Searchlight Educational Trust

Fear and HOPE

The new politics of identity

by Nick Lowles and Anthony Painter
with a foreward by Jon Cruddas MP

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Searchlight Educational Trust

Searchlight Educational Trust is a registered charity that works with communities to build responses to racism and hatred, dispel myths and develop greater understanding.

Since its formation in 1992 SET has provided education and training about racial and religious prejudice, carried out research into extremism and provided a positive input into understanding the social and historical factors behind far-right extremism.

We aim to empower community organisations, statutory bodies, youth workers, trade unions and individuals with the knowledge and tools to tackle and understand manifestations of racial hatred.

SET regularly trains police, probation and prison officers about recognising and dealing with race hate and extremism. More recently it has given presentations and advice to councils and police forces in dealing with the English Defence League.

TOGETHER

SET is now establishing a project called *Together* to explore, understand and tackle the rise of right-wing nationalism and extremism in Britain. The project will endevour to address the increasing polarisation in society, which is leading people to political extremes and violence. It will seek to counter this rising hatred through building new communities and forging shared identities.

Together will challenge the extremism of the English Defence League (EDL) and Islamic extremists by working within communities being targeted around what unites them rather than what divides them. It will build up positive role models and leaders in target communities and give a voice to the mainstream majority.

Combining research, policy remedies, training and community organising, *Together* is both unique and essential. A failure to address the rise of right-wing nationalism in a new, inclusive and refreshing way, one that builds a positive mainstream antidote to all extremism while understanding the drivers for this fear and hate, could have dire consequences for Britain.

If we succeed, on the other hand, then we can make a major contribution to improving community relations in Britain and beyond.

Together can make a real difference.

BRADFORD

Searchlight Educational Trust

For more on of the Fear and HOPE study and to learn more about the Together project, visit: **www.fearandhope.org.uk**

The authors

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Nick Lowles is the Chief Executive of Searchlight and editor of Searchlight magazine. He has been involved with Searchlight since 1989 and set up and ran the HOPE not hate campaign between 2004 and 2010. For many years he was an investigative journalist, working on TV programmes such The Cook Report, World in Action, Panorama and MacIntyre Undercover. He has written six books, including White Riot: The Violent Story of Combat 18 and Mr Evil: The Secret Life of Racist Bomber and Killer David Copeland. He has lectured on far right politics, nationalism and community campaign across Britain, Europe and North America.

ANTHONY PAINTER

Anthony Painter is a political writer, commentator and researcher. He wrote 'The Politics of Perpetual Renewal' published by Demos in 2010 which outlined the political impact of changing demographics and attitudes. Previously, he wrote Barack Obama: the movement for change and was a European parliamentary candidate in 2009. He sits on the Global Progress working group established by the Center for American Progress/Frederich Ebert Stiftung- through which he is author of a contribution to a forthcoming international study of political change.

Foreword: A report for its time

At certain moments a specific publication can turn the page on what went before. Occasionally – by the way it contests comfortable assumptions – a specific pamphlet can challenge, and indeed subsequently alter, how we view society. A piece of research can sometimes shine a light on cultural shifts as they occur; providing us with an empirical, real time focus on the country we inhabit. When this happens it demands a political response.

The research in this *Fear and Hope* document is, I believe, one such publication. Arguably it amounts to the most systematic study of contemporary attitudes to race, identity, nationhood and extremism available in England. It certainly is in depth, including a total of 91 questions covering 5054 discreet interviews systematically spread across the length and breadth of England.

The central findings contained in this publication should ricochet through the body politics. Arguably it identifies a 'new politics' built around belonging and loss; of identity, culture and nationhood which transcends both an older class politics and even more recent debates around demographics and immigration.

The research suggests that economic change and material insecurity have altered, fundamentally, orthodox political assumptions as to what constitutes the centre ground, or 'middle England'. The two most significant 'tribes' identified within – the 'cultural integrationists' demanding strength and authority, and the 'identity ambivalents' demanding economic security and social change – profoundly challenge much orthodox liberal economic and social thinking within both the Government coalition and Labour opposition.

The real floating voters, primarily 'identity ambivalents' – appear to be on a journey away from all major parties. This poses the very real threat of a new potent political constituency built around an assertive English nationalism. This is not the politics of the BNP, but of a reframed English identity politics that includes various ethnic groupings. Moreover, lazy arguments of English island 'exceptionalism' and moderation are questioned. Put simply, unless political parties step up and provide a new language of material wellbeing; of identity and belonging then these political forces might refract into more malign forms. As such, the political class has been warned.

Conversely, there is hope and not just despair. Violence is strongly opposed; community organising received positively. Politics remains local; extremism can be defeated. Talk of 'values' and 'engagement' must be real; anchored in the everyday, a politics that is parochial. In Bradford and Leicester this is exactly what Searchlight and Hope Not Hate have been developing in early skirmishes with the EDL. I have experienced at first hand their work in uniting communities against extremism in my own patch in Barking and Dagenham.

Political parties and politicians are too quick to go negative; play to people's concerns and prejudices. Searchlight, on the other hand, play on positivity and hope. Their positive message unites people against fear and hate and in the process make people feel better about themselves. Over 1,500 people were involved in their campaign in my area; over 150,000 are signed up nationally. Sometimes we, as politicians, need to be humble enough to learn from others.

Finally, the core message of hope contained within is that people share a common sentiment, a search for a common life even – built on a desire for belonging and security, which does indeed create possibilities for an optimistic 'new politics' but only if the mainstream political parties step up. The jury is out. This is a profoundly important text.

Jon Cruddas
MP Dagenham and Rainham

Searchlight ran a positive campaign in Barking & Dagenham which helped defeat the BNP

Executive summary

Searchlight Educational Trust commissioned the polling organisation Populus to explore the issues of English identity, faith and race. The *Fear and HOPE* survey gives a snapshot of current attitudes in society today. It explores the level of fear, hate and hope. It details what pulls us apart and what brings us together. With 5,054 respondents and 91 questions it is one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys into attitude, identity and extremism in the UK to date.

On one level it is not happy reading. It concludes that there is not a progressive majority in society and it reveals that there is a deep resentment to immigration, as well as scepticism towards multiculturalism. There is a widespread fear of the 'Other', particularly Muslims, and there is an appetite for a new right-wing political party that has none of the fascist trappings of the British National Party or the violence of the English Defence League. With a clear correlation between economic pessimism and negative views to immigration, the situation is likely to get worse over the next few years.

Of course attitudes and identity are fluid, and multilayered. Attitudes held today may not be held tomorrow. There are also many positive findings from the report. Young people are more hopeful about the future and more open to living in an ethnically diverse society. The vast majority of people reject political violence and view white anti-Muslim extremists as bad as Muslim extremists and there is overwhelming support for a positive campaign against extremism.

The report captures society as it is now but it also points to possible remedies. This is a starting point for a new Searchlight Educational Trust project – *Together*.

The key findings of the *Fear and HOPE* report reveal:

- A new politics of identity, culture, and nation has grown out of the politics of race and immigration, and is increasingly the opinion driver in modern British politics.
- Six identity 'tribes' in modern British society. These are: *Confident Multiculturalists* (eight per cent of the population); *Mainstream Liberals* (16%); *Identity Ambivalents* (28%); *Cultural Integrationists* (24%); *Latent Hostiles* (10%); and *Active Enmity* (13%).
- There is a clear correlation between economic pessimism and negative attitudes towards immigration. The more pessimistic people are about their own economic situation and their prospects for the future the more hostile their attitudes are to new and old immigrants.
- There is a new middle ground of British politics that is defined by two groups of voters: *Cultural Integrationists* who are motived by authority and order; and *Identity Ambivalents* who are concerned about their economic security and social change. Together they make up 52% of the population.
- Mainstream political parties risk pushing the *Identity Ambivalents* to the Right unless they tackle the social and economic insecurity which dominates their attitudes. This is a challenge for the current Government – which is implementing deep spending cuts – and for the Labour Party, which is the traditional home of many of these voters. Almost half of all voters who do not identify with a party are *Identity Ambivalents.*
- While more likely to consider ethnicity and religion to be important to their identity than nationality, Black and Asian minority groups share many other groups' opinions on a range of issues, including the national and personal impact of immigration.
- The British National Party (BNP) is in decline, entwined as it is with the old politics of race and immigration. Instead, groups such as the English Defence League (EDL), better adapted to the new politics of identity, are replacing them. However, there is a limit to the potential growth of this assertive and threatening form of nationalism.
- There is popular support for a sanitised, non-violent and non-racist English nationalist political party. Britain has not experienced the successful far right parties that have swept across much of Western Europe. Our report shows this is not because British people are more moderate but simply because these views have not found a political articulation.

On a more positive side:

- Political violence is strongly opposed by the vast majority of society and this is a 'firewall' between

those concerned with immigration/multiculturalism and more open and hardline racists.

- Over two-thirds of people view 'English nationalist extremists' and 'Muslim extremists' as bad as each other.
- 60% of respondents thought that positive approaches – community organising, education, and using celebrities and key communal movers and shakers – were the best way to defeat extremism in communities.
- There is a real appetite for a positive campaigning organisation that opposes political extremism through bringing communities together. Over two-thirds of the population would either 'definitely' or 'probably' support such a group.

CONCLUSION

This report paints a disturbing picture of our attitudes towards each another and the unknown. It also graphically highlights the dangers that lie ahead if the issues highlighted in the research are not addressed. *Fear and Hope* throws down a challenge to the political parties to really understand what is happening in the body politic and then do something about it. *Fear and Hope* shakes the confidence of those who believe that all is well in Britain's multiracial society. *Fear and Hope* should make all those working for a more peaceful, cohesive society think again about their strategy's and the effectiveness of their work.

The future is unwritten and it is all to play for. The *Fear and Hope* survey clearly shows that the new centreground voter is receptive to messages of openness, acceptance and pluralism – but they also need social and economic reassurance. If we can understand the new politics of identity then we can win them over. If we fail to do so then we risk their fear turning to hate. That is the challenge we all face. That is why we are launching the *Together* campaign.

Nick Lowles

Nick Lowles
Searchlight Educational Trust

Violence has accompanied many EDL demonstrations, like this one in Bradford

Introduction

"Along with the technological revolution, the transformation of capitalism, and the demise of statism, we have experienced… the widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge globalisation… [these expressions] include a whole array of reactive movements that build trenches of resistance on behalf of God, nation, ethnicity, family, locality."[1]

The Power of Identity, Manuel Castells.

The anti-fascist organisation Searchlight has found itself on the front-line of a new politics of identity. What began as a fight against Fascism has broadened as British extremism has changed form over the past decade. It is now impossible to simply deal with the Far Right threat, as Searchlight has done for almost 50 years, without also addressing other forms of extremism acting as drivers and recruiters for the Right. That is why Searchlight commissioned the polling specialist, Populus, to survey attitudes in modern Britain. We hoped to gain a richer understanding of the nature of hope and fear.

There have been dozens of polls and analyses that have tracked changing attitudes towards immigration and race. However, Searchlight's experience of this shifting dynamic – of a politics of culture, identity, and nation suggested that much deeper forces were driving attitudes towards 'Others'. These forces did not seem to be adequately described by our traditional notions of social class.

The clearest manifestation of these deeper forces has been the rise of the British National Party (BNP), UK Independence Party (UKIP) and more recently the English Defence League (EDL). While some confidently wrote off the Far Right threat after the BNP's poor results in last year's general and local elections, Searchlight believed the threat remained, albeit in a new form. We felt that these far-right parties were simply symptoms of a deeper growth of identity politics, mixed with economic and (perceived and real) social change, which (left unaddressed) would eventually manifest politically. Nature abhors a vacuum; fringe groups seed in fertile ground.

This report and the survey which underpins it is Searchlight's attempt to create a richer framework through which we can understand the dynamics of hope and fear in modern British society. It also highlights the risks that we face by not comprehending and not responding to strong forces which can divide communities both locally and nationally.

While the traditional class-based, left-right, social democratic/neo-liberal models of British politics still have some relevance, our central argument is that these need to be understood alongside a new politics of identity.

Much of the recent political discourse has been concerned with politicians accepting the rising importance of immigration as a political issue, and the sense that we increasingly lack 'cohesion' or 'integration.' But political elites are already behind the curve. Political parties have struggled and failed to catch up with the development of a broader and more fundamental politics of identity.

This new politics of identity means:

- The politics of immigration, a politically active issue in the decade past, has morphed into a politics of *culture, identity* and *nation*. This represents a significant shift.
- The BNP is tied to the old politics of race and immigration. They have failed to adapt, which means they are sinking under the weight of their own negative image. The signs so far are that they are not capable of adapting to a broader politics of culture, identity and nation and therefore unable to reach out beyond the extremist fringes of society.
- Identity politics will shape-shift and consume extremist, fascist and racially-motivated political forces. These malign forces will not disappear and could merely find new, and on the surface, more respectable homes. The EDL and UKIP are already adapting to the new post-immigration, post-BNP environment and others may follow-them.
- The possibility of the rise of a respectable, anti-violence, anti-immigration, anti-EU, non-fascist, anti-Islamic extremist party of flag and tradition is possible. This is contingent on the perceived competence of the major parties, economic conditions, and credible leadership.

Given this context, and with the coming fiscal austerity, Searchlight Educational Trust commissioned this report and research to broaden discussion and understanding of the current political context. The basic hypothesis that lies behind the research is:

"There is a new political spectrum and dynamic that explains attitudes to culture, identity and nation."

NEW TRIBES

The *Fear and HOPE* research has identified six 'identity-defined' groups in society. At one extreme of this spectrum lie liberals and multiculturalists. At the other end lie both active as well as latently-hostile groups.

