numerate amongst us:

- Derek Beacon, 1993: "..once claimed that a local housing estate in East London, Masthouse Terrace, was almost entirely Asian, and a 'no go area' for whites. When told that the Asian population was 28 per cent, he replied that this was more than half…"[81]

- "The population of many northern cities [is] well over 50 per cent immigrant" Winston Churchill (junior) 1993[82]

- A dangerous numbers game is played with integration, the "dark million" reporting of the Times in 1964 did untold damage. The critical figure for how many can be seen as too many came from a census in 1933 and was 1%. Statistics in society are the arithmetic of politics[83].

Whether or not the population of Masthouse Terrace was 100%, 95%, 90%, 50%, or even 28% made up of people stating that they felt their ethnic identity to be Asian is immaterial to how society is integrated. But it does not hurt – and can often greatly help – for people to have the right figures. Winston Churchill junior's statistics are of course true in that almost all of us are immigrant if you include our recent forebears' origins, but they are as true of the Blenheim estates of England as of its northern cities. The figure of 1%, above, came from the world's first "computerised" 77 character punch card census held in Germany shortly after the election of 1933. From that alone it should be clear there is no "threshold figure" that is too high. Instead it is intolerance that should be seen as intolerable.

It is not any geographical concentration of people labelled as being of a particular race or ethnicity that prevents integration, but inequalities, most clearly in wealth. When such inequalities rise, societies become less integrated and then everyone becomes more different from everyone else. Differentiation is the inverse of integration and leads to

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81   Ibid page 95.
82   Ibid page 63.
83   Ibid, and see also Dorling, D. and Simpson, S. (1999) Statistics in society: the arithmetic of politics, London: Arnold.

disintegration. In the United States (which has often led the way on issues of integration, civil rights and immigration in comparison to the UK) the most convincing analysis of the issues of lack of integration by race concerns issues of differentiation by wealth with the recent legacy of slavery still clear in where the wealth lies. Most recently it has become apparent that many Black and Hispanic Americans with a mortgage stand to lose their property due to the higher interest rates they have to pay because they are deemed to be bad risks.[84]

It is worth repeating that Philip Masons, the first Director of the of the Institute of Race Relations, the precursor to the Commission for Racial Equality, said "It [is] essential to cut down the number of immigrants until this mouthful has been digested" in 1965; the year after the Times Newspaper wrote of a "dark million".[85] Racism is not a natural emotion. It has to be stoked up, evil ideas lit and constantly re-kindled to maintain it. Sadly much of that is done by folk who probably had other intentions. The history of the debate on multiculturalism is littered with ill-thought sentiments and phrases, from digesting immigrants to sleepwalking to segregation.

Philip Mason is far from alone. In 1978 in publications attributed to the Commission for Racial Equality there was talk of ghettos emerging in London and the use of inflammatory language that it is extremely hard to believe did not further contribute to the incitement of hatred that resulted in the rise in racially motivated attacks and deaths of that year.

Currently history is repeating itself again over debates concerning multiculturalism, immigration and segregation. Public debate is being distorted by flawed methods of analysis. Some interpretations of what official data show are a means to shed less light on the subject and reinforce prejudices which have no foundation in reality.

People by ethnic group in Britain are becoming less segregated by area. Unfortunately not a lot of people know that. Doubly unfortunately a lot of people appear to think that it matters if this imaginary segregation is actually happening. Although crudely-counted segregation has not yet risen, in years to come it probably will and here is why: People are having children at the ages at which people normally have children and are dying at the ages that people normally die in Britain. Why should that result in the argument that segregation is rising? Well, if you have a group that are in general too young to be dying, but the right age to have children, that group will tend to grow in numbers where they live (although many will have to move out also so we see dispersal[86]).

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84   Otherwise known as the "subprime market" Rupert Cornwell, 2007, American dream ends in property market crash, The Independent Newspaper, April 6th: "US interest rates have increased sharply recently – in 2003 and 2004 they were at a historic low of 1 per cent. They have risen to more than 5 per cent. … In the past five years, the subprime market has risen sharply – it now accounts for nearly a quarter of new mortgages and is worth about $665bn (£337bn). In 2001, it was worth about $200bn and only accounted for 10 per cent of loans." http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article2426222.ece

85   The supposedly worthy warning of the Times in 1964 is a particularly important example of how what appears to begin as a debate in elite publications is transformed into what ends up as a violent racist movement involving the murder years later of Bengalis in London by poor white men over fears first stoked up by rich, mainly white, men.

86   See Simpson, L., 2007, Ghettos of the mind: the empirical behaviour of indices of segregation and diversity, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A., 170, 2, 405-424. In particular his suggestion that growing social spatial segregation since 1971 may be been one of the reasons as to why racial spatial segregation has decreased over time as new communities formed originally around immigration divide later alone English class lines and migrate accordingly (page 420).

Some commentators have interpreted this as rising segregation. They have done this because the same numerical result would have occurred if new migrants had arrived in the same areas as new births, thus creating a larger community of that particular group. They often also assume that when a group gets larger it mixes less with other groups.

Sadly, it is possible that they have convinced the majority of the population of this claim. In fact the opposite has actually happened. Segregation (as conventionally measured) has fallen and where concentrations of minority groups have increased that has predominantly been due to births. Children and young people mix better than older adults.

Indices can be deceiving things. Innumeracy is an enormous problem in the current largely innumerate debate on segregation. But there is also a degree of malice at work as exemplified by the questions about segregation that have been asked in recent surveys. One biased question recently asked by a supposedly reputable survey organisation was (and yes this was put as a question): "I am concerned that British society is becoming increasingly racially segregated: strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree".[87]

Some people do not like to see any black people living in any areas of Britain – and especially dislike seeing people (who they do not deem white enough) giving birth to children here. They will put great effort into trying to convince others to hate. Yet more do not realise how serious this debate is, nor appreciate how their contributions, even if misguided, may cause more harm. Get it wrong: add to the fear, prejudice and misunderstanding, and the least damage that happens is that you are only remembered for having got it wrong. The worst that happens is people are killed.

Anti-racist work alone cannot integrate society in Britain. The importance of geography to understanding how people are divided is crucial if more people, and especially children, are to be included in the mainstream rather than excluded from integration by choice or constraint. It is near to impossible to reiterate too many times what is actually occurring. We are facing a future in which more people will be excluded from ordinary living because they (and hence their children) either cannot afford to take part in ordinary activities or (for a very few) they are wealthy enough to be able to – and are choosing not to – take part in normal society.

Children in ethnic minorities are becoming increasingly associated with integration towards both ends of this disintegrating society. Access to medical school, for instance, provides an extreme example of the processes at play.[88] And our vocabulary to describe all of this is currently too narrow, and it has been too narrow for some time. It is:

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87   The survey organisation was YouGov. Migration-Watch paid for the survey.
88   Seyan, K., Greenhalgh, T. and Dorling, D (2004) The standardised admission ratio for measuring widening participation in medical schools: analysis of UK medical school admissions by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sex BMJ 2004;328:1545–1546. http://sasi. group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2004/seyan_greenhalgh_and_dorling.pdf

"… a small and monotonous vocabulary. The mainstays are a few words – environment, development, dimension, strategy, integration, and the like – used in bulk as nouns or adjectives, and almost invariably with the prefix 'human' (as though the authors had to affirm their humanist credentials …[and who does not integrate in our cities] *migrants from rural areas or immigrants from abroad. They are regarded as the culprits – whether or not they do play any such role."*[89]

Those words were written over thirty years ago, just a dozen years after the same newspaper in which they were written had coined the term the "dark million". We can challenge attitudes, perceptions and myths with constant reminders from our history, with actual evidence, and by an insistence on keeping our eyes on what is really dividing us, not on being drawn into false debates.

89 My words in roman type. Quote from: Ruth Glass (1976) The alarming but tired clichés about urban doom, The Times, 4th August. Perhaps she should have added cohesion to her list of jargon words? Sourced in turn from Ken Leech (2006) The Samuel Ferguson Lecture, University of Manchester, 19 October. On Page 7 of his lecture he points out that…"1968 gave birth to two new terms 'skinheads' and 'Paki Bashing'." Terms almost as new as multiculturalism in 1967 then…

6 What might bring communities and people together?

The last part of the remit for this think piece concerned providing positive suggestions for what might help bring communities and people together. It cannot be stressed enough that much that is written (and even more that is said on air) about integration and cohesion contributes hugely towards dividing people and communities by diverting our collective attention away from what actually divides us. This cannot be said too often or the point made too forcefully. The best way to bring communities and people together is to cease dividing them on false premises. Those times when we in Britain have concentrated our attention most on the real and substantive divides have tended to have also been those times when we made most progress in reducing many of those divides, and such cleavages have often been narrowed in the past; most notably at the start of the twentieth century when various forms of social insurance were introduced (around 1901–1910); in the late 1940s; in the late 1960s; similarly with education reform and, housing and health enfranchisements. Social division dominated the agenda again in the mid 1990s when the Conservative government of the day were forced to admit that social integration and cohesion had diminished. A large part of why the Conservatives were put out of office in May 1997 concerned their failure in the 18 years prior to that date to bring communities and people together.

In Britain, issues of fundamental importance to social cohesion and integration concerning in particular high and rising inequality in wealth teetered around the agenda again in 2004/2005 with the ten year anniversary of the Borrie report (The Commission on Social Justice report which could as well have been called a Commission on Integration and Cohesion). In early 2007 these issues are back on the agenda but often under the guise of trying to understand why we are not all happy and the misery that can be caused by inequality, excessive affluence and a more and more consumer orientated society. The concern that peaked around 1906, 1945 and 1964 (with election victories for the then progressive parties in those years) did, in each case, result in policies that could later be shown to have substantially improved integration and cohesion. In contrast, that concern which peaked in the mid-1990s has yet to result in more than a weak curb to a form of social disintegration where the individual and his/her family were deemed as sovereign. However, it is important to remember that the concern over social disintegration did contribute greatly to that landslide election victory of 1997, and was responsible for much of the subsequent Labour victories. There is a great public desire for real integration and cohesion over issues that still mater keenly. I'll end by touching on five that have mattered at each of the last periods of recent concern, but in each of which real progress towards greater integration is still required: education; employment; health; housing; and poverty.

