

Civil Renewal, Diversity and Social Capital in a Multi-Ethnic Britain

David Faulkner



RUNNYMEDE PERSPECTIVES

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in a
Multi-Ethnic Britain**

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ABOUT RUNNYMEDE

Our mandate is to promote a successful multi-ethnic Britain – a Britain where citizens and communities feel valued, enjoy equal opportunities to develop their talents, lead fulfilling lives and accept collective responsibility, all in the spirit of civic friendship, shared identity and a common sense of belonging. We act as a bridge-builder between various minority ethnic communities and policy-makers. We believe that the way ahead lies in building effective partnerships and we are continually developing these with the voluntary sector, the government, local authorities and companies in the UK and Europe. We stimulate debate and suggest forward-looking strategies in areas of public policy such as education, the criminal justice system, employment and citizenship.

Founded in 1968, Runnymede has established and maintained a positive profile on the social and interpersonal benefits of living affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse; and continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today.

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Foreword

Runnymede is delighted to publish this invited paper by David Faulkner as the first in a series of occasional papers – Runnymede Perspectives. It represents for us a clear example of what we wish to foreground for the next phase of our work – early engagement with new policy agendas, exploring the use and development of concepts in policy-making, and analysing their potential for contributing to the creation of a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

This paper mirrors the approach we developed through 2002/3 in helping define the concept of community cohesion during its emergence as a key element of social policy. There we saw the application of new language and ideas to address an old problem – social cohesion. Runnymede took on the task, through a series of lectures, events and publications, of encouraging government, academics and practitioners to engage with first the concept and then the arising policy implications for our multi-ethnic society.

Similarly now we see the emergence of a new policy agenda utilising the concepts of civil renewal and social capital: from the Cabinet Office's introduction of discussion papers on the subject of social capital in 2002; to the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's report on Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market in March 2003, where social capital was heralded as one of the prerequisites for addressing disadvantage in the workplace; to the Home Secretary's own declared intention of making civil renewal 'the centrepiece of the government's reform agenda' in June 2003 – to mention but three recent references.

As with community cohesion, the potential for utilising the concepts of civil renewal and social capital through policy may be great; but, again, overt or even 'quiet' references to the impact that these ideas are having or could have on issues of anti-discrimination and promoting racial justice are few at this stage.

In his June 2003 paper, the Home Secretary noted that 'we need to think much more broadly about the practical implications [of this policy framework] for all areas of government and the delivery of public services' and invited agencies, think-tanks and voluntary bodies to help develop ideas further.

This paper is our first word, so to speak, on the subject. David Faulkner rightly notes that '[t]here are still instances of racism in Great Britain which need to be dealt with firmly and decisively, both when they occur and to prevent them from happening in the first place'. But beyond the concrete issues 'there lies a range of larger sets of questions about the changing

nature of British society, its social composition and dynamics, the sources of power and influence, and the distribution of wealth. Those questions come together in the conceptions of citizenship and social capital.'

Michelynn Laflèche

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December 2003

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This paper considers the ideas of citizenship, community and social capital, and the related ideas of civic renewal and responsibility, which are now entering the political debate in England, and applies them to the position of ethnic and cultural minorities. It does so against the background, in particular, of the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (the CFMEB Report),¹ the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry,² the reports on the disturbances in certain northern towns during the summer of 2001,³ and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Other important materials include the guides and codes of practice which the Commission for Racial Equality have issued on the Act,⁴ David Blunkett's pamphlets *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda* and *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*, and the report *The New and the Old* from the Advisory Group on Life in the United Kingdom.⁵

Civil Renewal

In the summer of 2003, David Blunkett announced his intention to work to make civil renewal 'the centrepiece of the government's reform agenda'.⁶ For the Home Secretary, civil renewal is the key to redefining the relationship between the individual and the state, locally as well as nationally. At its heart is a recasting of modern democracy and a reinstatement of the role of political community:

We have to assert that our identity as members of a political community is a positive thing. Democracy is not just an association



¹ Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*, London: Profile Books for the Runnymede Trust, 2000.

² Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, Cm 4262, London: Stationery Office, 1999.

³ Ted Cattle, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review*, London: Home Office, 2001. Also John Denham, *Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*, London: Home Office, 2001.

⁴ Available on the Commission's website <http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/index.htm>.

⁵ *The New and the Old*, Report of the Advisory Group on Life in the United Kingdom, London: Home Office, 2003.

⁶ David Blunkett, *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda*, London: Home Office, 2003, p.1.

of individuals determined to protect the private sphere, but a realm of active freedom in which citizens come together to shape the world around them. We contribute and we become entitled. (p.11)

It is clear that the civil renewal agenda has a number of implications in terms of race equality, yet these are barely hinted at in what the Home Secretary has written. The aim of this paper is to fill that gap by examining more closely how this agenda might be interpreted in terms of diversity, social capital and racial justice, and how it relates to current understandings of race equality.