These tribes can be defined as follows:

- *Confident Multiculturalists* (eight per cent of the population)
- *Mainstream Liberals* (16%)
- *Identity Ambivalents* (28%)
- *Cultural Integrationists* (24%)
- *Latent Hostiles* (10%)
- *Active Enmity* (13%)

We can see that, broadly speaking, the new politics of identity splits as follows:

- Liberal 24%
- Mainstream 52%
- Hostile 23%

These divides constitute a new political understanding through which personal, community, economic, ethic, national identity, and global issues and attitudes can be understood. A person's location on this spectrum is no longer accurately described by their socio-economic class alone. For example, voters of the DE social group split 5%-14%-30%-19%-10%-21% [see table: Segment breakdown by class].

By applying the attitudes of these 'tribes' to a series of questions focusing on standard of living, race, immigration, nation, identity, community, values, and religion, a number of themes emerge. The following are particularly noteworthy:

- Optimism v pessimism; security v insecurity.
- Economic change and identity.
- Englishness, Britishness and identity.
- Changing minority attitudes.
- Social capital v social dislocation.
- Working class fragmentation and dislocation.
- Negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims.
- The refraction of individual issues through the prism of identity politics.
- A potential political vacuum on the right.

This analysis is a challenge to central and local Government, political parties, the media, campaign groups and community organisations. A different political dynamic calls for a different approach to policy, communication, organisation, and prioritisation. This report concludes with a series of practical recommendations for a response to the new politics of culture, identity and nation.

The core message, however, is that this changing political dynamic cannot be ignored. As happened with the controversy over immigration, this new dynamic is real and it is not going away. The question is rather: which response will gain the most traction. If it is to be the political mainstream and not the political extremes then a swift set of responses is required. The choice is between a politics of unity or a politics of division. It is between hope and hate.

SEARCHING FOR NEW WAYS TO EXPLAIN POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Drivers of political behaviour are the subject of intense academic debate. It is clear that social class has lost much of its importance in determining voting behaviour. This is not the same thing as saying class is irrelevant. The alternative view which states 'valence' issues as the major explanation of voting has its own limitations. 'Valence' includes image and party reputation. It is a retail form of politics but in itself is unsatisfactory.

For the purposes of understanding what forms attitudes several assumptions have been made.

Firstly, class is weakening as an explanatory factor for peoples' values, attitudes and voting behaviour. Secondly, while 'valence' factors are significant in terms of voting, they have less of an impact when it comes to cultural dispositions and social attitudes. Therefore, attitudes in relation to culture, identity and nation are formed on the basis of a complex interplay of:

- class
- personal experience
- life circumstance
- media

The central contention is that a politics of identity – where people congregate around the clusters or segments outlined above – has risen alongside a traditional left-right, class-based political axis.

Without understanding these clusters of attitudes towards issues of identity, an understanding of British politics is not possible. As class weakens as a means of understanding social attitudes and political change, and the old left-right dynamic of British politics weakens with it, there is a search for dynamics driving political change. The 'tribes' outlined here are intended as a contribution to that discussion.

Notes

1 Castells, M. The Power of Identity. 1997, p.2.

The New 'Tribes' of British Identity Politics

Confident Multiculturals (eight per cent of the population)

Most likely to be graduates or post graduates, these people are predominantly professionals and managers. They are more prevalent in London and the South East, and among people who identify with Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green. Outgoing, social and happy with their lives, they are confident about their own, as well as their country's future, and think Britain has benefitted from immigration.

Mainstream Liberals (16%)

These people are optimistic, self-motivated and for the most part educated to at least degree level. They see immigration as a net benefit to the country, and usually differ from *Confident Multiculturals* only in their level of enthusiasm about it.

Identity Ambivalents (28%)

These people are less financially secure and less optimistic about the future. They are more likely to be working class, to live in social housing and to view immigration through the prism of its economic impact on their opportunities and the social impact on their communities. Muslims and other BME (Black Minority Ethnic) groups are more prevalent here as are the largest single segment of those who identify with Labour.

Culturally Concerned (24%)

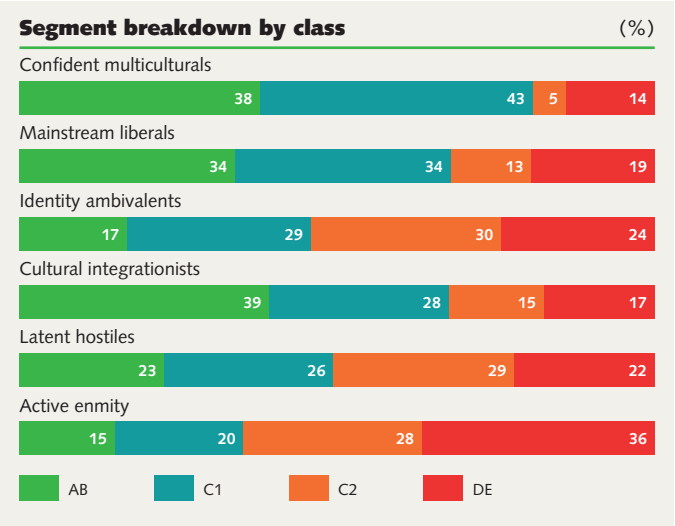
Generally older and more prosperous than other groups, many are (or have been) professionals and managers. They are more likely to view immigration as a cultural issue with concerns about the impact of immigration on national identity and about immigrants' willingness to integrate. This group forms the largest segment of those identifying with the Conservative Party.

Latent Hostiles (10%)

More likely to be older, not university-educated, and more than likely working class. They view their own future with uncertainty and Britain's future with pessimism. For them, immigration has undermined British culture, public services and their own economic prospects. They would support political forces that stood-up for their identity and way of life, but are less confrontational than those in *Active Enmity*.

Active Enmity (13%)

Drawing more support from the unskilled and the unemployed, these people are the most disengaged from traditional political processes and the most hostile to immigrants and what they think immigration represents. Opposed to all ethnicities or religions other than their own, many believe that violence is acceptable if it is a consequence of standing up for what is 'right'.[2]



The key point here is that these 'tribes' have a relationship with social class. The table below displays the class compositions of each of the 'tribes':

According to National Readership Survey, in 2010, 26% of the population were AB, 29% were C1, 21% were C2, and 23% DE.[3] Using this baseline data, we can see that *Cultural Integrationists*, *Confident Multiculturals* and *Mainstream Liberals* are significantly more affluent than the average. *Identity Ambivalents* comprise more C1 and C2s. *Active Enmity* are more working class.

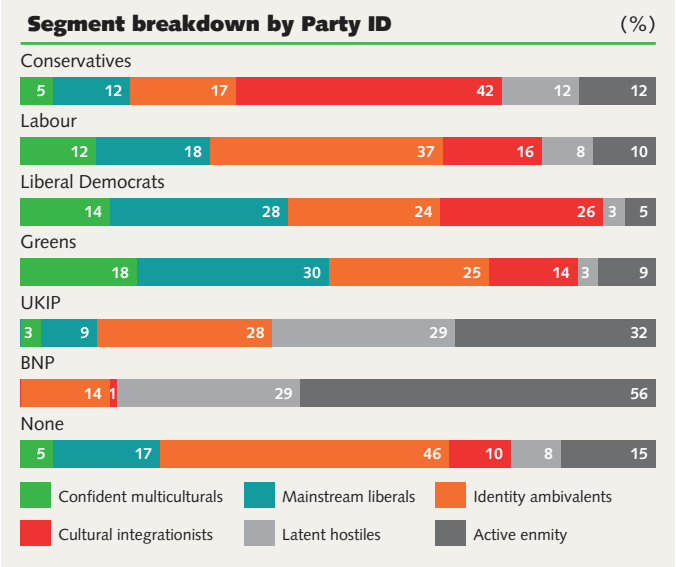
However, social class does not suffice as a substitute for these categories.

The centreground groups on this identity axis are *Identity Ambivalents* and *Cultural Integrationists*. The major differences between them are their class composition and their motivation.

The former are more motivated by economics and perceptions of fairness; the latter are motivated by authority and order, and their political identification.

The following table is a breakdown of 'tribe' composition of each party's vote:

Interestingly, the BNP vote contains almost no *Cultural Integrationists*. This is largely due to the violent and extreme image of the party, which proves deeply off-putting. However, 28% *Cultural Integrationists* support UKIP, though its largest block of support comes from *Active Enmity* (32%). Labour's biggest single block of support comes from the *Identity Ambivalents*. Interestingly, that



group also forms the largest block of none voters and the third largest block of BNP supporters. In many ways, this group resembles the 'squeezed middle' that has attracted so much political attention – it is the new swing group of British politics. It is worth considering this group in isolation.

The *Identity Ambivalents* as 'squeezed middle', swing vote and at risk tribe

The 'tribes' that have been identified are unlikely to be static. While the Populus survey is a snapshot, the variation of 'tribe' composition over age cohorts varies considerably.

Amongst the 25-34 age group, half (50%) are *Identity Ambivalents* – but this declines to 13% in the 55-64 age range, and then only eight per cent of the over 65s. Of this latter group, 44% are *Cultural Integrationists*.

It seems reasonable to hypothesise that people can – and do – shift between these groups in response to life events, as they do with shifting values during the natural course of their life. Of particular interest here are the *Identity Ambivalents*.

One of the defining features of this group is their tendency to view immigration through the prism of their economic circumstances. Where *Cultural Integrationists* are focused on order and authority, *Identity Ambivalents* will be more focused on fairness and their own personal circumstances. And with declining living standards, joblessness, casualisation of labour, and public sector cuts, it is this group that is perhaps more vulnerable to drifting towards *Latent Hostility* or *Active Enmity*.

To illustrate this point, 59% of the *Identity Ambivalents* are C1 or C2. This means that the net annual income of the chief income earner is in the £20,000 region, roughly the median in the UK income scale.[4] In many respects, this group has an overlap with what has come to be described by political parties as the 'squeezed middle.'[5]

This is a significant 'at risk' group, in terms of shifting to the tribes to the right. As they move through life, many may become more concerned about order and authority and so may find themselves becoming more *Cultural Integrationist*. However, if an adverse economic or social event befalls them they may ***leap-frog*** towards *Latent Hostility* or, in extreme cases, *Active Enmity*. One caveat is necessary: most Black and Minority Ethnic [BAME] people are *Identity Ambivalent*. It is likely that this group will be less attracted by more the culturally antagonistic perspectives held by the tribes to the right.

If we look at the socio-demographic profiles of *Identity Ambivalents* and *Latent Hostiles* there are some striking similarities.

	AB	C1	C2	DE
Identity Ambivalents	17%	29%	30%	24%
Latent Hostiles	23%	26%	29%	22%

There are also some differences that should be noted. *Latent Hostiles* are more likely to be owner-occupiers (71% to 53%.) In terms of housing tenure, *Identity Ambivalents* bear a resemblance to *Active Enmity*.

	Owner occupier	Social housing	Private rental
Identity ambivalents	53%	30%	17%
Active enmity	61%	27%	11%

There is a greater firewall between *Cultural Integrationist* and *Active Enmity* 'tribes', given the authority and order predisposition of the former. However, the BNP has a 14% *Identity Ambivalent* vote against nine per cent of UKIP's vote.

In terms of mainstream party politics, Labour's ability to communicate with this 'squeezed middle' vote of *Identity Ambivalents* is clearly key to retaining their faith in the efficacy and justice of politics. Only 17% of the Conservative identifiers are *Identity Ambivalents*. In Labour's case, it is 37%.

The party identification which contains the largest relative proportion of this group is those with no party identification. They are the swing vote, the 'squeezed middle' but also the group most at risk of drifting into *Latent Hostility* or *Active Enmity*.

Notes
2 Populus descriptions
3 http://www.nrs.co.uk/lifestyle.html
4 http://www.nrs.co.uk/lifestyle.html
5 http://www.touchstoneblog.org.uk/2009/05/life-in-the-middle-the-untold-story-of-britains-average-earners/

Political Context for Change

"Immigration, the elephant in the room? Not any more. Now it's parading down the high street, garlanded in ribbons, leading a three-ring circus. This detonation over migration has shaken both left and right."[6]

Jon Cruddas.

During the course of the early 2000s, two debates came to dominate the public discourse around 'identity'.

The first and most significant took place as numbers of net inward migrants swelled in the early part of the century; exacerbated by further inward migration following the Accession Eight countries' entry to the EU in 2004.

The second debate took place around cultural integration and cohesion, and followed domestic and global terrorist attacks perpetrated by Islamic extremists. When placed alongside economic decline and/or perceptions of social change in specific locations – e.g. former mining, mill or manufacturing towns – the politics of race and immigration provided fertile ground for the BNP.

However, these forces have now broadened and the debate has shifted. Immigration has become an aspect of a broader cultural division over notions of identity. Groups such as the EDL have been able to craft a politics of nation: non-ethnic exclusivity mixed with scapegoating of particular groups (i.e. Muslims), and nostalgia that moves beyond the supremacist politics of the BNP. It is also a violent street militia, so in some respects will have severe limitations given the widespread distain for political violence highlighted in the survey.

That said, their political message resonates with those who feel economically, socially, and culturally dispossessed and disoriented by negative change.

It is important not to overstate the influence of the EDL in this shift from the politics of immigration and race to a broader politics of identity. It is more a symptom than a cause. And there will be other symptoms of this shift. The current far right will morph and intermingle with other extremist and fascist groups. These new associations may be increasingly difficult to identify and respond to in the way that the Hope not Hate campaign was able to prevent the BNP from winning a single new local or parliamentary seat in the 2010 elections. The challenge is to limit any expansion of the ground on which such groups thrive. Part of that process is a deeper understanding of the drivers and dynamics of the new politics of culture, identity and nation.

FROM IMMIGRATION TO IDENTITY

It is a commonplace for politicians and voters to say that 'it's about time we started to talk about immigration.' Well, as a nation we have. It is an issue that, after the economy, has become the most significant issue in politics. What's more, it has driven political choices.