6.1 Education

Initial thinking by the commission suggests that it needed to take a greater account of geography. Geography matters because we are limited in the amount of time we have. For instance, the commission suggests that residential and school segregation were possible red herrings as integration outside of community areas and schools may make up for some lack of integration within them[90]. The problem with this argument is the lack of teleporting machines. People are limited in the time they have to travel and the environment (let alone our roads) can barely cope with the current mess now of the school-runs. These are school-runs that criss-cross major cities like never before because we never before had so many cars. Social interactions for children will continue to be mainly focussed around their home area and school, and hence the home area of who else goes to their school. Also although faith schools are mentioned, independent schools separate a minority of children far more from the mainstream than do faith schools. Both the absolute numbers and the proportion of children attending independent schools are slowly but steadily rising.

School segregation is a mess. It results in children not knowing children the same age as them that live on the same street, because they go to different schools. It results in hundreds of thousands of miles of extra journeys being made every morning and afternoon to ferry children to school, sometimes to a school a very long way from their nearest. School segregation causes huge angst to pupils, who know what is thought of their school, or what is expected of them if their school is highly "sought after". Similarly it causes great concern to parents, feeding on their fears of other people's children; or telling them that other people shun their children. School segregation (whereby children do not attend their nearest school) is the antithesis of social integration and cohesion. The rationale in the vast majority of cases where children are made, or choose, to travel further is that their parents do not trust the people they live near: other parents who live near them, their local teachers, and local children. School segregation also feeds residential segregation, so attendance at their nearest school alone is no guarantee of integration with others across a town or city. School segregation is a mess.

My suggestion is to do nothing about it. Leave all the schools as they are. Do not introduce complex admissions systems, lotteries, tax private education more, or penalise faith schools. The problem is not the schools. And the problem is not the teachers. And the problem is neither the parents, nor the children. The problem is what happens after school. It is only because there are such huge divisions in the life chances of children who attend different schools that school segregation is so high. If attending a private school did not improve your children's chances greatly in life, all but the extremely stupid and pompous would no longer pay for something they could gain elsewhere for free. I may

90   "Our initial thinking is to put faith schools in the same category as residential segregation, almost as a 'red herring' in the debate – i.e. there is no problem as long as there is social interaction outside the faith school, and the faith school is delivering a quality service to its pupils" Commission on Integration and Cohesion Interim Statement, page 27 (see footnote 21).
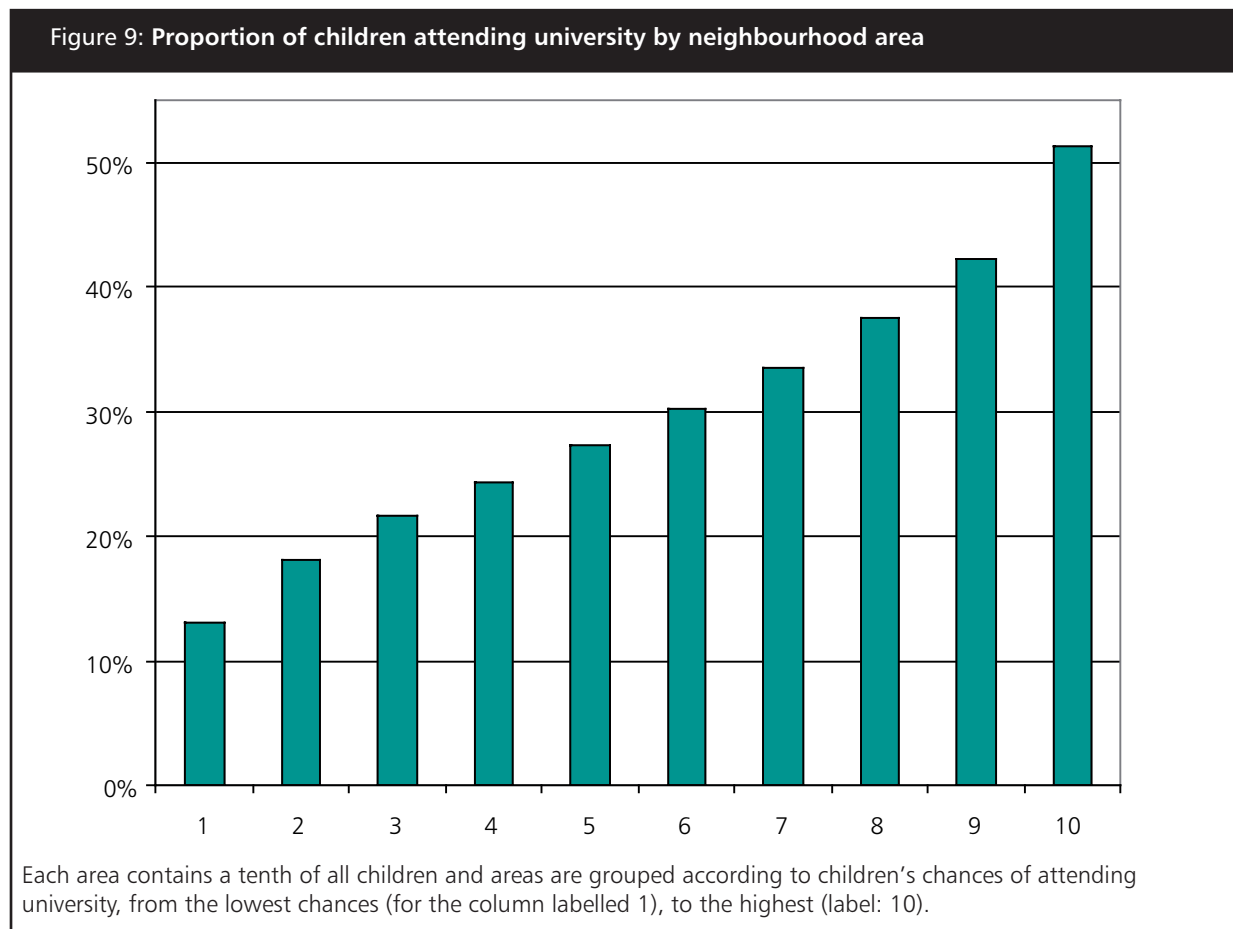
be being a little disingenuous, but I suspect that if the school you went to mattered less then far fewer parents and children would discover an interest in god in the run up to educational division time. Housing prices in those 'good catchment areas' might also take a little bit of a knock if there were not such an apparently serious implication to your children attending one school rather than another.

By now you probably have an idea what I am talking about. You should if you have children. What parents are really paying for in their fees for private school is not the cost of entry to the private schools but the cost of entry to what comes after school. That is what those with faith are praying for, and it is what those without faith are buying. Buying through the deposits and interest payments required to buy that property in the 'right' area. The paying and praying and buying are all for and about little invisible tickets to a rosy future. In 1906 most children left school at age 13; not until 1947 was the leaving age 15; by the late 1960s the norm of 16 was spreading across the country as the new minimum; and now, for most children, it is 18 when they leave education. And of those 18 (and 19) year olds, 30% now go to University within a year (43% one way or another by age 30). This now includes almost all of those who attended a private school. In the not too distant past not all of them had to go. Something has changed to make school so much more vital – and through this change, the mess of school segregation has grown. That change is the importance of going to university.

When only a few school-leavers went to university attending or not was of less aggregate importance. Just as most of us do not worry over whether we will become members of the House of Lords, so university access has not mattered to most. Access may not have been fair, just as access to the House of Lords is still not fair. But when only a tiny number of odd folk go, it appears not to matter much. But what happens when almost a third of children go either immediately or just after a year? That 30% access figure given above hides a huge discrepancy. By the neighbourhoods which have been used in most of the analyses presented above, as few as 6% (Hunslet in Leeds) and as many as 71% (Kensington in London) of 18 and 19 year olds get to go to university in a year (these are the proportions of all children reaching the age of 18 starting study in a Higher Education Institute between 1994 and the year 2000). The graph below shows the average proportions from each decile of neighbourhoods when neighbourhoods are divided between those children who are least likely to attend (decile 1) to those where they were most likely to go (decile 10). In the most likely to go areas children are more likely to go than not, and from growing up in some streets it is now almost impossible not to later attend university in Britain.

If the inequalities shown in Figure 9 were your chances of securing a job within a year, depending on where you grew up, or of receiving decent health treatment, depending on where we lived, then there would be an outcry. The situation is far more extremely skewed if you consider to which types of Higher Education Institution children from these areas are going. And it is becoming more unfair as time passes: The majority of 'extra' Higher Education places have gone to children from already advantaged areas and so

the participation gap between social groups has been increasing (for the 1997-2003 graduating cohorts).[91]

Figure 9: **Proportion of children attending university by neighbourhood area**

Each area contains a tenth of all children and areas are grouped according to children's chances of attending university, from the lowest chances (for the column labelled 1), to the highest (label: 10).

To address the segregation of pupils in schools and the damaging effects that inequalities in education have on social cohesion and integration we need to increase participation in Higher Education much more than is planned for 2010. The target for then is that half of all people aged thirty and under will have gone; it will probably be missed. Narrowing the gradient of the graph above can only be done, without huge protest, by raising most the lowest bars.[92] There will still be protest from those who might see their children's relative advantage diminished by other peoples' children being given chances. But then there are always people who dislike moves towards real social integration and cohesion, and it is only when we begin to tackle such mean spiritedness and selfishness that we will really begin to increase integration and cohesion.

91 Source: the commentary "Little progress towards a fairer education system" on HEFCE Widening Participation report (by Mark Corver), January 2005 (concerning the 1994 to 2000 entry cohorts); see: http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/commentary/corver_and_ dorling_2005.pdf

92 And that is done in the short term by raising the funding limits and the very strict place quotas that currently hold those bars as low as they are, in contrast to so much of the rest of the affluent world.

Further, just as it makes sense for more school children to attend their nearest school; it makes transport, environmental, and great social (cohesion!) sense for more university students to do the same, as they do in so many other countries in the world. Most countries that are a republic, or which have had a revolution (such as the United States) have established universities not for the elite but also for locals. Not all locals admittedly, but the English higher education tradition is an odd relic of our particularly uneventful national history. Britain is the odd one out amounts other nations in Europe, and amongst powerful nations in general in many ways. Britain is odd in the elitism of its Higher Education system in comparisons across the board, for instance with each of the other four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (nations all of which were defined through revolution). It is not possible to both expand Higher Education and to maintain it as a key gate-way to use to differentiate between classes. We try to do this for no better reason than that historically we like to differentiate more than others! The rest of the world has learnt at least to view its children as potentially equally able. We have some catching up to do in this regard.

6.2 Employment

Social cohesion and integration continues to suffer greatly in Britain because so many people wish to work and, for one reason or another, are unable to. The map below shows that almost nationwide at least one in ten adults aged 45 to 59 cannot work and have to rely on benefits. Or, to be slightly more precise, this is the situation almost everywhere outside of a few parts of the most affluent of southern English counties. In much of the country some distance from the south, far more than a tenth of older adults are forced to rely on at least one of the benefits included here to survive. The benefits include: Bereavement Benefit; Carers Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; Incapacity Benefit; Income Support; Jobseekers' Allowance; Pension Credit; and Widow's Benefit. In a few places the majority are in this situation, surviving without work and on one or more of this list of allowances, supports, credits or benefits. This is the picture drawn at a time when those with public responsibility celebrate success in the overall "record levels" of employment. The 45 to 59 age group are focussed on here as they are experienced and hardly likely to be part of some counter-culture that does not wish to take part in employment. They are also the age group most likely to have responsibilities for looking after those both older and younger than themselves. A society in which these eight safety nets catch so many is a society where the real problems of employment are its availability and its extremely unequal rewards.

Figure 10: **Proportion of people aged 45–59 in receipt of means-tested benefits**
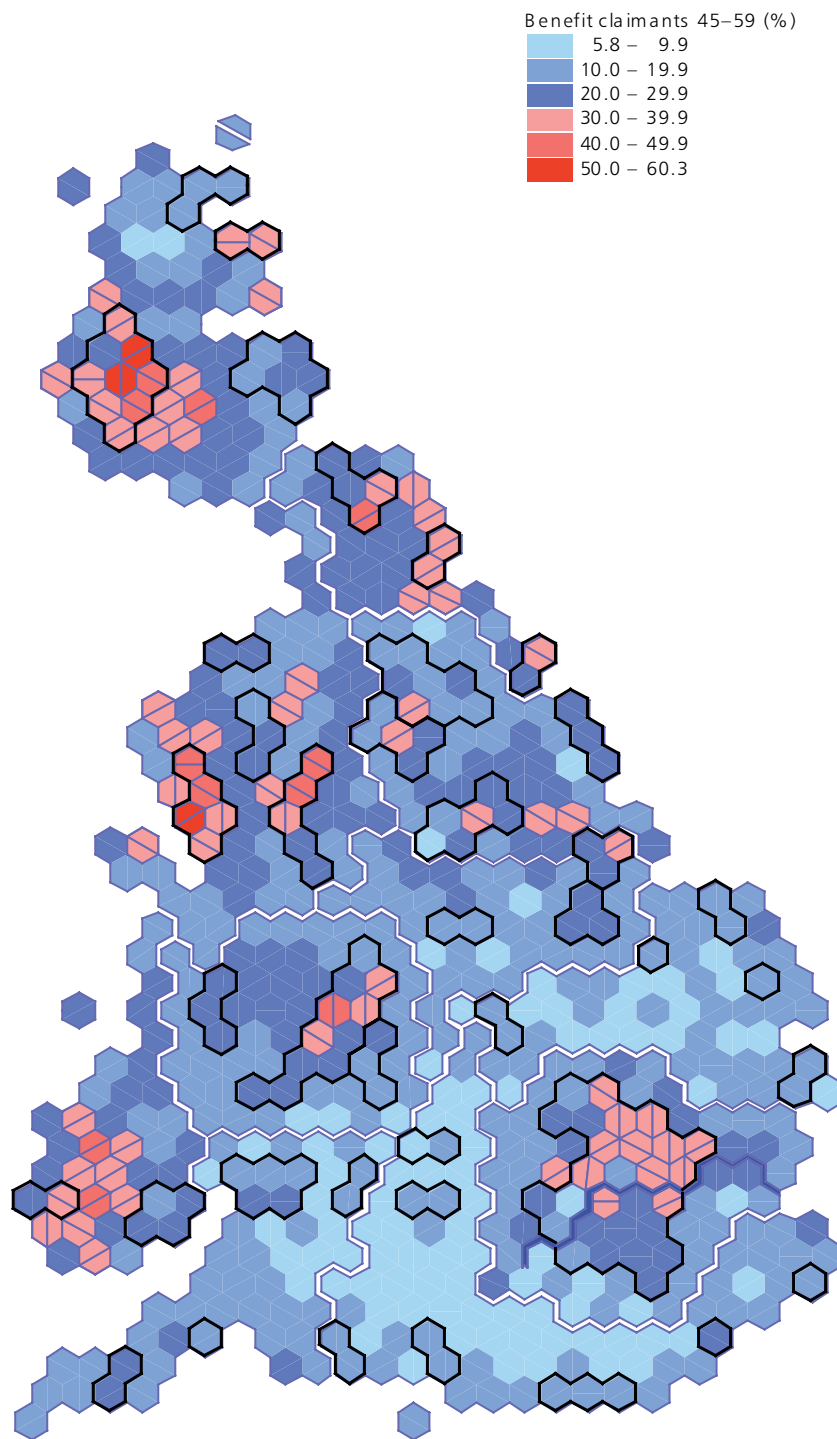
Benefit claimants 45–59 (%)

5.8 – 9.9
10.0 – 19.9
20.0 – 29.9
30.0 – 39.9
40.0 – 49.9
50.0 – 60.3

Source: Thomas, B. and Dorling, D. (2007) Identity in Britain: A cradle-to-grave atlas, Bristol: Policy Press, Figure 6.8. This snap-shot was taken around summer 2001 coinciding with population denominators.

Further, work itself is not the solution to the problem even for the minority of those living on benefits able to secure it out of those mapped above:

"Despite the claim that 'work is the best route out of poverty', getting a job doesn't necessarily mean escaping poverty. Public policy has been relatively effective at helping people into a job, with Britain now enjoying record levels of employment. However, a significant minority of working people remain poor. Almost half of all poor children live in a household where someone works…"[93]

Employment divides are not just growing between those who are paid very well in employment and those who are paid so poorly that despite a minimum wage at least half the poor live in a household where at least one person works. The divides are also growing in the nature of the work people do, the "lousiness" or "loveliness" or their work, the perks associated with that work (or lack of any); the security of work and general control it gives or takes away from people's lives. Employment rates are at record levels only because so many people have to work, as so much work pays so badly that one wage no longer supports a household. The divides have grown too between work rich and work poor households. In the former not just two adults, but often some of their grown up children may also be working. Households may appear work rich but they are collectively all working mainly just to make ends meet. In contrast, in work poor households, the ends rarely meet, as is evident from the poverty statistics. One part-time or even full-time wage does not sustain most households in an adequate standard of living.
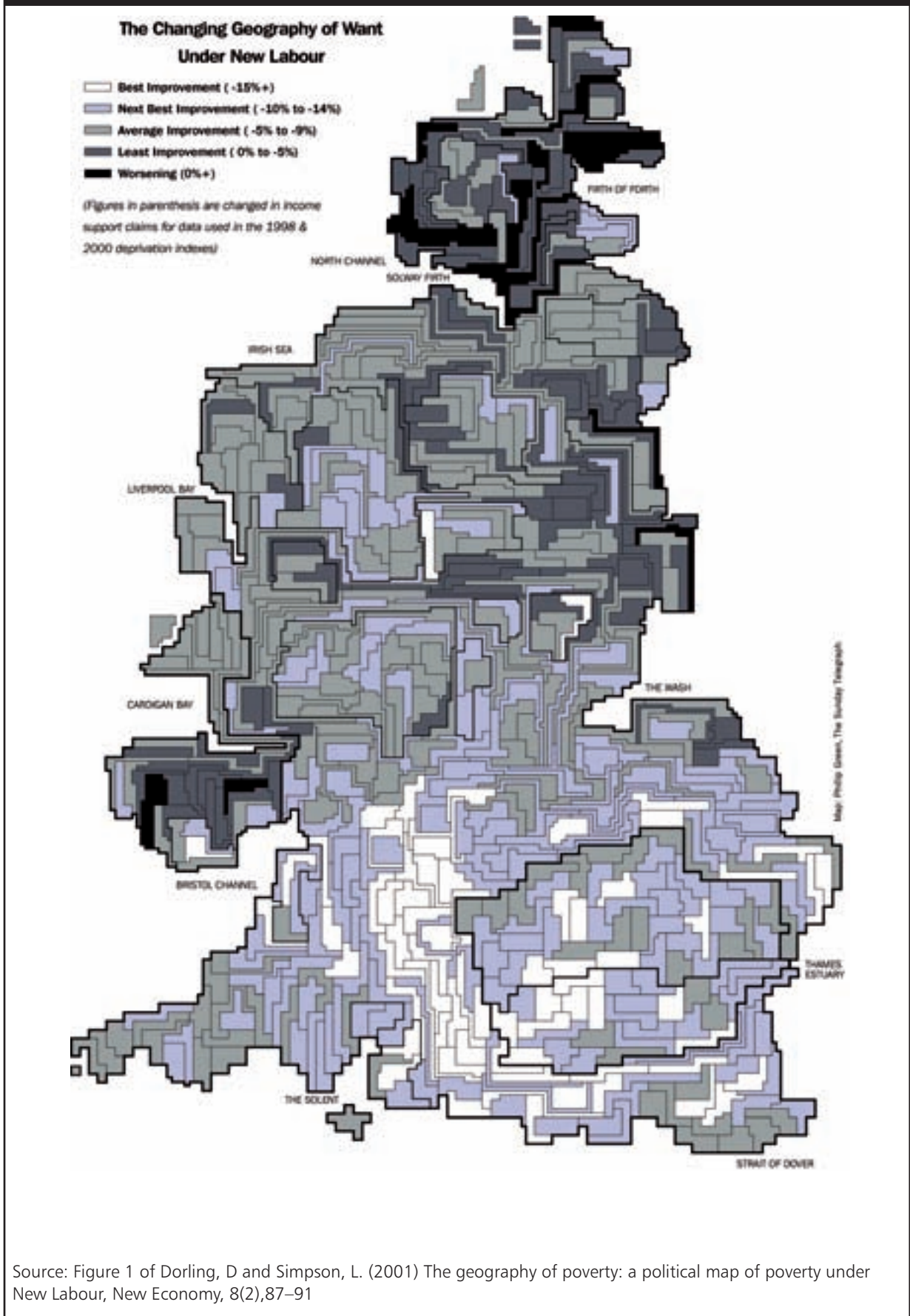
All these employment divisions result in increasing number of different ways that we use now to try and get work to try to get by. These employment divisions reduce social cohesion and integration. In this their effect is exacerbated because the divides are between places as well as people[94]. This is not news – it was obvious that the country was continuing to divide along these lines following the 1997 general election, and evidence was available as early as in 2001. The next map was published in 2001 and shows how even then the best improvements in employment were concentrated towards the south east of England between 1998 and 2000[95]. These were improvements in people's chances of getting a job, irrespective of how good a job it was that they gained.