- When Labour came into office in May 1997, around five per cent saw immigration as a 'main or other issue facing Britain today.'
- By 2006 that figure had pierced the 40% mark.[7] Of course, many individuals in communities that experienced abrupt change would have felt wage competition and that would be one driver – immigration did rapidly expand in the New Labour years.
- However, the change was as much perceived as real. Eighteen per cent (18%) of Britons see immigration as a big problem in their own area but 76% see it as a national problem, too.[8]
- Immigration has become a driver of voting patterns. Fifty-two per cent (52%) of the voters Labour lost since 2005-2009 see immigration as one of the three or four most important issues facing the country today, compared with 34% of those Labour kept (there is no significant difference in the demographics of the two groups).
- Forty-five per cent (45%) of lost Labour voters consider that the Labour party most wants to help 'immigrants and non-white Britons.'
- Only 15% of the voters that Labour has kept feel the same way.[9]

While immigration remains the most prominent and controversial of the 'identity' issues, it has come to be grouped with a range of perspectives on: nation, ethnicity, integration, cohesion and diversity, faith, community, economic change, security, social change, individual/family prospects and standards of living. Together, these issues and outlooks coalesce around a new politics of identity. And politicians have increasingly searched for a language of meaning in this regard. Nowhere is this more visible than in discussions over cultural diversity, cohesion and integration.

THE POLITICS OF POST-MULTICULTURALISM

Two recent political speeches, both by senior members of the Coalition, have touched on the politics of identity. The first was Baroness Warsi who argued in January 2011:

> *"For far too many people, Islamophobia is seen as a legitimate – even commendable – thing. You could even say that Islamophobia has now passed the dinner-table-test."*[10]

The second was from the Prime Minister himself, David Cameron, who said in a speech at the Munich Security Conference a few weeks later:

> *"We must build stronger societies and identities at home. Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens: as long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. A genuinely liberal country does much more. It believes in certain values and actively promotes them."*[11]

The Prime Minister's 'muscular liberalism' speech – as he described his approach to issues of identity – in many ways echoed a speech given by Tony Blair to the Runnymede Trust in 2006:

> *"The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means. And neither racists nor extremists should be allowed to destroy it."*[12]

Politicians have been searching for the holy grail of a new 'Britishness' for much of the last decade. That they have failed is no surprise. National identities are most definitely not exogenous to the political process: the history of the nation-state is one of the successful moulding of cultural identity to legitimate power. However, modern culture is too free-flowing for that process to be an easy one; or even to be possible at all. Nonetheless, the direction has been in favour of a more integrationist and less multicultural political rhetoric. It is easy to understand why, when the political axis of identity is considered. Only eight per cent of the population are *Committed Multiculturals,* with a further 16% *Mainstream Liberals* who share a more diluted but similar outlook.

Two things have happened. Firstly, the multicultural[13] 'brand' has been deliberately toxified as politicians seek to speak to and for the centre ground of *Identity Ambivalents* and *Cultural Integrationists.* At the same time this process has skewed identity politics away from multiculturalism.

Meanwhile, the strategy pursued by David Cameron and Baroness Warsi is interesting. The Prime Minister's comments in Munich were not new. The speech was well adapted to the language and outlook of *Cultural Integrationists* who are more strongly Conservative identifiers than any other group.

At the same time, Baroness Warsi is sensible to highlight rising Islamaphobia. Essentially, a tough message on the need for integration and a tough line against Islamaphobia could help to build a firewall between *Cultural Integrationists* and *Latent Hostiles*. However, on the basis of the Munich speech, the Prime Minister's strategy is pitched very narrowly and is more rhetorical than substantive. In other words: it is insufficient.

All this raises the question of what Labour's response should be. In some respects the Blair approach on integration missed its target. It was a message aimed at the same sort of people that David Cameron is targeting; it the positions of Cameron and Warsi. It also raised the unanswered question of what exactly are these 'British values' to which immigrants should subscribe.

Remember, the *Identity Ambivalents* are economically and socially insecure: their 'tribe' is not simply a value system or cultural expression.

The most significant intervention that current Labour leader Ed Miliband has made about the politics of identity was his speech to the Fabian Society in January 2011. At its core was the assertion that there is a 'progressive majority' in Britain.

> *"We need to be honest over 13 years in government we forfeited the right in too many people's minds to be the natural standard bearers for this* ***progressive majority*** *in Britain."*[14]

The Populus survey does not support the assertion that there is a 'progressive' majority. It suggests that there is a solid anti-progressive block (47% – *Cultural Integrationists*, *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity*), a solid progressive cohort (24% – *Confident Multiculturals*, *Mainstream Liberals*), and a rump (28% – *Identity Ambivalents*) which simultaneously displays progressive and non-progressive attitudes.

From the perspective of holding the mainstream together and preventing any leap-frogging of *Identity Ambivalents* to *Latent Hostility* and *Active Enmity,* Labour's message must, while culturally aware, also answer social and economic concerns. In this regard, the focus on the 'squeezed middle' is important though not necessarily sufficient if it just becomes a dry policy agenda.

One thing remains certain: data shows that attitudes to immigration have hardened, with a ratio of 60:40 – including 67% of *Identity Ambivalents* – thinking it has been a bad thing for the country.

However, there is more of a divide over questions of diversity. There is a 50:50 split on the question of whether there is a 'place for every kind of person in this country' or 'some people are just too different to fit in.' There is a 49:51 split on the question of whether a 'variety of cultures are part of British culture' or a 'variety of cultures have undermined British culture.' A shrill anti-diversity rhetoric is not what is called for. However, the 'progressive' outlook does not have a head start; it is, in fact, handicapped.

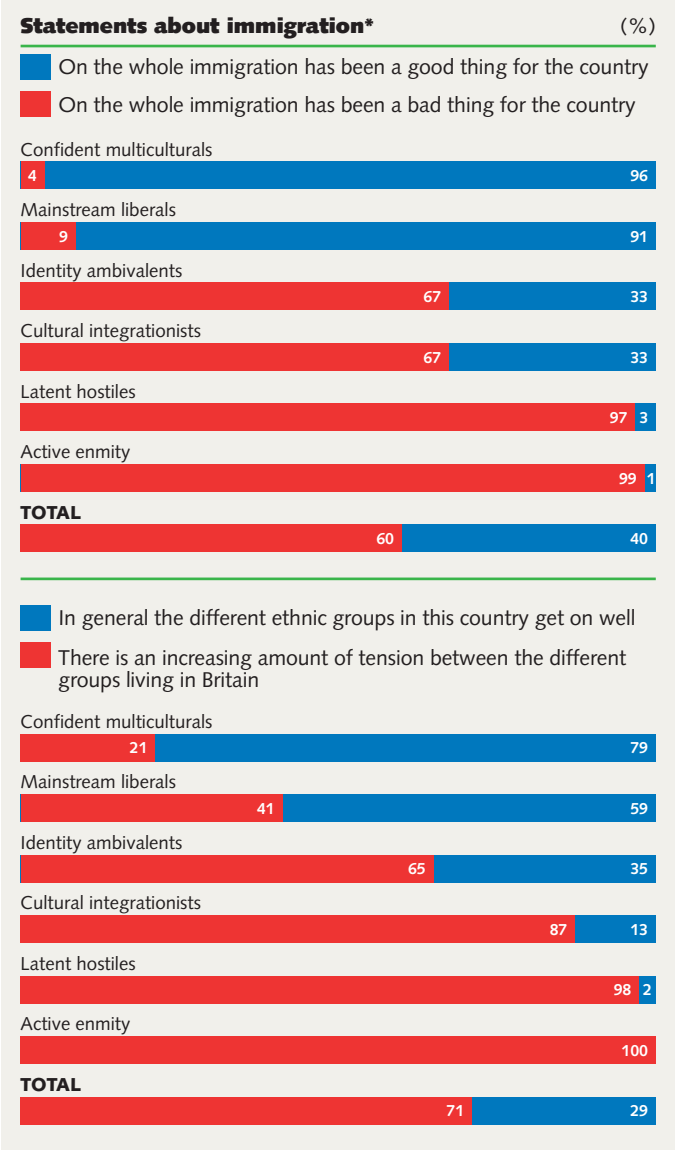
In a sense, both mainstream parties have a role to play in ensuring that the proportion of the population drifting or leap-frogging towards *Latent Hostility* or *Active Enmity* is limited. The Conservative Party is better placed to reassure *Cultural Integrationists*; Labour's natural constituency of interests rests with *Identity Ambivalents.* If either fail, then the politics of identity in the UK could become far more assertive and even toxic.

Rumbling in the background is an economy that is not producing enough jobs with a living wage; a public sector that is shedding employment, cutting services, and distributing resources away from the least advantaged communities; inflation and tax rises –VAT and fuel duty – that are simultaneously hitting people hard; a political class that has reached toxically low-levels of trust; and, as consequence, fear and insecurity about both the present and future.

In short, 'muscular liberalism' speaks to only one section of the centreground of identity politics, while David Cameron's economic and fiscal policies alienate large swathes of the other. Meanwhile, Ed Miliband's 'progressive majority' is in danger of focusing too much on the left-hand side of the politics of identity – even with a 'squeezed middle' narrative that has so far failed to resonate.

The *Identity Ambivalents* – the largest single 'tribe' – are in danger of falling between the two stools of 'muscular liberalism' and 'progressive majority.' This is also the group that is most likely to shift political allegiance – hence the 'ambivalent' label.

This is the context to today's politics of identity and it has a number of themes. It is to these themes that we now turn.



Notes

6 http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2010/11/immigration-bnp-british-labour
7 Ipsos MORI
8 Ipsos Mori, Blair's Britain: the social & cultural legacy. P.32.
9 YouGov, Labour's lost voters poll, May 29th- June 5th 2009.
10 http://www.sayeedawarsi.com/2011/01/university-of-leicester-sir-sigmund-sternberg-lecture/
11 http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/02/terrorism-islam-ideology
12 http://forum.stirpes.net/ethnopolitics/9647-tony-blair-speech-multiculturalism.html
13 Here we are taking multicultural to mean a belief that individuals are free to pursue their own group identities as long as they abide by democratic norms, the rule of law, and respect the rights of others.
14 http://www.fabians.org.uk/events/transcripts/ed-miliband-speech-text

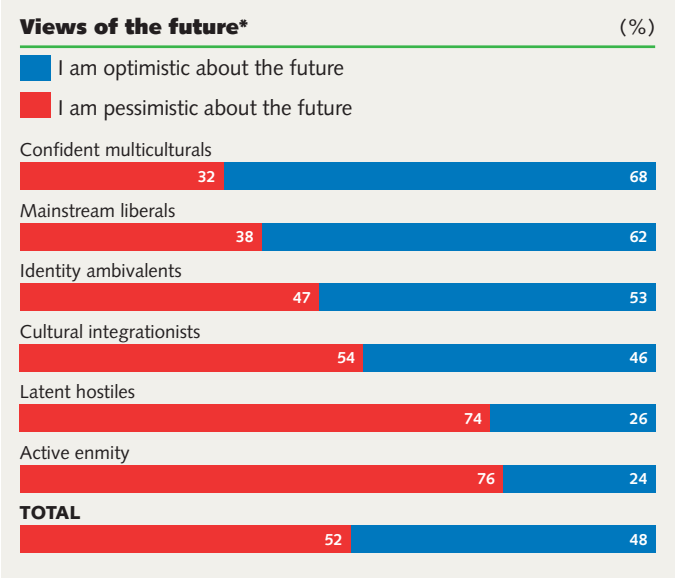
Themes

OPTIMISM V PESSIMISM, SECURITY V INSECURITY

One of the major divides is the degree to which the identity 'tribes' are optimistic or pessimistic about their own and the country's future.

There is very high degree of concern across the board that the country is heading in the wrong direction. Eighty-two per cent (82%) consider life in Britain is worse than 10 years ago. Notwithstanding the economic situation, this is very high.

There is a major divide of opinion between the *Latent Hostiles / Active Enmity* and the rest of the 'tribes' when it comes to general expressions (as opposed to the country specific question) of optimism and pessimism.



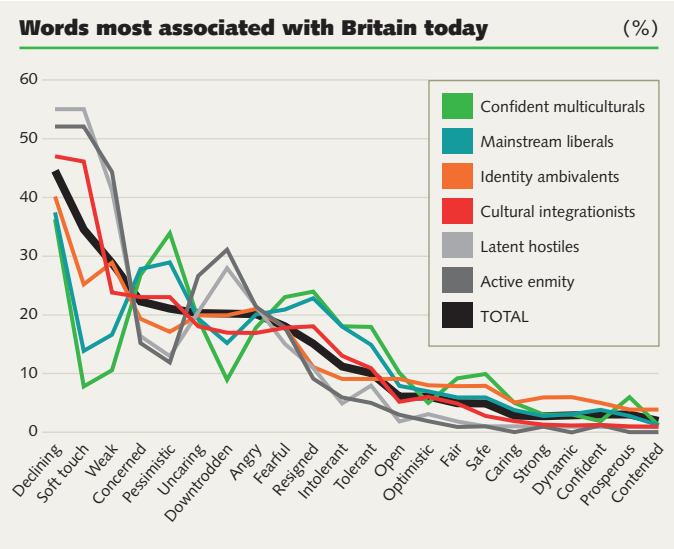
Modern Britain is most definitely not a country that is currently at ease with itself. *Active Enmity* and *Latent Hostiles* are more pessimistic than optimistic by a ratio of three-to-one. The graph below shows how more positive associations of words with the country are to be found on the right hand side of the graph, at the lowest point of the curve. Negative words are found at the highest point. The two groups on the right of the spectrum differ most significantly from the groups on the left on the concepts of 'soft touch' and 'weak'.