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93   Source: IPPR research project: Working out of poverty (expected to run from April 2007 to March 2008). See http://www.ippr.org.uk/research/teams/project.asp?id=2529&tID=90&pID=2529. Note, this is even true using the narrow definition of poverty as: "living in a household with below 60 per cent of median earnings, measured either before or after housing costs". As used in this IPPR research.

94   Work rich and work poor geographical divisions are growing by area and by income to widen more and more each year to at least the middle years of this decade. Evidence on inequalities in work and how it is reflected geographically is given for people of different ages by industry and occupation in Bethan Thomas and Daniel Dorling (2007) "Identity in Britain", following on from the same authors study of trends in the 1990s in: People and Places (2005) and Danny Dorling's (2005) Human Geography of the UK (London: Sage), which can be updated given data released by Barclays Premier Clients on December 8th 2005.

95   Dorling, D and Simpson, L. (2001) The geography of poverty: a political map of poverty under New Labour, New Economy, 8(2),87–91 http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2001/dorling_and_simpson_geography_poverty.pdf

Figure 11: **Changing rates of benefit claiming 1998–2000 by constituency**

The Changing Geography of Want Under New Labour

Best Improvement (-15%+)
Next Best Improvement (-10% to -14%)
Average Improvement (-5% to -9%)
Least Improvement (0% to -5%)
Worsening (0%+)

(Figures in parenthesis are changed in income support claims for data used in the 1998 & 2000 deprivation indexes)

Source: Figure 1 of Dorling, D and Simpson, L. (2001) The geography of poverty: a political map of poverty under New Labour, New Economy, 8(2),87–91

Just as with schools, to begin to move towards a society better integrated by the nature of employment, and made more cohesive through it, requires concentrating not on employment itself, but why people work, and why we divide them through work (as we earlier do at school) in such divisive ways. Part of the answer to that is that lack of cohesion in employment partly reflects lack of cohesion in education. We don't allow people to gain the skills they need, and then we point out that they don't have them as if that is their fault. Conversely, we set strict quotas as to how many can obtain elite qualifications and then claim we have to reward graduates of particular kinds substantially because there is a shortage of such 'talent'. Similarly, we allow the very basics that we need to live – the cost of shelter – to escalate uncontrollably so that large numbers of people feel they need to work harder (and many couples now both need to work) simply to be able to afford to live in their home through paying the mortgage. You literally could not have made this up and sold it to a voter a lifetime ago as a plausible state of affairs to now be in. But here we are. People make sense of their situation and assume it is in some way normal. We fool ourselves both individually and collectively into assuming that how we have come to arrange all this is either normal or rational.

To increase social cohesion and integration through action on employment first requires a wider understanding that current employment patterns in Britain are not normal. It is not normal to have this number of working age people not working in households where no-one is working, and it is not normal to have such wide disparities between the rewards for different kinds of employment. Reducing the perceived need to buy your way away from others would greatly help us begin to share out work more equitably, as would a fairer education system. However, it is possible to aim further than this in the short term and, as part of the commitment to end child poverty, realise that this commitment requires ending the poverty of parents and potential parents and other carers too (and that quickly extends the net to all of us if no children are to be poor, even when staying with their grandparents).

Ending child poverty requires ensuring that both all adult benefits and the minimum wage never pay an income below that required to partake in the norms of society. That may sound reasonable – but it has been resisted as an idea for decades. Instead we choose to use fear of poverty or even deeper poverty to force people to labour who we do not think would otherwise work. This is hardly conducive of integration. It is underpinned by a belief in an underlying lack of merit in many people. This prejudice is underpinned by beliefs that people can be separated into different tribes, different 'aptitude' groups. If you have such a belief as your foundation you are unlikely to bring people together. Instead, a society which aims to secure no poverty as a result of employment or unemployment would be highly cohesive even before it achieved that aim. To eradicate child poverty requires poverty for all to be ended. That aim could be achieved if the eradication of poverty is taken seriously and a good medium term route would be if attempts to harmonise the taxation and benefit systems of the European Union focussed on a solution that did this and that provided every citizen of Europe with an income sufficient to avoid them being poor. Of course, any suggestion that ending

poverty and the ever wider income and wealth gaps that sustain poverty is possible or desirable is likely to be greeted as being as risible an idea as once was the deemed argument for ending the death penalty, or making slavery illegal. The death penalty is no longer legal in Russia. Slavery continues. One day employment inequalities in Britain will fall and people will be free to choose if they work, and they will say it will never happen, right up to the point that it does.
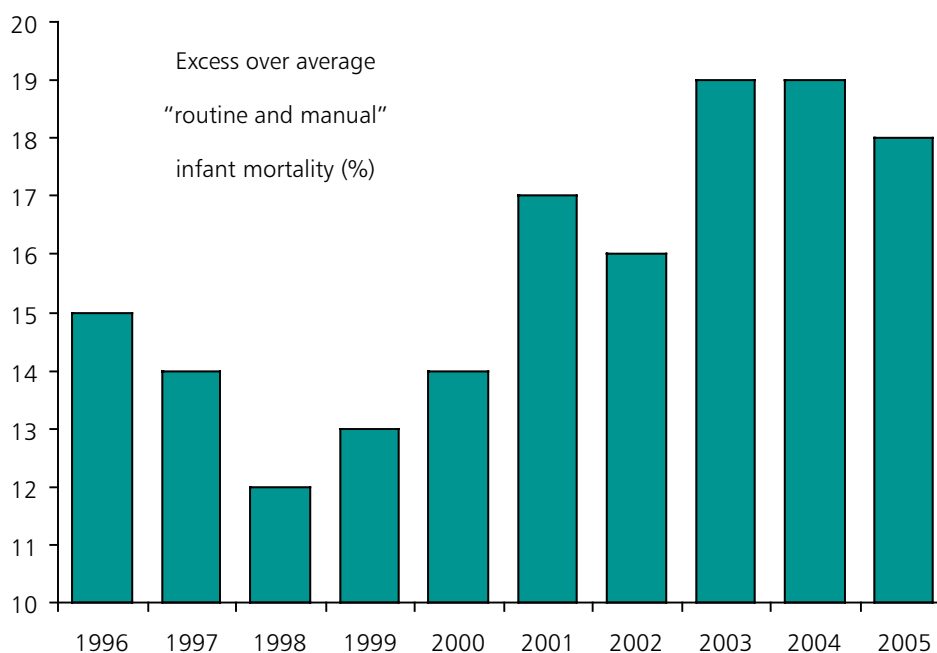
6.3 Health

- The most direct way in which we experience the effects of poor social cohesion and integration is through the state of our health. This can be seen directly in terms of the millions unable to work due to ill health. Ill health is caused by the ways we choose to live and work, divide ourselves up from when we first go to school right through life socially in a myriad of ways. In terms of health divides, Britain is one of the most socially divided countries in Europe. Internationally it ranks alongside the United States of America in the extent to which its social divides clearly contribute to poor overall health outcomes.[96] The health divides are most evident along geographical lines where only Germany (and only then the Germany formed following "reunification") has similar divisions between its regions. Divides which are most clearly seen when measured through health outcomes and especially when measured through premature death rates.[97] We live in a country which to an outside observer looks as if it had an iron curtain dividing it, both regionally and locally. Those divides are wide, and they have been growing.

- With health the argument that an unequal society will be an unhealthy society is now well known[98] but we need to still focus on the extent to which we are becoming less integrated in terms of our basic life chances by both social class and by area – when life chances are measured in terms of mortality and life expectancy. And we should start first with infant mortality:

96   Ross, N, Dorling, D et al (2005) Metropolitan Income Inequality and Working-Age Mortality: A Cross-Sectional Analysis Using Comparable Data from Five Countries, Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, March 2005, vol. 82, no. 1, pp. 101–110(10). http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2005/ross_dorling_etal_fivecountries.pdf

97   Shaw M., Orford S., Brimblecombe, N. and Dorling, D (2000) Widening inequality in mortality between 160 regions of 15 countries of the European Union, Social Science and Medicine 30, 1047–1058; see: http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2000/shaw_Widening_inequality_160_regions.pdf. For divides within Britain see also Shelton, N., Birkin, M. and Dorling, D. (2006) Where not to live: a geo-demographic classification of mortality for England and Wales, 1981–2000, Health and Place. 12(4)

98   Richard Wilkinson, 2001, Unhealthy Societies — the Afflictions of Inequality, London: Routledge.

Figure 12: **A measure of social integration of class: Infant mortality rates diverging in England and Wales 1996–2005**

Excess over average "routine and manual" infant mortality (%)

The Source of data used to draw the figure above is: Tackling Health Inequalities: Status Report on the Programme for Action, London: Department of Health, 11 August 2005, p. 27 (note infant mortality figures are for England and Wales only; figures for three year period ending in December of the date shown, last period being 2001–2003); The 2002–2004 and 2003–2005 national figures are derived from: Tackling health inequalities: 2003–05 data update for the national 2010 PSA target, London: Department of Health, 21 December 2006.

Since 2004 there has been a 1% improvement in this measure:

"The infant mortality rate among the "routine and manual" group was 18% higher than in the total population in 2003–05, compared with 19% higher than in the total population in 2002–04, the same as for 2001–03. This compares with 13% higher in the baseline period of 1997–99."[99]

The change in the most recent period was so slight, a 1% drop, that it falls within the margin of error in how infant mortality by class is recorded. But at least the widening was not obviously continuing. Note that this 18% gap between classes disguises a much larger gap between even very large areas. Reported infant mortality rates, in 2002, were lowest at 3.8 per thousand live births in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and at 3.9 per thousand in Thames Valley SHA. Rates were highest at 7.0 per thousand in West Yorkshire SHA and 7.7 per thousand in Birmingham and the Black Country SHA.[100]

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99 Tackling health inequalities: 2003-05 data update for the national 2010 PSA target, London: Department of Health, 21 December 2006 (web reversion of document address given in footnote above.