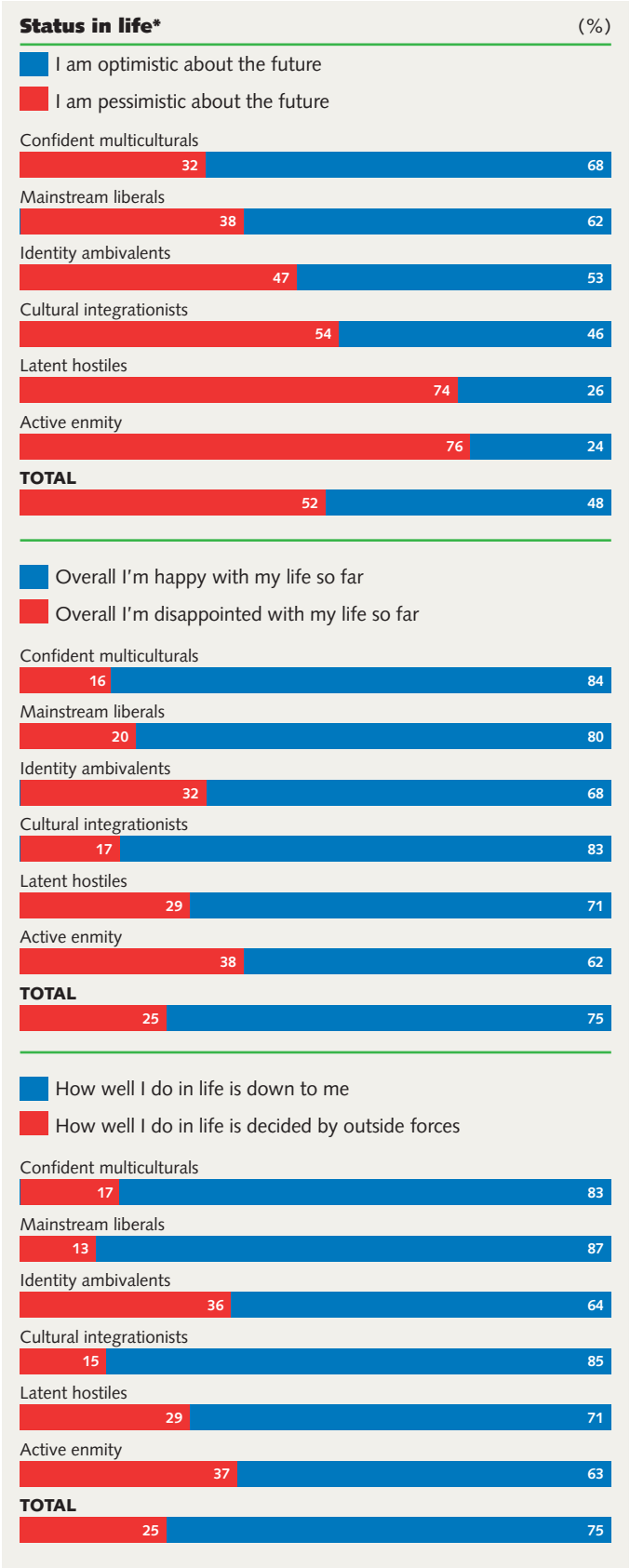
There is also a security v insecurity aspect at play here. Security is linked very much with feelings of empowerment. As part of the survey, respondents were asked about their happiness with their life so far and whether their success in life was self or externally determined.

The two categories with the highest disappointment ratio were *Active Enmity* and *Identity Ambivalents* (see bar chart below.) Both these groups had relatively high levels of perception of success linked to 'outside forces' – 37% and 36% respectively.

There are two points worth making here:

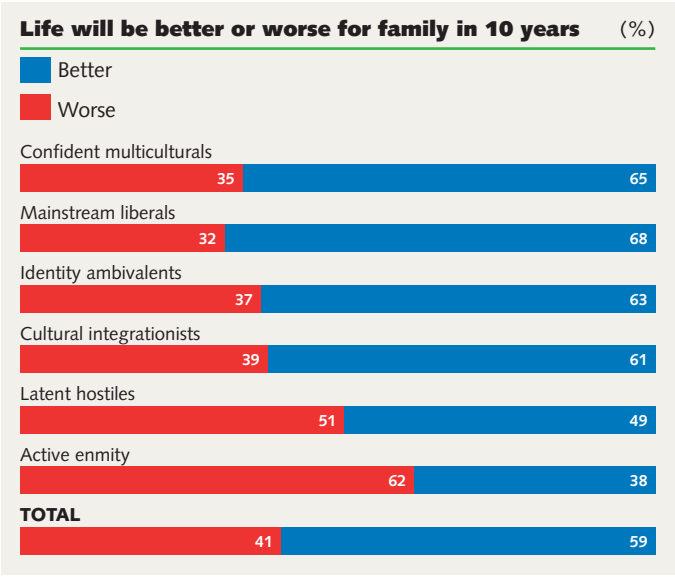
1. People do not tend to blame themselves for their own perceived shortcomings
2. The proximity of notions of power and security between these two groups has to be a cause for concern when considering potential shifts from one attitude set to another.





THE INTERACTION OF ECONOMY/ STANDARD OF LIVING AND IDENTITY.

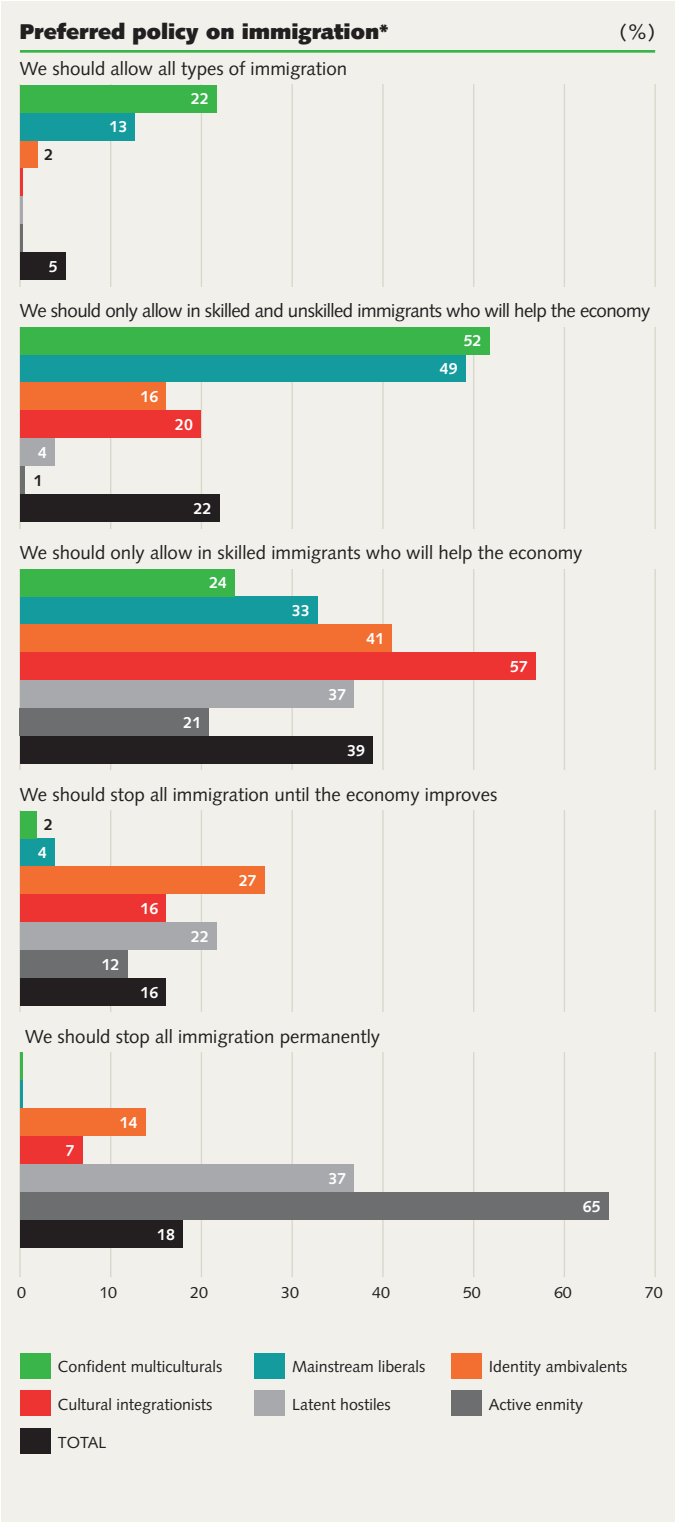
When it comes to their personal and family's situation, respondents believed that 'life would be better' by a margin of 59% to 41%. Again, the same split can be seen between *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity* and the rest on this optimism v pessimism question. Both these groups are more pessimistic about their family's future than the rest:



What is interesting is that the *Identity Ambivalents* retain a degree of optimism about the future (despite many of them being economically insecure), in a way that *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity* do not. A further or deeper period of economic insecurity or even suffering could impact on this over time. For example, unemployment is known to have a severe impact on a person's long-term well-being.

Immigration impacts on this insecurity. *Identity Ambivalents* are more likely to see this issue through economic glasses than other groups.

The chart over shows that 27% of these *Identity Ambivalents* agree with the statement: 'we should stop all immigration until the economy improves.' Fourteen per cent (14%) of this group believe that all immigration should be permanently stopped, compared to 37% of *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity*. Therefore, the latter groups' outlook on immigration is more likely to be linked to the general state of the economy. The longer their



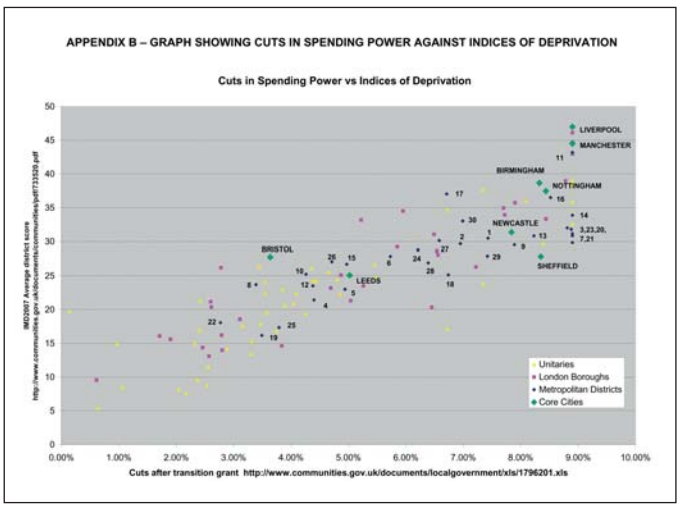
perception of economic weakness, the harder the line they are likely to take on immigration.

The key variables here are change and security: if things change for better then attitudes towards immigration are likely to soften to a certain degree (though it is important not to overstate this); if they worsen then they could harden further.

One other variable that must be considered is the impact of public sector spending cuts. The C2, DE mix of *Identity Ambivalents, Latent Hostiles,* and *Active Enmity* is over 50% in each: 54%, 51%, and 64% respectively. In the case of *Confident Multiculturals*, *Mainstream Liberals,* and *Cultural Integrationists* it is less than 50% in each: 19%, 32%, and 32% respectively. Public expenditure cuts will hit C2 and DEs to a disproportionate extent, because:

1. They receive more (proportionate to their income) from the public purse in tax credits, local and public services
2. The cuts in many areas, most particularly local services, will hit them harder.

The following graph produced by the campaign group *Core Cities*[15] demonstrates the impact of cuts on central government grants to local authorities, measured against the index of multiple deprivation.[16]



What this shows is that the cuts to local authority central grants will hit poorer areas harder. Moreover, a total of £81billion of cuts over four years will impact in-work benefits, employment, housing, local services, as well as a VAT and fuel duty rise on top of wages that are declining in real terms.

This consolidation could have a significant impact on the finances and security of many in the *Identity Ambivalents, Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity.* It is the first of these groups – the 'squeezed middle' – which is politically uncertain and where there could be a shift in attitude as the decline in living standards and the squeeze in public support starts to bite.

ENGLISHNESS, BRITISHNESS, NATION AND IDENTITY

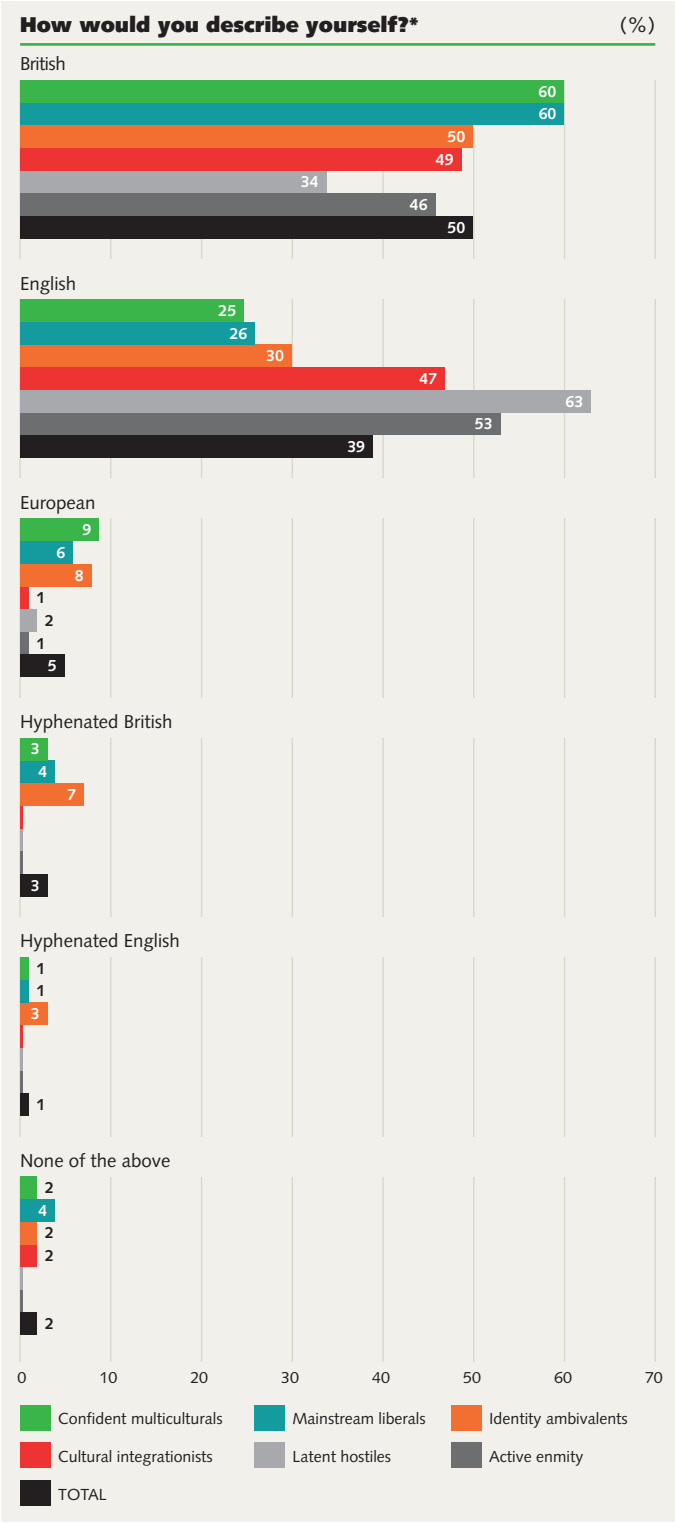
Englishness is back on the political agenda[17] and it is absolutely an avowed and expressed identity of a significant number. On a forced choice between British, English, European, hyphenated-British (e.g. Asian British), or none of the above, 60% regard themselves as British and 39% regard themselves as English. If Englishness is the nationality that didn't dare speak its name, then that is no longer the case.

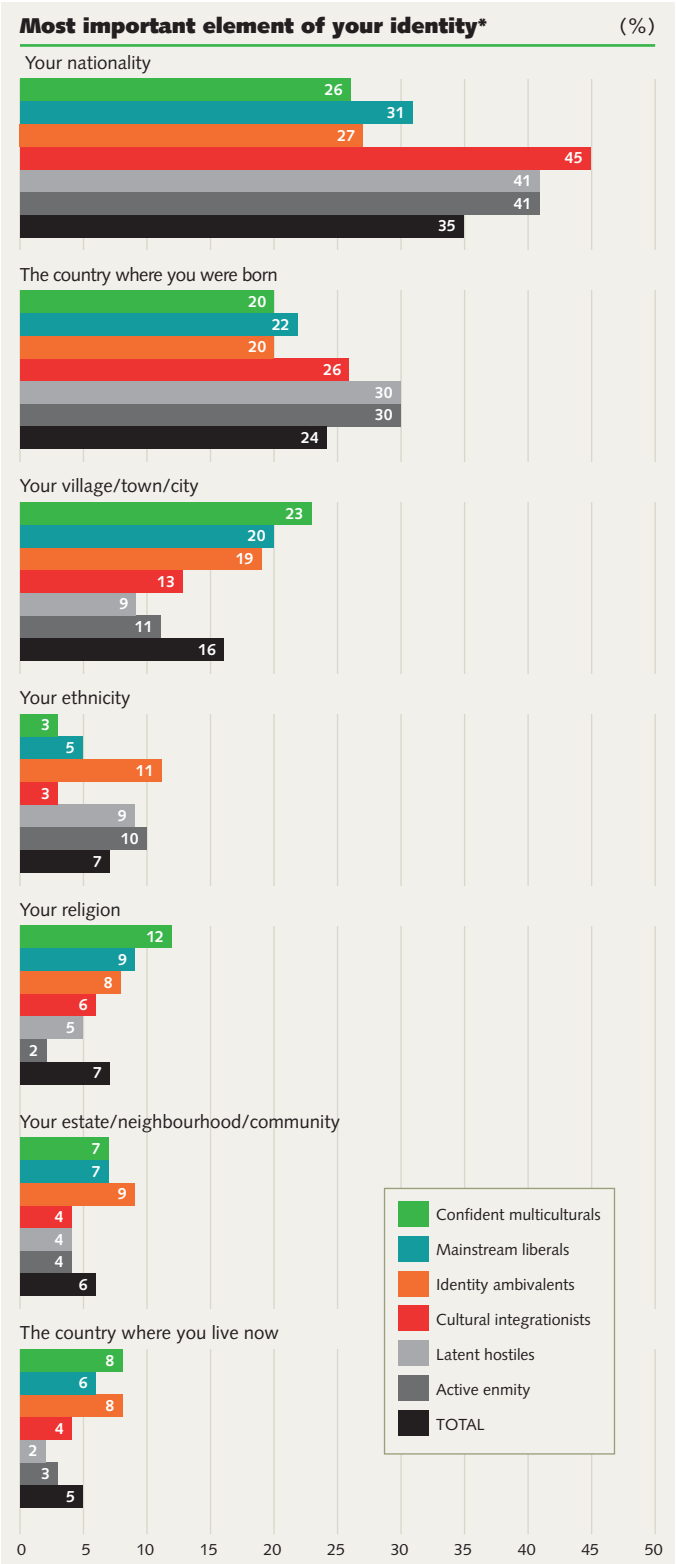
Significant numbers now regard themselves as primarily English over British. This is clearly a widespread phenomenon. Moreover, national identity trumps any other notion of overall identity.

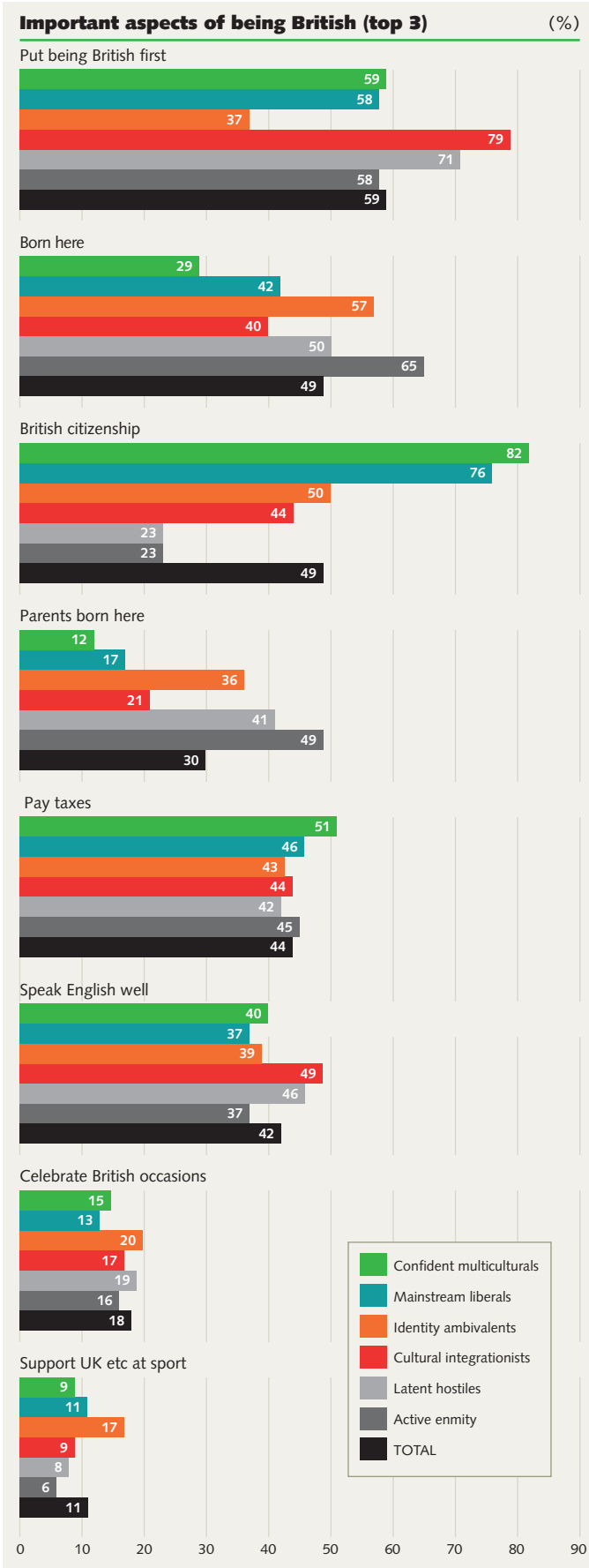
Sixty-four per cent (64%) of respondents see nationality, country of birth or country of residence as the most important aspect of their identity. This means that people have far a weaker attachment to the place where they live, their ethnicity or their religion than their national identity. This begs the question: what do people consider the important aspects of being British?

Almost 60% of respondents placed 'putting being British first' in their top three choices. Another near-50% put being born here and British citizenship in their top three choices. Thirty per cent (30%) placed 'parents born here' in their top three priorities, which seems a relatively high bar for Britishness; it includes almost 50% of *Active Enmities* (which suggests that acceptance will be a long time coming from that particular group). For many respondents it was not enough to be a citizen, but a *good citizen* (such as paying taxes and speaking good English) both come in at around 40% of those surveyed.

It is worth noting that 55%+ of *Identity Ambivalents* regard being born here as an important aspect of Britishness – far more than the *Latent Hostiles*. Trust is something that is earned over time – and the reservoirs of social trust and capital is a theme which underpins notions of identity.




Most important element of your identity*
(%)
Your nationality
26
31
27
45
41
41
35
The country where you were born
20
22
20
26
30
30
24
Your village/town/city
23
20
19
13
9
11
16
Your ethnicity
3
5
11
3
9
10
7
Your religion
12
9
8
6
5
2
7
Your estate/neighbourhood/community
7
7
9
4
4
4
6
The country where you live now
8
6
8
4
2
3
5
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Confident multiculturals
Mainstream liberals
Identity ambivalents
Cultural integrationists
Latent hostiles
Active enmity
TOTAL


Important aspects of being British (top 3)
(%)
Put being British first
59
58
37
79
71
58
59
Born here
29
42
57
40
50
65
49
British citizenship
82
76
50
44
23
23
49
Parents born here
12
17
36
21
41
49
30
Pay taxes
51
46
43
44
42
45
44
Speak English well
40
37
39
49
46
37
42
Celebrate British occasions
15
13
20
17
19
16
18
Support UK etc at sport
9
11
17
9
8
6
11
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
Confident multiculturals
Mainstream liberals
Identity ambivalents
Cultural integrationists
Latent hostiles
Active enmity
TOTAL

MINORITY ATTITUDES

The evidence from the survey does not suggest that attitudes from minorities are significantly different from white attitudes on a whole range of issues. Even with a sample size of over 5000, only two minority groups produced statistically significant results: 'Asians' and 'blacks' (and the latter, it should be noted, is with a small sample size.) Therefore it is on these three groups that this analysis is focused.

The area of greatest divergence from the population average is over identity. This is not necessarily surprising. Amongst Asians, 34% consider themselves British first, one per cent (1%) English, 13% 'hyphenated-English' and 39% 'hyphenated-British' (for black respondents, it is almost the same: 33% British, six per cent (6%) English, three per cent (3%) 'hyphenated-English', and 41% 'hyphenated British'). Asian and black minorities are also more likely to regard religion and ethnicity as the most important element of their identity.

Most important element of your identity

	Asian	White	Black*
Nationality	16%	37%	10%
Country where you were born	15%	25%	6%
Your village/town/city	8%	16%	11%
Religion	24%	6%	16%
Your estate/neighbourhood/community	4%	5%	11%
Ethnicity	17%	6%	40%
Country you live in now	15%	5%	5%

It should be noted, however, that there is not an aggressive anti-nationalism to accompany this proportionately greater ethnic and religious construction of identity. In fact, if anything Asians are just as relaxed and only marginally less proud of symbolic displays of English patriotism such as flying the St.George's flag.

How do you feel when see someone fly the St George's flag?

	Asian	White	Black
Proud	19%	25%	14%
Irritated	2%	5%	6%
Indifferent	26%	28%	44%

On issue after issue there is a great deal of proximity between different ethnic groups, rather than difference.

On immigration there is a more positive attitude amongst minority groups in general.

On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a good thing for the country

or On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a bad thing for the country

	Asian	White	Black
Good thing	57%	38%	83%
Bad thing	43%	63%	17%

However, when actual approaches to immigration are detailed, there is broad agreement.

Preferred policy on immigration

	Asian	White	Black
Stop all immigration	10%	19%	4%
Stop all immigration until the economy improves	29%	15%	17%
Only allow in skilled immigrants who will help the economy	33%	40%	30%
Only allow in skilled and unskilled immigrants who will help the economy	25%	22%	39%
Allow all types of immigration	4%	4%	10%

The above table suggests that 39% of Asians and 34% of whites are in a hard anti-immigration camp. Fifty-eight per cent (58%) of Asians and 62% of Whites seem pragmatic towards immigration. Four per cent (4%) of each are 'open borders' advocates. And when we consider perceptions of the impact of immigration on different groups, it is easy to understand why, despite a generally more accepting attitude towards immigration, the attitudes of ethnic minority groups converge with the average over the impact immigration has on their personal economic situation and that of the wider economy as a whole .