100 For more information see text around Figure 1 in Dorling, D. (2006) Class Alignment Renewal: The Journal of Labour Politics 14(1), 8-19: see http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2006/dorling_class_alignment.pdf

By the end of 2005 it was apparent that health inequalities by area had been widening in general since 2001, not just for infants. The gap had been widening before of course.[101] The graphs above and below (Figures 12 and 13) summarise these trends toward less social and spatial integration as indicated by our health for all communities in Britain.

While the widening gap is a tragedy, it is important to note that the experience in Britain could be much worse than this. We should contrast the rise in relative inequalities in health experienced in Britain with the absolute increases in infant mortality being experienced by Black families in the United States. Infant mortality rates had risen overall for the first time in decades in the year 2001–2002.[102] That absolute rise in infant mortality across the whole of the United States was due almost entirely to increasing death amongst the new-born of black families, coinciding with the living conditions of those that were poor falling in absolute terms as US social security spending was cut to help finance tax cuts for the best-off one percent of the population and to allow for an increase in overseas military expenditure and activity.

Incidentally much has been written and said in Britain on the effect of overseas military action on domestic cohesion. The rising numbers of poor Black American babies dying in the States is perhaps one of the most vivid examples of how foreign policy can work directly to the detriment of national social cohesion and integration.

This is the latest official pronouncement on the geographical trends in health inequalities:

> *"Nationally, life expectancy is increasing for both men and women, including in the Spearhead areas. But it is increasing more slowly there, so the gap continues to widen, and it is widening more for women than men. For males the relative gap is 2% wider than at the baseline (compared to 1% wider in 2002–2004), for females 8% wider (the same as in 2002-2004). The 2003–2005 relative gaps show little change over the 2002–2004 figures, and data are subject to year-on-year fluctuation."* (see latest source to Figure 13 for origin of quote)

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101 Davey Smith, G., Dorling, D, Mitchell, R., and Shaw, M. (2002) Health inequalities in Britain: continuing increases up to the end of the 20th century, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 56: 434-435. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2002/davey-smith_et_al_health_inequalities.pdf

102 Information on absolute increases in mortality and severe social disintegration occurring abroad relies on sources such as the United States Centres for Disease Control, see the line in the graph at the bottom of this page for the Black non-Hispanic group: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5422a1.htm.

Figure 13: **A measure of social integration between geographical areas: Life expectancy estimates diverging in the United Kingdom 1999–2005**

Difference between best and worst-off districts by life expectancy (years)
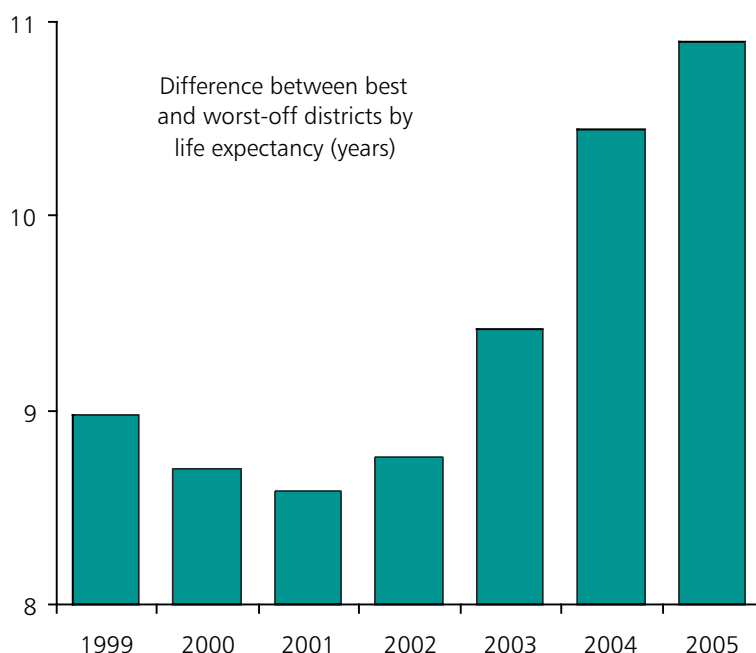
Source: for data used in Figure 2: Life expectancy data from ONS details in the British Medical Journal, Letter, December 16th 2005.[104] For the latest data see 21 November 2006 press release, ONS: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/liex1106.pdf, all districts of the UK are included in the comparison, but the simple range of maximum to minimum charted (three year average again ending on the year shown).[105]

The graph above shows a very crude measure of geographical widening. However, the quote above describes the very latest trends by the government's own chosen measure: what is happening to their "Spearhead groups". It confirms that there is no improvement in the most recent data overall even when the extremes are considered.[103]

When this figure was first drawn, and before the latest bar was added, my colleagues and I wrote this:

> *On 10 November National Statistics released new life expectancy figures by area and announced that "Inequalities in life expectancy persist across the UK."*

> *"Persist" was an odd word to use. In Kensington and Chelsea, where it was already highest, it rose by exactly one year for both men and women (from 79.8 to 80.8 years and 84.8 to 85.8 years, respectively). In contrast, in Glasgow where it was lowest a year ago, life expectancy*

103 Tackling health inequalities: 2003-05 data update for the national 2010 PSA target, London: Department of Health, 21 December 2006, page 6 (on which it also shows the gap in life expectancy between the Spearhead group and the rest widening from 2.60% to 2.61% for men in the most recent period, and from 1.90% to 1.91% for women). See http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_063689

104 Tackling health inequalities: 2003-05 data update for the national 2010 PSA target, London: Department of Health, 21 December 2006, page 6 (on which it also shows the gap in life expectancy between the Spearhead group and the rest widening from 2.60% to 2.61% for men in the most recent period, and from 1.90% to 1.91% for women). See http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_063689

105 Tackling health inequalities: 2003-05 data update for the national 2010 PSA target, London: Department of Health, 21 December 2006, page 6 (on which it also shows the gap in life expectancy between the Spearhead group and the rest widening from 2.60% to 2.61% for men in the most recent period, and from 1.90% to 1.91% for women). See http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_063689

remained static at 76.4 years for women, and rose just slightly for men from 69.1 to 69.3 years. The range in life expectancy between the extreme highest and lowest areas thus increased from 8.4 to 9.4 years for women, and from 10.7 years to 11.5 years for men.

For men and women combined, the life expectancy gap between the worst and best off districts of the UK now exceeds 10 years for the first time since reliable measurements began.[106]

Just a year after writing that new figures were released showing that the range in life expectancy had expanded yet again, increasing according to the latest reports nationally to 9.5 years for women and 12.3 years for men – and the combined gap is now almost 11 years (10.9) – just a year after it passed the 10 year point.[107]

So to what extent is this rise in health inequalities a consequence of the other ways in which social integration and cohesion are falling in Britain? Seven years ago I took part in a study which aimed to estimate the number of premature deaths in Britain that could be prevented were the government to achieve some of its stated objectives of the time to increase social integration.[108] The number of deaths per year that could be prevented were calculated assuming a modest reduction in basic inequalities in wealth (to 1983 levels), a large fall in unemployment, and a significant move towards the abolition of child poverty. At the time we estimated that some 7500 lives were ended each year prematurely due to social inequalities. This number far exceeded those that could be attributed to the effects of widespread unemployment, and of deaths caused by child poverty. In fact the health effects of the achievements in reducing unemployment and child poverty have been more than completely wiped out by rising social inequalities, reflected in widening inequalities in wealth, measured since the year 2000.

One response to health inequalities widening has been a move towards blaming the victims. This is a failure to see premature deaths as resulting in greatest numbers from our collective failure to reduce poverty and inequality. There is again a resurgence in the belief that there is no such thing as society. Those who believe this suggest that: "Our public health problems are not, strictly speaking, public health questions at all. They are questions of individual lifestyle – obesity, smoking, alcohol abuse, diabetes, sexually transmitted disease."[109] As the then new Minster for Public Health said ten years ago in June 1997, such an approach should be criticised for "its excessive emphasis on lifestyle issues" which "cast the responsibility back on to the individual".[110]

106 Dorling, D, Mitchell, R., Orford, S., Shaw, M., and Davey-Smith, G. (2005). Inequalities and Christmas Yet to Come.BMJ, 331(7529): 1409. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2005/BMJ_letter_dec05.pdf

107 21 November 2006 press release, ONS: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/liex1106.pdf. "Of the ten local authorities with the highest male life expectancy at birth all are in England: five in the South East, three in the East of England, and one each in the South West and London. Eight of the ten local authorities with the lowest male life expectancy are in Scotland. Glasgow City (69.9 years) is the only area in the UK where life expectancy at birth is less than 70 years. The local authority with the highest male life expectancy is Kensington and Chelsea (82.2 years), 12.3 years more than Glasgow City (see Table 3). Kensington and Chelsea also has the highest life expectancy for females (86.2 years), 9.5 years more than Glasgow City, the lowest at 76.7 years (Table 4)."

108 Reducing health inequalities in Britain, JRF findings, 980, September 2000. Full report, Inequalities in life and death: What if Britain were more equal? by Richard Mitchell, Mary Shaw and Danny Dorling, is published for the Foundation by The Policy Press. Summary avaialbel at: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/pdf/980.pdf

109 Blair, T. (2006) Blair backs healthy living, 26th July 2006: Speech available from the BBC at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5215548.stm – speech made six weeks prior to resignation announcement.

110 Jowell, T. (1997) Public Health strategy launched to tackle the root causes of ill health, Department of Health Press release 7th July 1997.

Rising inequalities in health are being recorded from the most mundane of illnesses to the most newsworthy of premature deaths.[111] However there is also good news. Rates of suicide, the original marker of social fragmentation,[112] have been falling rapidly and, by April 2006, were at their lowest level since recording had begun.[113]

However, there is an acutely uneven geography to the risk of suicide which is largely a product of where you live and work.[114] The rapid falls are a very good news story but were not unexpected.[115] They show what can be achieved when people act together and in the common good. And such trends are found in other countries at times when they have moved initially at least away from individualist market rhetoric (as Britain did after 1997). Our propensity to work together rather than compete is hopefully improving. Table 3 below gives just one recent measure of collective action for good and it is worth pointing out that it is headed by two southern European territories, and that Britain (unlike the United States) is in this top ten list of folk campaigning to prevent death and injury.