Immigrants have put my job at risk

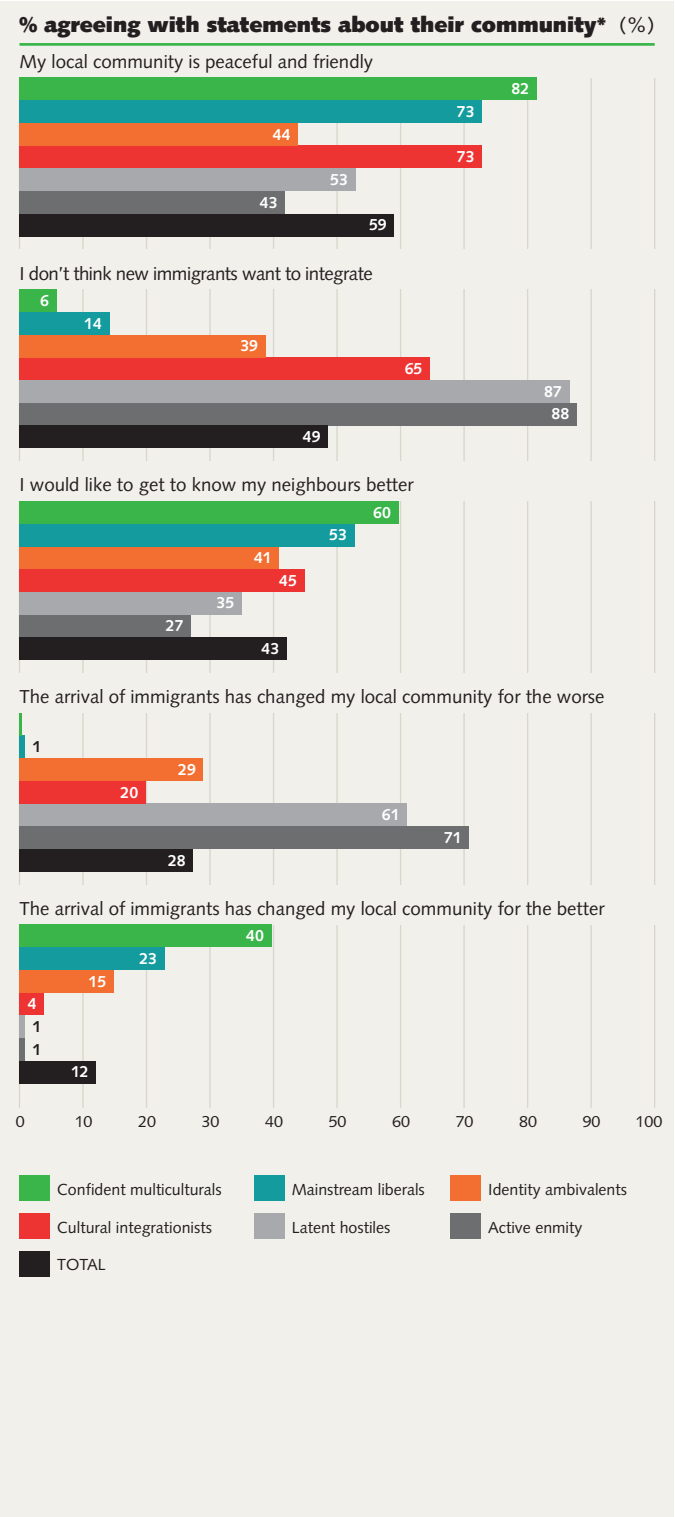
	Asian	White
Strongly agree	16%	10%
Agree	24%	13%
Neither agree or disagree	28%	34%
Disagree	17%	18%
Strongly Disagree	14%	26%

Immigrants have made it harder to get a fair wage for the work I do

	Asian	White
Strongly agree	15%	15%
Agree	32%	19%
Neither agree or disagree	30%	31%
Disagree	16%	15%
Strongly Disagree	6%	20%

In terms of direct personal impact, more Asians believe immigration has a greater detrimental effect upon than White respondents. This challenges our assumptions about how different groups are responding to identity and immigration.

While the construction of Asian and Black identity varies from that of White Britons, their attitudes and experiences converge. The ethnic politics of identity are neither clear cut nor predictable which means that assumptions are hard to make. People have to be met where they actually *are*, not where we assume or *think* they are.



SOCIAL CAPITAL V SOCIAL DISLOCATION

The political scientist Robert Putnam has written about the effect of diversity on social capital.[18] Traditional opinion posits that there is a 'conflict' for resources as communities socially change: suspicion between groups but solidarity within groups.

Obviously, as resources such as jobs or housing become more scarce this conflict intensifies, even more so in areas which have fallen prey to major economic as well as social change. Putnam's insight was that rather than diversity (and he was principally writing about ethnic diversity) and change are increasing in-group solidarity it actually leads to reduced in-group solidarity and social isolation.[19] He summarises his argument:

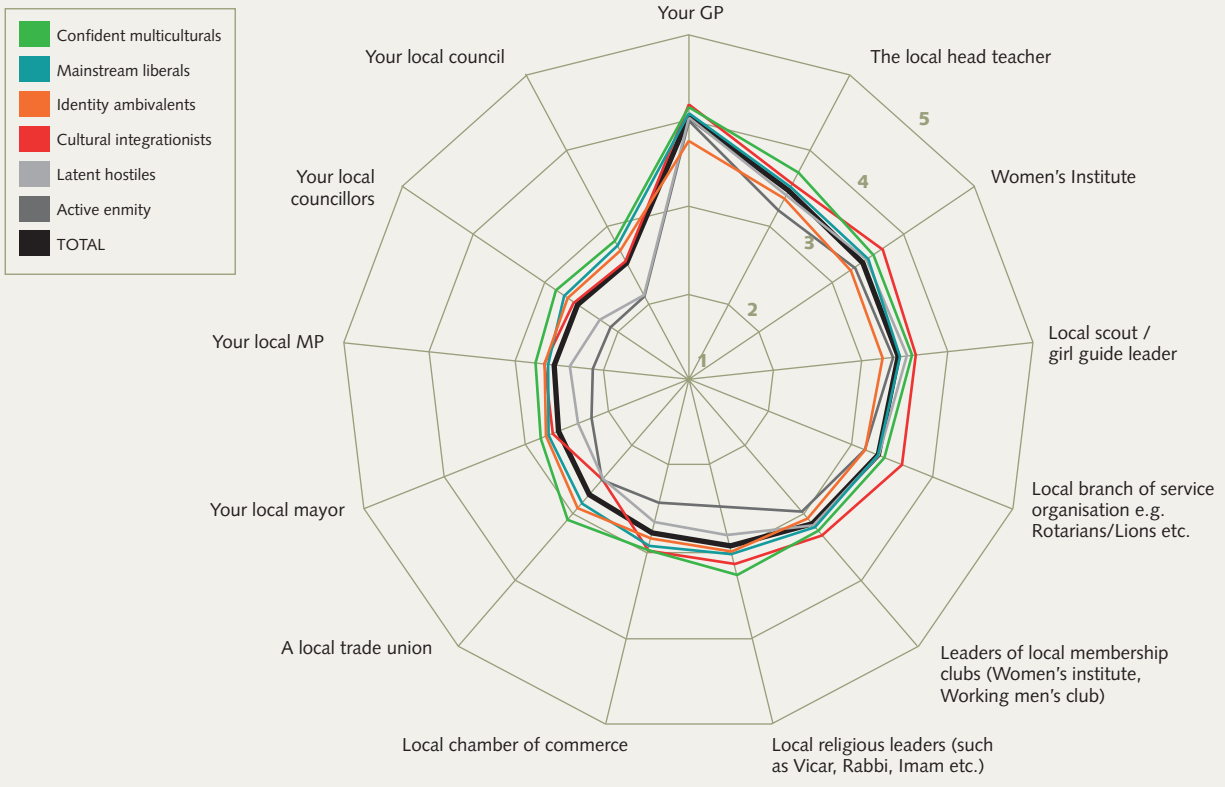
> *"Diversity seems to trigger not in-group/out-group division, but anomie or social isolation."*

Putnam argues that social change creates a 'turtle effect.' People withdraw into themselves in reaction to major economic and social upheaval. There could a short-term aspect to this and much of Putnam's analysis is about the possibility of reversing this 'turtle effect' – a question on which he is very positive.

The research in this survey tends to provide some support for the 'turtle' theory of change and diversity. There tends to be an association between change and (short term) weak bonds of community. Of course, a raft of other questions would need to be surveyed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the drivers of attitudes but there are certainly 'turtle-esque' characteristics to groups who are more likely to display antagonistic attitudes to others.

Latent Hostiles and *Active Enmity* are less likely to regard their communities as peaceful and friendly but they are also less interested in 'getting to know' their neighbours better. The survey also reveals that *Identity Ambivalents* are less likely to live in communities that they perceive as

Who do you most respect in your community?



'peaceful and friendly' than the population overall. However, they are more likely to want to get to know their neighbours, more likely to think that new immigrants want to integrate, and less likely to think that new immigrants have changed their local community for the worse. It should be noted that this group do contain the majority of BAME voters and there is no objective measure of the degree to which their communities have changed in ethnic terms.

This social dislocation is also underlined by the degree of trust that the different 'tribes' have in notable local figures and institutions.

As expected, this web skews right towards a higher degree of trust in community institutions and local services than anything of a political nature. There is, however, a much lower average trust score the further right on the axis one goes:

Trust Index

Total	**3.04**
Confident Multiculturals	**3.24**
Mainstream Liberals	**3.12**
Identity Ambivalent	**3.02**
Cultural Integrationists	**3.14**
Latent Hostiles	**2.91**
Active Enmity	**2.75**

The key point here is that social dislocation *within communities* is an aspect of antipathy. When people become dislocated it is not necessarily to their 'own group' that they turn: it is away from social engagement all together. They are not interested in those around them. They have more negative views of outsiders. They are victims of change and view change negatively.
In situations of scarce resources this type of social dislocation and even conflict is likely to be more severe.

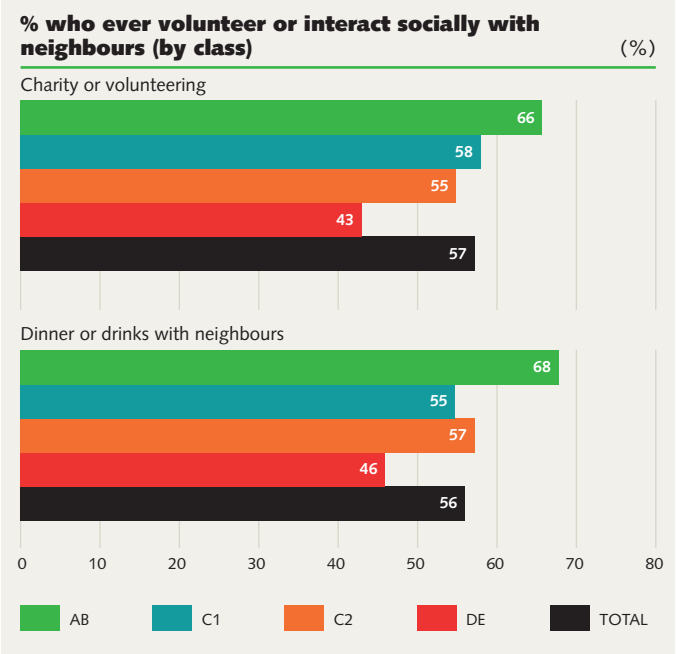
WORKING CLASS DISLOCATION

The experiences of working-class Britain have been extremely varied over the past few decades. Some in former mining villages, major manufacturing towns cities and former mill towns have experienced loss and dislocation. Others have benefitted from industrial change as new industries have established in new locations, such as Honda in Swindon. Overall, though, there has been a de-skilling, casualisation and flexibilisation of the workforce at lower income levels. Many families now require two incomes, where previously one would have sufficed.

There are still romantic notions of working-class solidarity in the face of this economic change. Much as the evidence suggests there is a 'turtle response' to the short-term impact of diversity, this survey also picks up on 'turtle-like' responses in working-class communities. These responses exhibit in several ways, with several causes, and are likely to be influenced by economic change, decline of opportunity, the quality of the public realm, social change, and hardship.

It is perhaps of no surprise that many of the areas where the BNP has made its most substantial gains are in the very communities and localities which have experienced the most economic and social change – particularly those places built up around one or two key industries. These include Barking & Dagenham (car industry), Stoke-on-Trent (steel, potteries and coal), Nuneaton (coal and car industry) and Barnsley (coal). This economic upheaval has been accompanied by social upheaval, too, and resulting dislocation. It's as if the glue that bound the area together, and the people within it, has melted away and left behind a disconnected, dislocated and increasingly resentful population.

The romantic notions of a unique working-class community culture are certainly questioned by some of this data. It is worth noting that 46% of DE respondents say that they have dinner or drinks with their neighbours, whilst 43% engage in charitable or voluntary activity. However, these questions (about engaging in charitable or voluntary work) are some of the most prone to false recall. Furthermore, working class groups socialise less with their neighbours (by 10%) than the overall average; 22% less than the ABs.

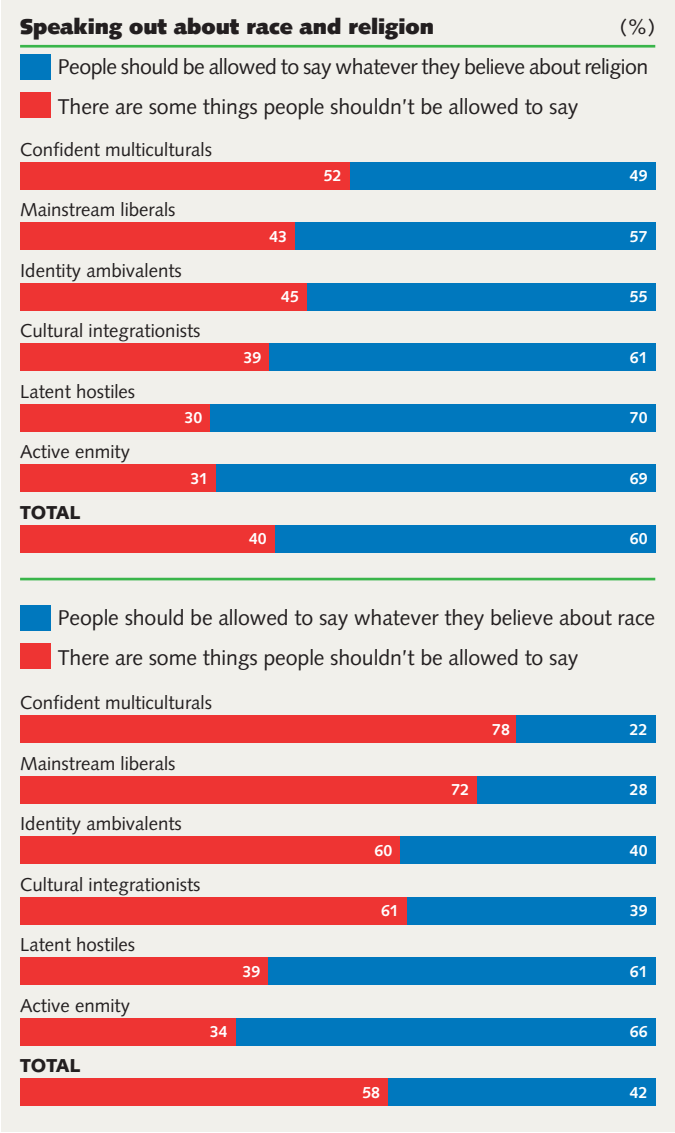


Furthermore, this lower level of engagement runs right across the board. Contrary to popular perception, for example, DE voters are even less likely to go to the pub than other social groups. The following table shows the level of engagement of all social classes with a range of community activities (0 is never, 1 is less than once a month, 2 is at least once a month, 3 is at least once a fortnight, 4 is at least once a week):

	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
Go to a local pub	1.63	1.73	1.68	1.73	1.37
Involved in some form of sport	1.23	1.53	1.31	1.17	0.8
Do some charity / community work	1.04	1.39	1.06	0.82	0.8
Have dinner or drinks with neighbours	1	1.19	0.95	1.06	0.77
Attend a place of worship	0.84	0.98	0.88	0.86	0.61
Involved in some political activity	0.48	0.58	0.5	0.55	0.25

There is the possibility of a 'persecution complex' amongst certain groups: those who feel constrained from saying what they truly believe – whether or not such persecution is true. If it is true, then their voice is not being heard; they are alienated. If it is not true, then they feel outside the system and alienated; therefore dislocated. This is illustrated in the table below:

Two groups which comprise more DE voters than the average are *latent hostiles* and *active enmity*. These two groups are far more likely than average to push back against 'political correctness.' This could imply that there



are things that they feel they can't say that they feel they want to. This isn't a view that is shared amongst the *identity ambivalents* so there is something deeper at play than just class. However, C2, DE voters have the highest proportion who are pushing back against a denial of the right to express what they feel (interestingly C1 voters are the most 'PC' and this might be explained by the proportion of public sector workers found with this group.)

There are some things that people should not be able to say about race and if necessary they should be prosecuted if they do

Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
58%	59%	62%	55%	55%

People should be allowed to say what they believe about race, however critical or offensive it might be

Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
42%	41%	38%	45%	45%

ISSUE REFRACTION THROUGH THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY.

A political dynamic refracts individual issues through pre-formed frames of perception. The 'tribe' to which you belong steers your outlook on particular issues in a certain direction. One of the tests of the utility of the new politics of identity outlined in this report is the degree to which this is occurring. The table below shows some compelling evidence that it might well be.

The first two statements are, on balance, probably true (see House of Lords *The Economic Impact of Immigration* for detailed analysis and evidence.)[20] Net immigration does add pressure to public services. But many organisations, including in those in the public sector, could not cope without migrant workers. And yet there is almost a two-point difference between *Confident Multiculturals* and *Latent Hostiles* on the 'pressure' question. On the 'coping' question, there is a further two-point difference between these two 'tribes.' Whatever the broad objective reality, which identity 'tribe' you belong to skews your outlook and perception.

The other statements on this table are more subjective. One further issue is worthy of note: the degree to which respondents consider that immigrants have made it 'harder to get a fair wage for the work I do.' Immigration impacts certain types of workers more than others. As a recent report by the House of Lords reported on the basis of academic research into the impact of immigration on wages:

> *"This work suggests that every 1% increase in the ratio of immigrants to natives in the working age population ratio led to a 0.5% decrease in wages at the 1st decile (the lowest 10% of wage earners), a 0.6% increase in wages at the median, and a 0.4% increase in wages at the 9th decile. These effects are fairly modest."*[21]

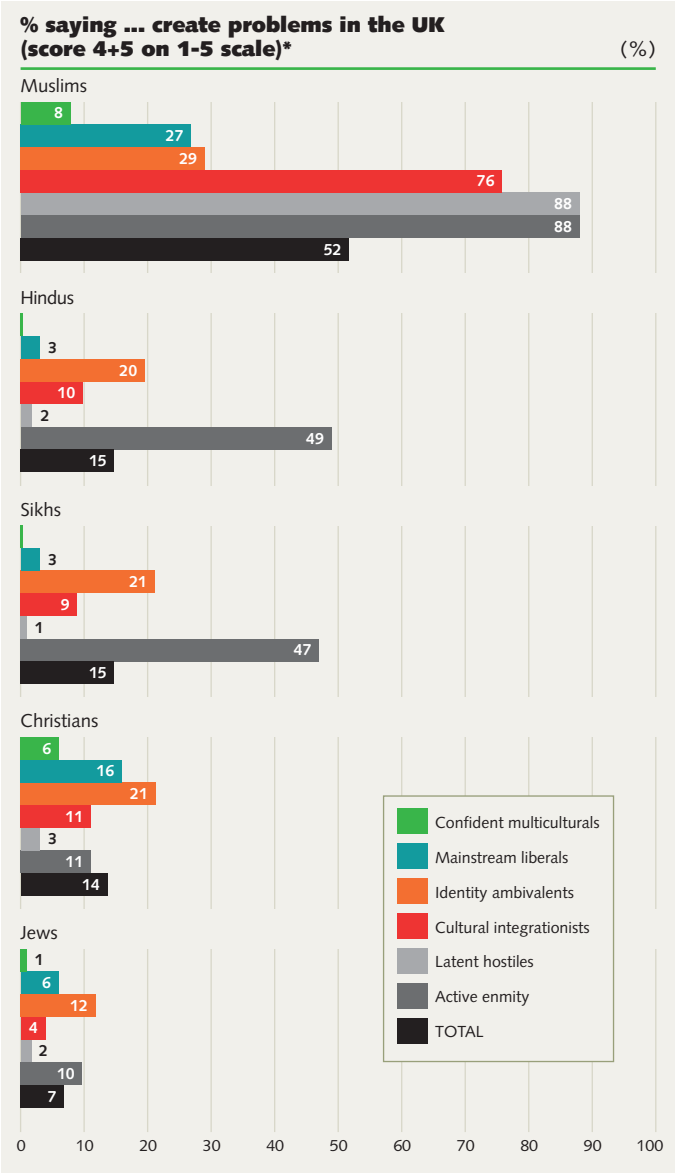
It is little surprise that the worst impacts are among those 'tribes' who are the least economically advantaged: *Identity Ambivalents, Latent Hostiles,* and *Active Enmity.*

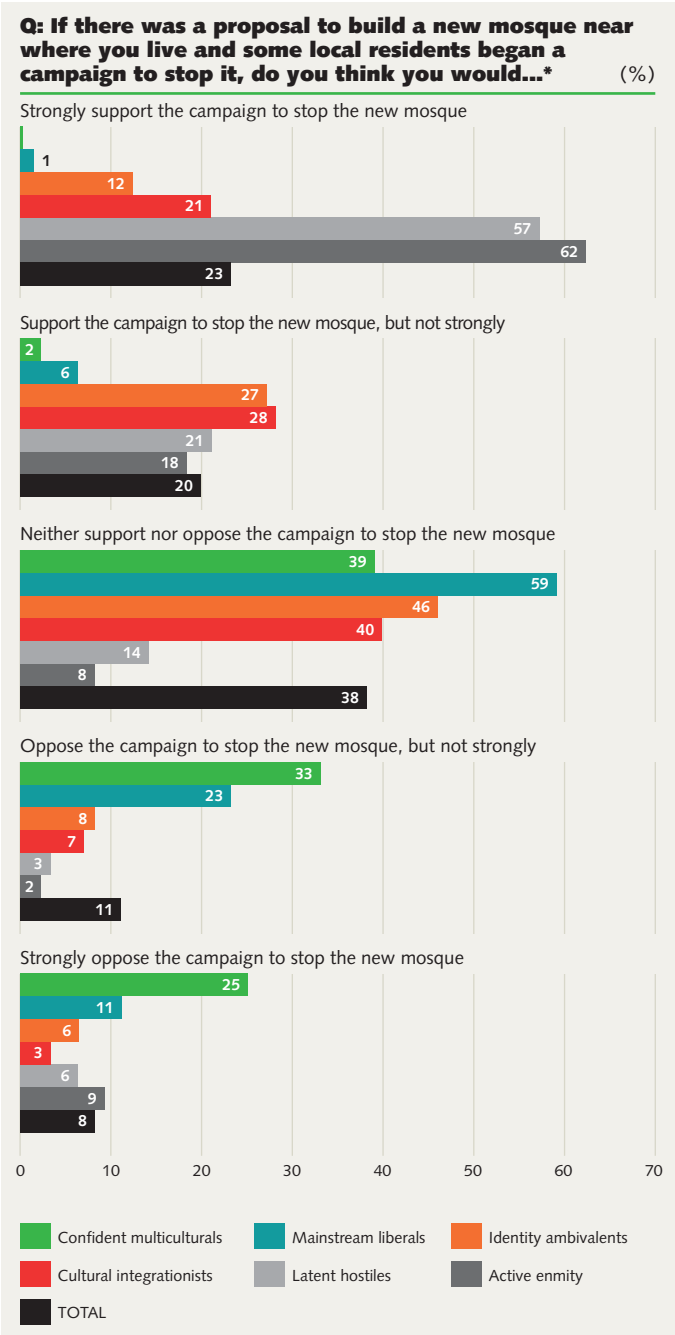
Whether that is an accurate description of their actual situation is impossible to know. What could be happening is an interplay between perception and experience. That is a defining feature of a political dynamic. British politics, and peoples' political understanding, is refracted through this politics of identity. That can, unfortunately, weigh heavily on attitudes towards particular groups.

ATTITUDES TO MUSLIMS/ ISLAM

By and large the respondents in the survey believe that religion is a private activity which should have little influence on the laws of the land. Over two-thirds (68%) hold this view. Overall, however, religion is not seen as a force for good. Only 23% consider that religion is important to them personally and the same number see it as a force for good in the UK.

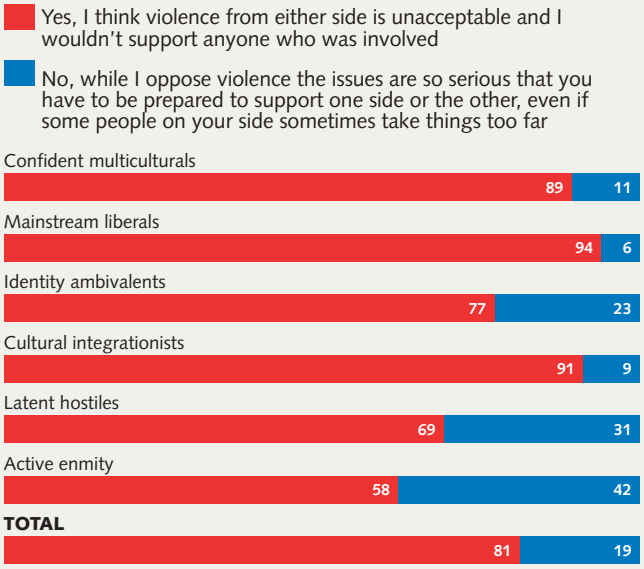
All religions are not equal, however. Islam as a religion and Muslims generally face very strong negative attitudes from a broad swathe of the population. Baroness Warsi appears to have had a point about the dinner table respectability of Islamaphobia. It is certainly very widespread in English society.





Just over half of respondents believe that Muslims 'create problems in the UK.' *Identity Ambivalents* share a closer affinity with *Mainstream Liberals* and *Confident Multiculturals* on this point. Once again this underlines the fact that the *Identity Ambivalents* more focused on the economy and perceptions on fairness than the *Cultural Integrationists*. (The majority of Muslims surveyed are in this group, though remain only a small part of it.) There is a huge gulf between the Muslim community and other groups in the perception of others and this obviously can lead to feelings of animosity and

Q: And regardless of whether you would support or oppose the building of the mosque or the campaign to stop it, if either side became violent or threatened violence, would this make you reconsider your view?* (%)



potential violence, on one side, and alienation and extremism on the other.

Perhaps this is most clearly demonstrated by reactions to the question about their reaction to an application to build a new mosque in their area.

In total, 43% would support the campaign to stop the mosque against 19% who would oppose such a campaign. This is quite a startling figure. People are making their decision based solely on their opposition to an Islamic building and the image and stereotype that conjures up.

This is one of the most clearly divided questions in the survey: on one side are the *Confident Multiculturals* and the *Mainstream Liberals* and on the other the *Latent Hostiles* and the *Active Enmity*. The broad point, though, is that there is a gulf of understanding and acceptance between Islam and a large portion of the UK population – as much 50 per cent. This is a matter of urgent concern.

It is clear that violence polarises opinion. The group with the closest view to the *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity* is the *Cultural Integrationists*.

As soon as violence becomes part of the equation there is a firewall between the *Cultural Integrationists* and the *Latent Hostiles* (see above graph). A belief in authority and order is emblematic of the *Cultural Integrationists.* As long as right-wing parties and groups such as the BNP and the EDL are associated with violence there is a firewall in place between them and mainstream society. Nearly a quarter (23%) of *Identity Ambivalents* do not see violence, or the threat of violence, as sufficient to make them change their mind. However, what if the threats of violence were not there? Is there political space for a different kind of identity-focused party of the Right?

POLITICAL VACUUM ON THE RIGHT OF THE IDENTITY AXIS?

Threats to public order or threats and acts of violence build a firewall between the political Right and other groups that, to a degree, quarantines *Latent Hostility* and *Active Enmity*. As a purely hypothetical exercise, a question which outlined a fairly sanitised version of an English nationalist, anti-Muslim extremism, anti-immigration party was asked. The wording of this question was relatively benign and it was not linked to any individual or existing political brand. Nonetheless, the numbers do show a clear appetite for a right-wing English nationalist party.