As the trend in suicide rates falling shows, with rates even falling for young men, it is possible to see improvement in health and the narrowing of gaps even when other inequalities are rising. However, much research suggests that those suicide rates were so high for the young in the 1980s and early 1990s because of the acute sense of hopelessness felt by particularly badly placed young people unlucky enough to have been born to the wrong family in the wrong area at the wrong time. If we had not seen that trend turn then there would have been little hope. Similarly, the collective action documented through the detailed sources to Table 3 was only brought about because of terrible actions that presented such a threat to peace in the world that the largest ever numbers of people worldwide demonstrated, and demonstrated most in some of those countries near to or directly involved in the conflict to come. The table gives the ranking of those countries where more people came together (per head) than anywhere else in the world to demonstrate for peace. Over ten percent of the population of Spain were involved. Acts of such committed social solidarity are clearly indicative of the latent ability in the population at large to work together to increase integration and cohesion.

111 Shaw, M., Tunstall, H. and Dorling, D (2005) Increasing inequalities in risk of murder in Britain: Trends in the demographic and spatial distribution of murder, 1981-2000, Health and Place, 11, 45–54. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2005/shaw_tunstall_dorling_murder_corrected.pdf

112 Whitley, E., Gunnell, D., Dorling, D, Davey Smith, G. (1999) Ecological study of social fragmentation, poverty and suicide. British Medical Journal, 319, 1034–1037. See: http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/1999/whitley_et_al_ecological.pdf

113 "Lowest suicide rate since records began", Department of Health Press Release, 13 April 2006: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Pressreleases/DH_4133871

114 Dorling, Danny & Gunnell, David (2003) Suicide: the spatial and social components of despair in Britain 1980-2000 Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 28 (4), 442–460. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2003/dorling_and_gunnell_suicide.pdf

115 Shaw, M., Dorling, D and Davey-Smith, G. (2002) Editorial: Mortality and political climate: how suicide rates have risen during periods of Conservative government, 1901-2000, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 56 (10): 722–7. http://sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/2002/shaw_et_al_mortality_political_climate.pdf

| Table 3: **Example of collective action rising as social integration increases: list of largest collective demonstrations in one weekend for the common good**		
highest rate of demonstrators per person		
Rank	Country	Value
1	Spain	105
2	Italy	80
3	Australia	34
4	Norway	30
5	Ireland	26
6	United Kingdom	26
7	Luxembourg	23
8	Greece	21
9	Uruguay	21
10	Iceland	15
per thousand people, total population		
Source – Worldmapper.[116] These are the validated estimates of the largest demonstrations in human history. UK ranks 6th out of around 100 nations in which demonstrations were recorded.		

6.4 Housing

Having considered ways in which integration could be improved in education, employment and health and what the benefits of doing this may be, housing is the fourth key arena in which the reality of a lack of social integration and cohesion is played out in Britain today. It is becoming palpably apparent to folk in this country that they and their families' future wealth trajectories are becoming ever more determined by where they happen to be placed on a housing ladder. Furthermore that ladder is unstable, so even those high up the ladder, with in theory high levels of equity, do not feel that safe as (unless history does not repeat itself again) there will at some point be a crash in house prices.

Inequality in housing wealth is one of the main drivers of inequalities in wealth which is widely reported and its rise has been commented on repeatedly.[116] The growing length of waiting lists for social housing in many parts of the country has been less commented on, and very little work has be done on estimating how many more people than before now own multiple homes (two, three, four and so on). Further, as far as I am aware, there are no published estimates of rising inequalities in floor-space in Britain as poorer households are crowded into homes which begin to feel smaller and smaller, because relative to the extended norm they are shrinking in size.

116 The most recent work I was involved in concerning housing wealth inequalities is summarised in: a report for Sheleter: "Know your place Housing wealth and inequality in Great Britain 1980–2003 and beyond http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/reports/knowyourplacesummary.pdf

Figure 14 below shows (for 142 areas of the United Kingdom) how there tends to be an inverse relationship between areas with a high proportion of people living in homes where they rattle around in too much space for just 1 or 2 people, and those areas where there are often more people in the home than there are rooms to be occupied. The circles are drawn with their areas in proportion to households. The furthest to the right on the Figure are London and Slough: areas both surrounded by counties in which relatively high under-occupancy of property occurs. This graph is just one of a dozen or more produced as part of series of ten reports designed to illustrate that general operation of inverse care laws in Britain – where those in greatest need (in this case for housing) often receive the least of what they need (in this case space)[117].
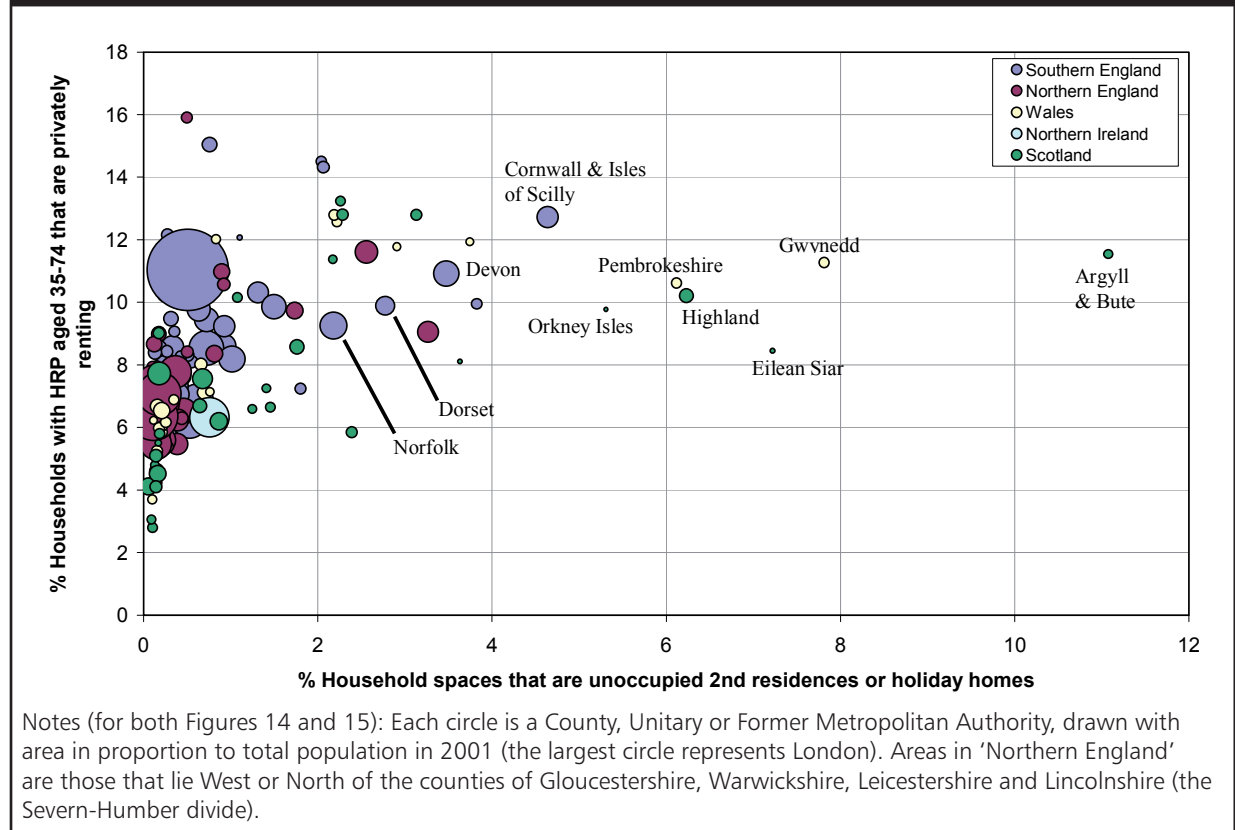

Figures 14: **The inverse relationship between under-occupancy and overcrowding**
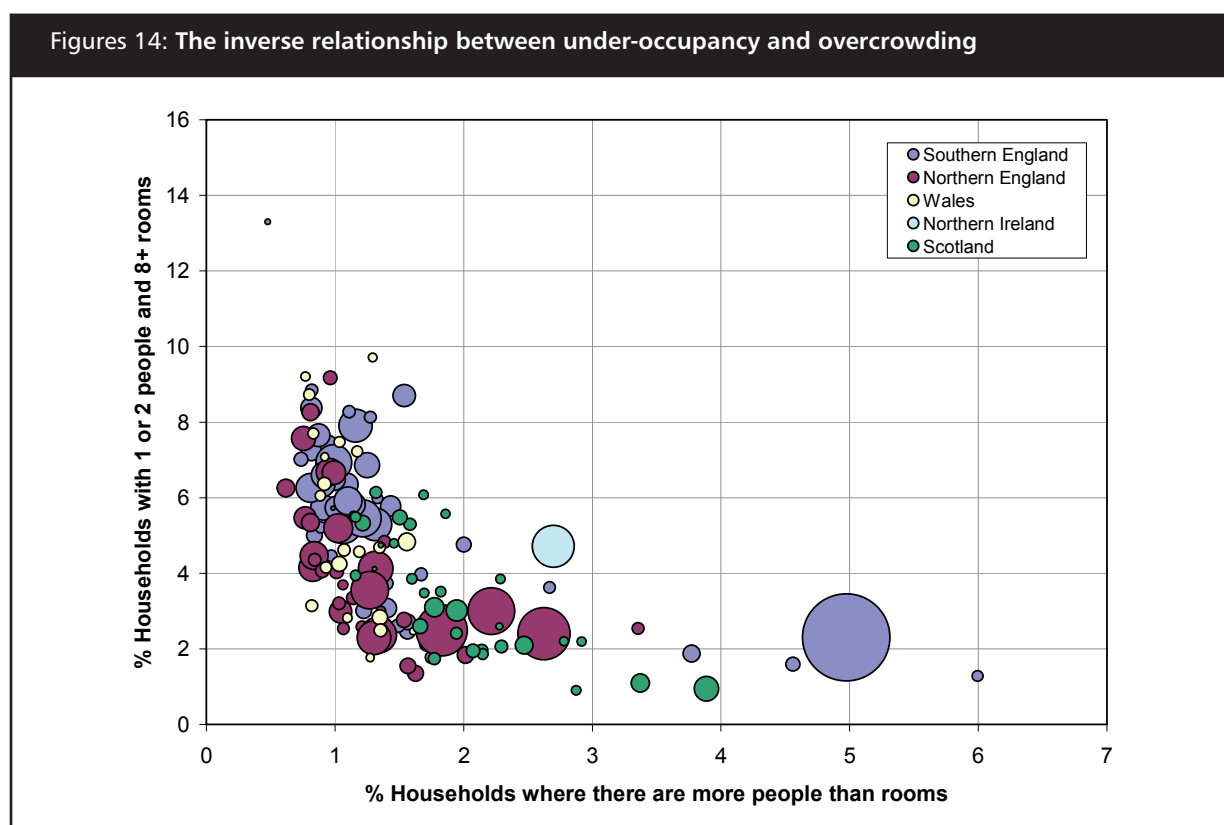
The second figure below, Figure 15, shows how it is now very often in areas where older people[118] are privately renting (in high proportions) that many homes are also empty for much of the year as second residences. Across the spectrum, from empty grand castles to cramped London flats being home to two families, we have managed to make such a mess of our housing in Britain that our collective angst over housing is great while we have never had as many bricks and as much mortar in place to create so many homes (and even more rooms) for people in this country. There is more than enough housing, it is just so badly shared out, and so much is being used for investment rather than for shelter. Integration and cohesion in housing begin to fail if increasing numbers of people

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117 These two figures are taken from two of the reports published as part of the survey "Life in Britain: Using Millennial Census data to understand poverty, inequality and place", 2005, by Ben Wheeler, Mary Shaw, Richard Mitchell and Daniel Dorling. A summary of all of the ten published reports is available at http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0425.asp
118 Strictly speaking older Household Reference People (HRPs).

begin to see their home as their pension, or their children's inheritance, or their route to better schools, rather than a place to call home, in a neighbourhood chosen for its convenience, not its cachet or because nowhere else was affordable.

Figure 15: **The association between prevalence of second homes and households that might be having difficulty buying a house in the UK**

Notes (for both Figures 14 and 15): Each circle is a County, Unitary or Former Metropolitan Authority, drawn with area in proportion to total population in 2001 (the largest circle represents London). Areas in 'Northern England' are those that lie West or North of the counties of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire (the Severn-Humber divide).

Social integration and cohesion over housing could be greatly increased if all policies that had an influence over housing were made with an eye to reducing future inequalities in the sharing out of housing amongst the population. As with the suggestions above that more education and employment should take place locally, there are obvious environmental benefits to a fairer sharing out of housing.

The possibility of being able to sell your property to the state – so that local authorities and other social landlords have access to larger homes for families could be raised. However, to do this would require a significant underlying change in what we thought housing was for; in how we thought we might be protected in future as we age; and in whether we trusted each other enough not to continue to wish to see inequalities grow. A small act could be the precursor to that significant change, an act such as tightening up on inheritance tax loop-holes and tax evasion on profiteering from housing. But, while people believe that selfishness is implicitly encouraged, while government has no problem with the very rich, why should they be trusting of others?

6.5 Poverty

It is often suggested that solutions to cohesion and integration need to be locally led, not nationally imposed.[119] This is true of much, but not of those national trends in the nature of our society which constantly undermine our collective ability to increase social cohesion and integration. Chief among these is the rise in poverty and inequality experienced since the mid 1970s and which continues to grow today. This rise has not been experienced in many countries with similar income per head to the United Kingdom. It is not found in Canada, or Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, or Spain (where inequalities have in general not risen in recent decades); it is not found in Finland, France, Italy or Sweden where inequalities are no lower than they were a few decades ago; a rise in poverty and inequality such as that we have experienced in the United Kingdom since the 1970s has only being experienced in a similar way in the United States[120].

Rising social disintegration and falling social cohesion is not a global trend found across most rich nations, it is a trend largely confined to the United States and United Kingdom due to choices made in these two countries, not the result of some unstoppable global forces operating everywhere. How people are then affected by the choice not to abate forces of division within the United Kingdom depends very much on where they find themselves living.

The map below (Figure 16) shows yet another picture of the country (in this case divided into 85 areas, listed in Table 4 that follows after it). The map is coloured by the country of region each area is in and the height of the area is drawn in proportion to a child's chances of not attending higher education if they grow up there. It could be drawn with height in proportion to poverty, or premature death, or literacy, or wealth – it would be much the same landscape. The key thing to understand is the shape of the land – of the social landscape. Trace out the shape of the best-off places, from number 11 (east Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire) across to number 5 (North London) and down through South West London to Surrey (area number 17). Folk living there will tend to do well, the rest will fare worse, by degrees. And as you move north you scale a series of social cliffs at various key points. Moving west the land rises less harshly.

This is not a landscape conducive to a nationally well integrated society, let alone one in which at a local level efforts to increase cohesion are likely to have long lasting effects when buffeted by the movement, fears and prejudices across these national geographical divides. Those divides are highlighted by many factors. Figure 17 (4.9 from the original report these maps were first used in[121]) shows how divided up adults are by highest educational

119 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Ruth Kelly at the launch of the Commission's Interim Statement: "Too often in the past, Whitehall has tried to impose solutions from the centre. That's just not going to work today. It is civic leadership at a local level that can find ways to make communities work better." Her emphasis, http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1506358

120 Sanjoy Chakravorty, 2006, Fragments of Inequality: social, spatial, and evolutionary analysis of income distribution, New York: Routledge, page 26. (Rising inequalities, but not with the same timings, have been experienced in New Zealand and Australia).

121 Dorling, D. (2005) Human Geography of Britain, London: Sage: www.shef.ac.uk/sasi/hguk

qualification nationally. Figure 18 (4.4 in the original) that follows that map below shows how the distribution of major religions is superimposed over this landscape in turn.[122]

Britain is a country that is poor in many ways – not just through the number of adults and children living in poverty – but poor in terms of how well people mix socially, are integrated into their local areas – choose to go to the same schools and study at college together in places near to where they grew up (we tend not to). Britain is rich in wealth but not in social well-being, or in good-health as compared to countries with similar wealth – or in our overall educational achievements or the overall quality of our housing or our work. Draped over this landscape of inequity are new arrivals to this country. They have to find a place to fit into this pitted landscape. Across the landscape are found groups defined in a myriad of types of identity that can in turn be classified according to how they fit in to find a place along our so widely stretched social continuum. Recognising just how unusual and increasingly uneven are our landscapes of poverty, lack of opportunity and inequality is vital. Much of our debate assumes we are normal.

Looking at the social landscape, the map above[123] is drawn with height in proportion to a child's chances of not going to university. The higher their area the less likely they are to attend. The names of the areas are in Table 4 that follows and are groups of parliamentary constituencies that were put together by civil servants for an election that was never held with votes counted using these areas. Incidentally, there is quite a close correlation between the areas shown low here and those where more of the population hold a degree than any other categorisation of highest qualification (see Figure 17 for details). These are: London Central; London North; London North West; London South and Surrey East; London South Inner; London South West; London West; Thames Valley; Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire East; South Downs West; Hertfordshire; Hampshire North and Oxford; Surrey; and, just one outside SE England: Lothian.

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122 See Press release 11 May 2006 – Publication of DWP research reports 333 and 341: Ethnic minority populations and the labour market: an analysis of the 1991 and 2001 census & Ethnic penalties in the labour market: employers and discrimination, for much more detail regarding ethnicity rather than religion: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2006/may/empl41-11-05-06.asp

123 This map is not that easy to understand, as social landscapes are not often drawn, and the two maps that follow are harder still as they show areas coloured by how their population varies from the national average. See the website links and excel files from there for more details of the calculations.

Table 4: **Key to Figures 16, 17 & 18**			
#	European Constituency	43	Staffordshire West & Congleton
1	London Central	44	Worcestershire & S. Warwickshire
2	London East	45	Leicester
3	London North	46	Lincolnshire
4	London North East	47	Northamptonshire & Blaby
5	London North West	48	Nottingham & Leicestershire NW
6	London South & Surrey East	49	Nottinghamshire N. & Chesterfield
7	London South East	50	Peak District
8	London South Inner	51	Cheshire East
9	London South West	52	Cheshire West & Wirral
10	London West	53	Cumbria & Lancashire North
11	Buckinghamshire& Oxfordshire East	54	Greater Manchester Central
12	East Sussex & Kent South	55	Greater Manchester East
13	Hampshire North & Oxford	56	Greater Manchester West
14	Kent East	57	Lancashire Central
15	Kent West	58	Lancashire South
16	South Downs West	59	Merseyside East & Wigan
17	Surrey	60	Merseyside West
18	Sussex West	61	East Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire
19	Thames Valley	62	Leeds
20	Wight & Hampshire South	63	North Yorkshire
21	Bristol	64	Sheffield
22	Cornwall & West Plymouth	65	Yorkshire South
23	Devon & East Plymouth	66	Yorkshire South West
24	Dorset & East Devon	67	Yorkshire West
25	Gloucestershire	68	Cleveland & Richmond
26	Itchen, Test & Avon	69	Durham
27	Somerset & North Devon	70	Northumbria
28	Wiltshire North & Bath	71	Tyne & Wear
29	Bedfordshire & Milton Keynes	72	Mid & West Wales
30	Cambridgeshire	73	North Wales
31	Essex North & Suffolk South	74	South Wales Central
32	Essex South	75	South Wales East
33	Essex West & Hertfordshire East	76	South Wales West
34	Hertfordshire	77	Central Scotland
35	Norfolk	78	Glasgow
36	Suffolk & South West Norfolk	79	Highlands & Islands
37	Birmingham East	80	Lothian
38	Birmingham West	81	Mid Scotland & Fife
39	Coventry & North Warwickshire	82	North East Scotland
40	Herefordshire & Shropshire	83	South of Scotland
41	Midlands West	84	West of Scotland
42	Staffordshire East & Derby	85	Northern Ireland

Figure 16: **The Social Landscape of the United Kingdom**
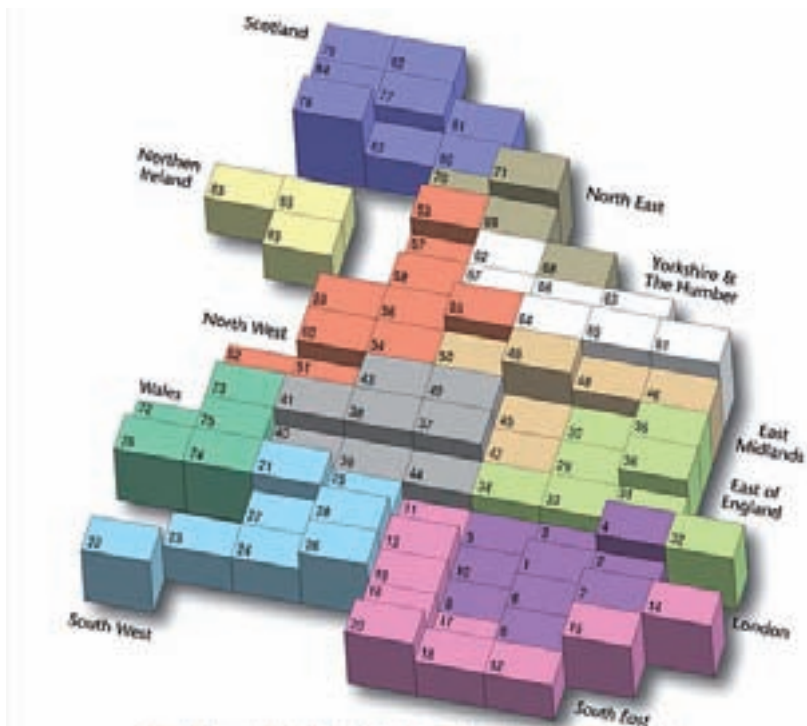
Source: Drawn by hand for this book to roughly preserve the shape of Britain and the true arrangement of areas while making each constituency equal in size (note the West Midlands region with no coastline is not labelled).