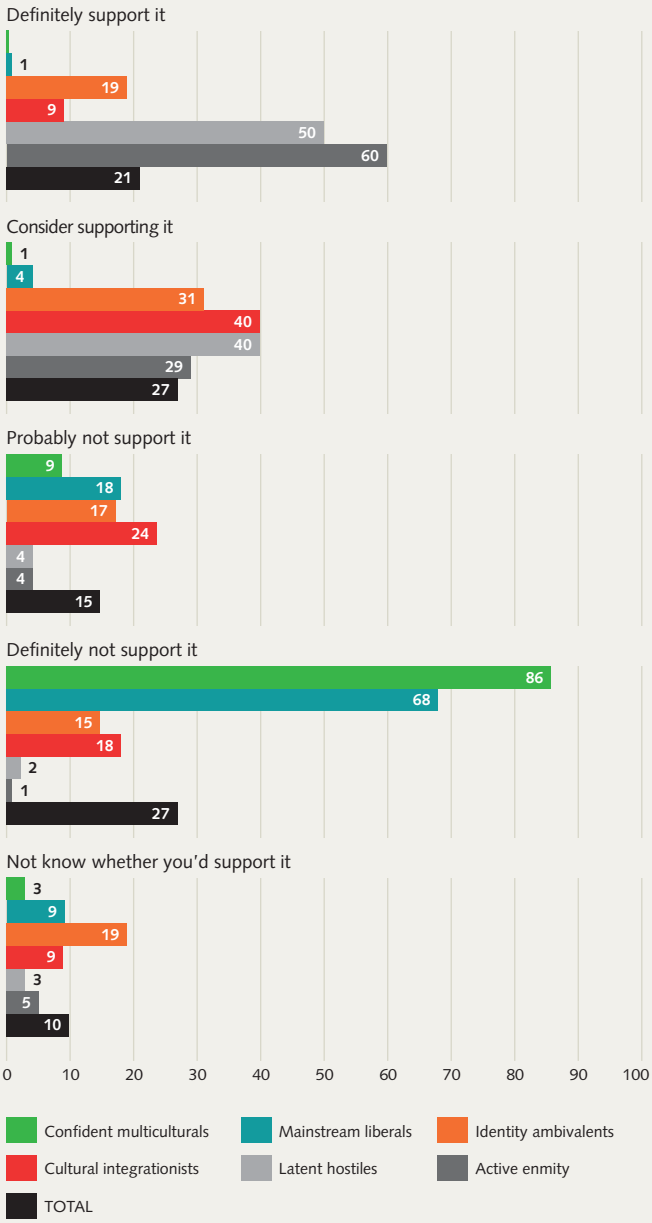
The potential support for a more respectable right-wing party is a worrying development. To date, the UK has been 'lucky' that it has not had politically or electorally successful right-wing parties: they have been aggressive, disorderly, spill over into violence, or, in the case of UKIP, they are obsessive about a single issue. Right-wing parties have grown more spectacularly on the continent, most notably in The Netherlands, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark. What is clear, however, is that the lack of a similar right-wing party here is not due to the lack of potential support or even the British/English being any more moderate. Simply, there has not been a presentable political face for this mood.

Whether a new right-wing party emerges remains to be seen. It would be dependent on a number of factors. But what is clear is that the appetite for a new party will grow if the mainstream political parties fail to understand and deal with the new identity-driven landscape. Left unaddressed, a new party could, as our survey graphically demonstrates, not only appeal to those among the *Latent Hostiles* and *Active Enmity*, but also prove attractive to some in the *Culturally Integrationists* and *Identity Ambivalents* 'tribes'.

The future, however, is not set in stone and while this survey flags up very real concerns and alarming attitudes, there is plenty of ground for a positive politics of cultural pluralism, authentic patriotic pride, and a fair distribution of access to services and distribution of opportunity of income.

Politics that offers a more compelling vision for people's everyday concerns, as well as respects and understands their cultural identity, will ensure that the political

Q: A new party is going to be set up which says it wants to defend the English, create an English Parliament, control immigration, challenge Islamic extremism, restrict the building of mosques and make it compulsory for all public buildings to fly the St George's flag or Union Jack. Would you:* (%)



mainstream feels a connection to the mainstream parties. The growth of the Right will be quarantined, too, if such efforts can be made.

In this regard, more must be offered by all of the mainstream parties. The Conservatives must understand the economic and social damage that austerity could do to many in the mainstream. Labour must realise that it is no longer a voice for the real mainstream. Both parties have much to do.

Notes
15 http://www.corecities.com/home
16 http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markeaston/2011/02/fairs_fair.html
17 See Jonathan Rutherford and Jon Cruddas http://www.progressonline.org.uk/articles/article.asp?a=7451
18 Robert Putnam. E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol. 30 - No.2, 2007.
19 Ibid p144.
20 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/ldeconaf/82/8202.htm
21 ibid, p.27

What Next?

The *Fear and HOPE* survey gives a snapshot of current attitudes in England today. It explores the level of fear, hate and hope in society. It details what pulls us apart and what brings us together. With 5,054 respondents and 91 questions it is one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys into attitude, identity and extremism in the UK to date.

On one level it is not happy reading. It concludes that there is not a progressive majority in society. And it reveals that there is a deep resentment to immigration, as well as scepticism towards multiculturalism. There is a widespread fear of the 'Other', particularly Muslims, and there is an appetite for a new right-wing political party that has none of the fascist trappings of the British National Party or the violence of the English Defence League.

Of course attitudes and identity are fluid and multilayered. Attitudes held today may not be held tomorrow.

There are, however, many positive findings from the report.

- Young people are more positive towards immigrants and multiculturalism than older people
- Over two-thirds of people would either definitely support or consider supporting a group that campaigns against religious and racial extremism and promotes better relations between ethnic and religious groups in England
- The vast majority of people in England abhor political violence, from whatever quarter, and 60% would support a positive solution to combating extremism, such as community organising, education or using celebrities and positive role models within communities to show that people from different communities are not actually different to them.

Before we discuss the way forward, it is worth remembering one of the key findings. The two most important groups with which we need to engage to prevent an increase in right-wing extremism are:

- the *Immigrant Ambivalents*
- and the *Cultural Integrationists*.

Together, they represent over half (52%) of society, making them 'the mainstream'. Whatever our personal views on immigration, identity and diversity, we must focus our attention on these groups and create a 'firewall' stopping them moving over into the *Latent Hostiles* 'tribe'.

Prime Minister David Cameron seems to understand some aspects of this situation – hence his 'muscular liberalism' approach. The insistence on integration and opposition to state multiculturalism, whilst simultaneously speaking out against the politics of fascism and racism, speaks directly to the *Cultural Integrationists* group (in a way that promoting multiculturalism and the benefits of immigration simply cannot). It plays to their concerns over immigration and a changing world, as well as their belief that newcomers should accept the British way of life.

Muscular liberalism is a strategy that plays well with *Cultural Integrationists* but it is insufficient to deal with the other, slightly larger mainstream group – the *Identity Ambivalents*, whose attitudes towards immigration and identity is shaped much more by social and economic insecurity.

On the political scale the *Cultural Integrationists* might appear to the right of the *Identity Ambivalents* – being more conservative in political outlook – but it is a much firmer and less fluid group. The clear lack of *Cultural Integrationists* identifying with the BNP suggests that few would shift over to a far-right party.

The *Identity Ambivalents*, on the other hand, are far more fluid and spread across the entire political spectrum. As our report highlights, they are economically insecure, have many similarities with the *Latent Hostiles* and make up almost half of all people who do not identify themselves with any of the political parties. They are the true swing voters in British politics. With this group likely to come under even more stress in these difficult economic times, there is a real possibility that some could leapfrog over the *Cultural Integrationists* and in the process turn their fear into hate. It is for these reasons why the *Identity Ambivalents* have to be the focus of our work.

Preventing people in this group moving off to the Right will require increased social and economic security. With such security many will become more relaxed about immigration, and feel less acutely about identity issues. If political parties are serious about combating extremism then they will have to address these economic and social insecurities. This is particularly true for the Labour Party: this group is a significant Labour-supporting (or potentially supporting) set of voters.

There are other reasons why the *Identity Ambivalents* will not react as positively to muscular liberalism as the

Together united the people of Bradford against the EDL

Cultural Integrationists. As stated earlier, they are more positive to immigration and multiculturalism, more opposed to aggressive right-wing extremism and look to more positive answers for reducing extremism. In almost every indicator they are more culturally and socially liberal. Without the current economic fears and pessimism it is easy to see how many in this group could shift attitudes to be closer to the *Mainstream Liberals*.

There are some other fundamental problems with a simplistic muscular liberalism approach. It seems half a strategy. It is a strategy of 'stick' without the 'carrot'. It is about people conforming to an unspecified list of British values without looking at ways to force the two groups on the right of our identity spectrum to conform. Our survey suggests that 23% of the population are in the two identity groups that resolutely oppose immigration and a diverse society. A shocking 26% of respondents sided with English nationalist extremists in a violent confrontation but where are the calls for muscular liberalism to be applied here?

Perhaps most interestingly, our research showed that the average Muslim in Britain, along with Asians as a whole and in fact BAME, have fairly similar concerns and fears to their white counterparts. While culturally and on identity there are some differences, widely-held views about Muslims being 'fundamentally different' need to be challenged by politicians, the media and even the leadership of Muslim community organisations when discussing social and community cohesion.

What is required is less a policy of 'here are our British values, you need to accept them' – vague, simplistic and often nostalgic – but instead developing a universal set of values. At the same time we need to develop real and meaningful shared identities anchored in modern society and local communities. This is more about carrot rather than the stick.

Individuals should of course be able to lead their lives in private as they so wish but in the public sphere all citizens should be treated equally and consistently, according to generally accepted universal values. This means we should not be afraid to speak out against behaviour and actions that are clearly inconsistent with our common values.

For this to work, however, then everyone must be subjected to the same set of values – not just the Muslim community, as is all too often the case. The number of non-Muslim Britons who refuse to mix with Muslims far outnumber those Muslims who refuse to integrate into wider society.

Alongside this need for a commonly-held set of values is the need to develop *shared identities*. Most people have several, sometimes competing (and changing) identities, ranging from attachments to their local community, region or the country in which they live. These identities draw upon history, regionalism, culture and economic differences. Our survey highlights the multitude of factors that make up our identity but it also stresses the desire of the vast majority of people to have a strong sense of belonging.

For the Government, greater emphasis needs to be placed upon developing shared identities, local as well as national, something that goes beyond a shared set of values imposed from above. For the supporters of multiculturalism there needs to be an acceptance that most people do want to belong and share an identity, particularly around the idea of a national identity. When discussing the dismissive attitude of some towards the

importance of national identity, it is worth citing a passage from Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities*:

> *"In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles."*

This national identity, however, has to be *real* and link to the everyday experiences of ordinary people – not be linked to some golden, nostalgic past or a version of (Tony Blair government's) 'Cool Britannia' which was the preserve of the rich and famous.

Developing this universal set of values is beyond the scope of Searchlight Educational Trust. But we can help develop a shared identity against a common enemy – extremism – and through this create a gap, a firewall, between the mainstream and the Far Right. And we have already achieved this, on both a local and national level, in many towns and cities up and down the land.

When faced with several recent EDL demonstrations we have sought to unite communities – white and Asian, Christian and Muslim – against extremism. We have sought to marginalise the violent extremists of the EDL, arguing that they will only bring fear and trouble to local communities. In the process we have made local people think about the community in which they want to live; and let them consider the choice of a community of fear, division and hate with one where people find a way to get along together, in peace. In Bradford and Leicester the council, police and local newspapers have all remarked about the renewed sense of 'community' in their respective cities following our campaigns.

People can come together in a positive and peaceful way.

A key component of universal values is consistency in applying them. We must be prepared to speak out against extremism, from whatever source it originates. We have applied this to our local campaigns and it has received a very positive response. We are being consistent in our approach; by linking seemingly-opposite extremes we are bolstering the mainstream middle. As our survey clearly shows, the vast majority of people, especially in the mainstream middle, oppose all extremism equally.

THE TOGETHER PROJECT

Searchlight Educational Trust is establishing a project to explore, understand and tackle the rise of right-wing nationalism and extremism in Britain and Western Europe.

Entitled *Together*, the project will endeavour to address the increasing polarisation in society, leading to political extremes and violence, then seek to counter this rising hatred through building new communities and forging shared identities.

■ Do-Tank:

Together will be a "Do-Tank", not a "Think Tank". We will use our research to influence and direct public policy, and help develop political remedies to extremism and threats to cohesion. We will also use our research to engage more effectively in the community and link it to proper local community engagement.

■ Research:

We will expand on elements of this research to develop a greater understanding of the threat faced, and means to deal with it. We will commission academics, journalists and writers to conduct more in-depth research and write papers and pamphlets.

■ Training:

We will provide assistance and training for local authorities, the police and NGOs in dealing with extremism in the community. We will promote good practice and engage with the Government on public policy issues. We will develop training tools for schools and teachers and work with faith communities to oppose extremism in a positive and collective manner.

■ Campaigning:

Together will also work inside those communities most affected by fear and extremism.

We will continue to organise in the towns and cities facing EDL demonstrations and protests. We will work with councils, community organisations and faith groups to build positive cross-community opposition in a peaceful and unifying manner.

Mobilising around the slogan *"A plague on both their houses"* we will link the racist extremism coming from parts of the white community with the Islamist extremism of small sections of the Muslim community, and show how each breed and fuel the other.

***Together* can, and will, make a real difference.**

Methodology

Populus based the segmentation on a subset of both hard and soft questions which covered the following key issues:

- Attitudes and exposure to race, multiculturalism, immigration, religious minorities and their impact on the British communities;
- Participants perceptions of their own racial, religious and cultural identities
- Perceptions of what makes somebody British
- A Segmentation was created from these using Latent Class Analysis
- A form of Latent Class Analysis called "Dfactor Modelling" was used:
  - Exploratory Technique
  - Involves the creation of Four factors (known as Dfactors) which summarise the responses across questions
  - The factors can be thought of as four different cuts of the data
  - Each factor cuts the data into two groups: Those Low on a dimension AND Those High on the same dimension
  - Populus then interpreted the dimension by profiling each factor
  - The four factors emerge in such a way that in combination they maximise our ability to explain different response patterns across the underlying questions
- On this basis Populus had four dimensions upon which to create a segmentation

For more information on Populus and its work please visit: **www.populus.co.uk**

Populus

The magazine of the HOPE not hate campaign

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