Figure 17: **Modal qualifications of local populations shown allowing for the national average distribution of qualifications at all ages.**

None
1+ GCSE
5+ grade A-C
2+ A-levels
Degree
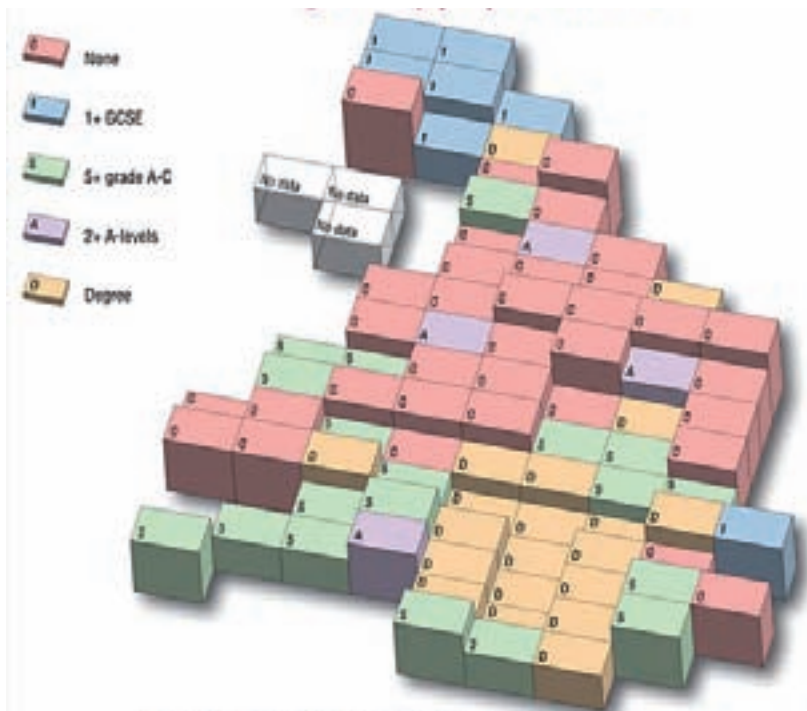
Source: Analysis of the 2001 Census Key Statistics by Local Authority. Most unusually large group is shown when each place is compared with GB.

Source: http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/hguk/fig4_9.htm

Figure 17, above, shows another aspect of the social landscape. To understand the Figure, you need to know that it was drawn such that each area is given the symbol of the highest qualification held that is most common there having subtracted the national average proportions of people with each highest qualification as indicated by the 2001 census. If that were not done then almost the entire country appears as being populated by areas in which the largest group of people have no qualification, with 14 areas (listed beneath Figure 16) where the majority hold a degree; and just one area in between and nationally representative (West Sussex, where the majority have 5 A-C GCSE or equivalent). The national distribution that has been adjusted for is 31.4% of the population having no recognisable qualifications; 18.5% holding at least 1 qualification; 20.3% with the equivalent of 5 A-C GCSE; 8.7% two 2 A levels or more as highest; and 21.1% with a Degree or above as their highest.

Figure 18: **Most highly represented religious groups shown after allowing for the national average distribution of religious adherence.**
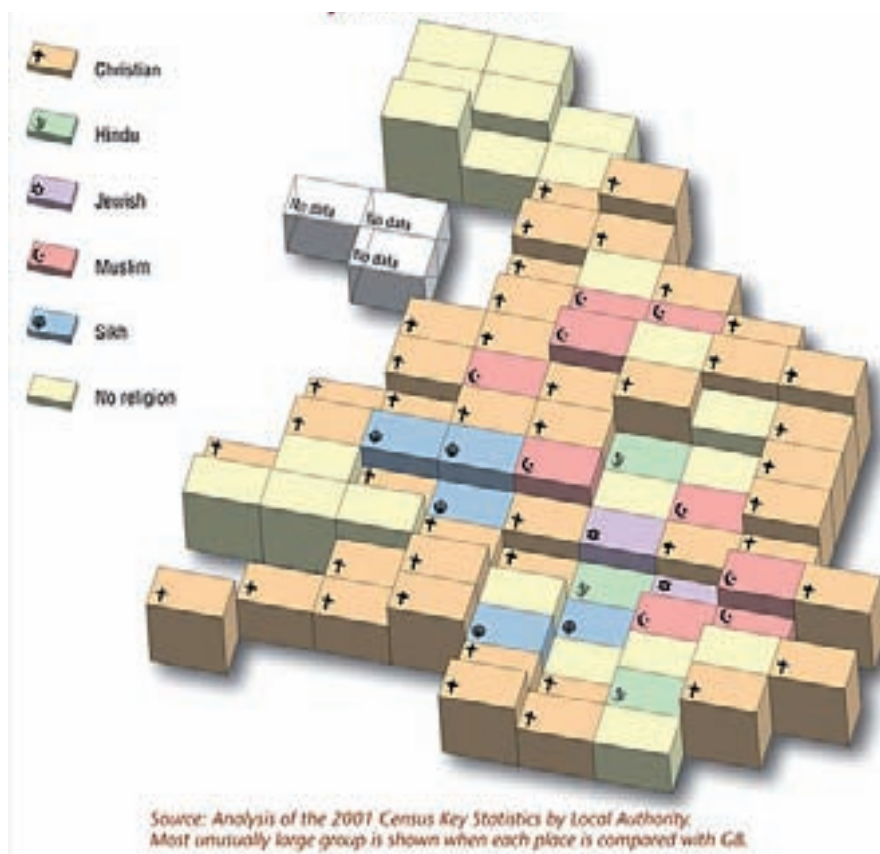
Source: http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/hguk/fig4_4.htm

Numerous aspects of the social landscape of Britain can be draped over the topology of our basic inequalities In Figure 18, above, each area is given the symbol of the religion that is most common there, having subtracted the national average proportions of people with an affinity towards each religion as indicated by the 2001 census. If that

were not done then the entire country appears as being populated by a single group that are Christian (and only of any denomination in Scotland). The national average proportions that the map above shows the highest absolute variance from are: 71.2% Christian; 15.9% No religion; 7.5% Religion not stated; 2.8% Muslim; 1.0% Hindu; 0.6% Sikh; 0.5% Jewish; 0.3% other religions; and 0.3% Buddhist. How each religious identity group fares in Britain depends very much on where it finds itself.

7 Conclusion

This think-piece was commissioned to consider the four inter-related factors of the extent to which people in Britain are now leading separate lives; the links between deprivation and cohesion; how we might challenge attitudes, perceptions and myths, and what might bring communities/people together. I have tried to explain why I think that a great deal of the current debate is skewed in the wrong direction, but it is important to point out that many other people are saying what I am saying. It is not that original to point out where we really are lacking integration and cohesion. In short, education, employment, housing, health, race, ethnicity, religion, poverty, multiculturalism and moaning about multiculturalism are linked in ways that really are very obvious to many people:

> *"Almost 10 per cent of London is Muslim, and you're two and a half times more likely to be out of work if you're a Muslim – especially if you are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin – and the biggest thing driving separation in Britain today is the failure of our education system to give Muslim kids the skills they require, and the failure of employers to recruit and promote them. When you look at the dynamism up and down Brick Lane in the Bangladeshi community, you have to wonder why that dynamism and drive is not feeding into the city. So the people moaning about multiculturalism should start saying employment is a real problem and the other big issue is access to housing."[124]*

Failures of education systems to integrate people who vary in their backgrounds by the extent to which they are poor or wealthy are what matter most in causing social disintegration; failures of our normal practises of employment to draw on all peoples' innate abilities; increasing failure of our evolving traditions of housing ourselves to encourage us to live near one another. This all results in rising poverty and, as a consequence, in rising geographical and social inequalities in health as different social groups of people move slightly further apart from each other each year. There are a great many things that can be done to increase integration and cohesion, but prior to even the most trivial policy implementation there is an urgent need to recognise the real problem – that there is such a thing as society, as public health, as a common good, that the situation we find ourselves in throughout Britain is both internationally and historically unusual, is a mess of our own making and does not benefit any of us enough to be worth preserving. Once we step back and look at our collective lives this is not that hard to see.

Too many of us who have the best chances in life, the greatest wealth and the most opportunities live under the misunderstanding that we have what we have because others do not. There is a danger for those of us who are wealthy begin to believe that this is as good as it gets and that if we give up some of our wealth the quality of our lives, our chances, our very health may be damaged. When a geographical view is taken – looking at other nations, looking at communities inside our nations, and looking at regional divides, the evidence points increasingly to the contrary. The evidence is even beginning to point to the lack of social cohesion and integration that arises from such great inequalities harming the well-being of the affluent as well as the poor. After all, what is the point of having it all, if you don't fit in?

124 Ken Livingston, Major of London, Prospect Magazine, Issue 133, March 2007.

Appendix: Key to the largest towns in Britain that appear on some maps above

Aberdeen
Dundee
Glasgow
Edinburgh
Newcastle
Sunderland
Blackpool
Middlesbrough
Bolton
Leeds
Liverpool
Bradford
Hull
Sheffield
Nottingham
Norwich
Manchester
Leicester
Stoke
Derby
Ipswich
Cambridge
Luton
Birmingham
Coventry
Southend
Oxford
Outer London
Swansea
Bristol
Inner London
Cardiff
Swindon
Reading
Dover
Portsmouth
Hastings
Plymouth
Exeter
Southampton
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