The CFMEB Report

The Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain developed two main ideas – of citizenship based on human rights, mutual respect and of reciprocal responsibilities; and of a ‘community of communities’ in which a range of communities – especially but not only those based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion – are able to retain their individual identity but with a sense of ‘common belonging’ to a single country or nation. It summarises its vision as follows:

The fundamental need, both practical and theoretical, is to treat people equally and with due respect for difference; to treasure the rights and freedoms of individuals and to cherish belonging, cohesion and solidarity. Neither equality nor respect for difference is a sufficient value in itself. The two must be held together, mutually challenging and supportive. Similarly, neither personal liberty nor social cohesion is sufficient on its own. They too must be held together, qualifying and challenging each other, yet also mutually informing and enriching. (p. xvii)

The report made 128 recommendations addressed to central government, local authorities and statutory services, and to communities themselves. Many were concerned with the familiar issues of disadvantage and of discrimination – in both its obvious and more subtle forms – in areas such as education, employment, housing and criminal justice, with remedies which should be sought through training, monitoring and ‘mainstreaming’. Most of the recommendations addressed to the

Government were eventually accepted, at least in principle. Others were concerned with the less tangible (and certainly less measurable) dynamics of social, economic and political life – leadership, representation, the sense of having a stake and a voice and of enabling that voice to be heard.

Progress towards Racial Equality

Together with the other reports already mentioned and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act itself, the CFMEB Report can fairly be said to have contributed to the country's understanding of the issues, its willingness to deal with them, and its effectiveness in doing so. Research carried out for the Commission for Racial Equality has reported some significant progress in measures designed to remove discrimination since the legislation was brought into effect.⁷ There has also been some improvement in the situation of minority communities themselves. More men and women from minority groups are employed in the statutory services or are working in the professions, and some of them – though still not in proportionate numbers – are beginning to reach senior positions. Increasing numbers are members of boards and committees. They are more readily accepted on equal terms as colleagues, and there are more neighbourhoods where they are likely to be socially welcomed. Many of their children, although in some groups more especially the girls, do well at school and in higher education. 'Community cohesion' has become a focus of attention by central government and local authorities.⁸ Action is needed to deal with inconsistent treatment by the Crown Prosecution Service;⁹ there are still disproportionate numbers of black people in prison;¹⁰ and there are still



⁷ Commission for Racial Equality and Schneider-Ross, *Towards Racial Equality – An evaluation of the public duty to promote race equality and good race relations in England and Wales*, London: Commission for Racial Equality, 2003.

⁸ Local Government Association, *Guidance on Community Cohesion*, London: LGA Publications, 2002.

⁹ As shown in the report 'Race for Justice' by the Gus John Partnership (2003). The Executive Summary of the report is available on the Crown Prosecution Service's website [www.cps.gov.uk]. For the action being taken, see CPS Press Release 130/03 of 21 October.

¹⁰ For a discussion of race and sentencing, see Amanda Matravers and Michael Tonry, 'Is Sentencing in England and Wales Institutionally Racist?', in Michael Tonry (ed.) *Confronting Crime: Crime Control Policy under New Labour*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2003, pp. 156–81.

serious difficulties within the police, especially in London and the Northwest, and in relationships between the police and some minority groups.¹¹ But on the whole members of minorities seem to have as much confidence in the criminal justice system as anyone else.¹²

Other, more subtle, changes are taking place in the country's social composition. The Advisory Group on Life in the United Kingdom refers to some of them in its report, already mentioned. Minority groups are themselves becoming less clearly defined. Large areas of the country have populations which are predominantly white, but in others the composition is changing rapidly. More people are of mixed race, or identify themselves – and are identified by others – as not having a single ethnic, cultural or national identity.¹³ The idea that all members of minorities are either 'black' or 'Asian', with corresponding stereotyped characteristics, is now plainly absurd (as it always was). It is no longer sensible (and it never was) to think of 'ethnic minorities' as if they formed a single element in the population distinct from white people, or as white people might say, from 'ourselves'. Nor is it sensible – and it was always insulting – to equate ethnic minorities with groups who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. Those groups may still contain disproportionate numbers of people who might be regarded as coming from minority ethnic background and that is still a proper matter for concern, but increasing numbers of people from minority ethnic communities are becoming successful in the 'main stream' of national life. Many people also have 'hyphenated' identities, and take pride in them, but some of are coming to resent being classified as belonging to an 'ethnic minority'.¹⁴



¹¹ For a recent assessment, see Ben Bowling and Coretta Phillips, 'Policing Ethnic Minority Communities', in Tim Newburn (ed.) *Handbook of Policing*, Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2003, pp. 528 - 555.

¹² Roger Hood, Stephen Shute and Florence Seemungal, *Ethnic Minorities in the Criminal Courts: Perceptions of Fairness and Equality of Treatment*, London: Lord Chancellor's Department, Research Series No 2/03, 2003.

¹³ As an example, among the children at one playgroup in West London, there is only one whose parents both have the same ethnic origin, and they are Armenian.

¹⁴ Discussing BBC2's Asian season 'Big Dreams' in the *Radio Times* for 18–24 October 2003 ('Currying Favour', p. 31), Yasmin Alibhai-Brown wrote

'...the very idea of an Asian season in the 21st century is patronising. It distorts who we are – a dynamic, mixing, transforming nation – and herds "minorities" back into their pens, telling us that we're still trainee Brits who one day will earn the right to be at the heart of the nation – but not yet.'

Continuing Frustrations

The situation so far described may provide some grounds for cautious optimism, but certainly not for complacency. There are still examples of 'old-fashioned' racism, in all its forms – outright hostility, including physical violence; systematic exclusion from positions or access to services; and 'institutional' racism of the kind identified in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Policies and practices may still have discriminatory effects which no one involved in them notices or considers. Where social disadvantage or injustice exists, those who suffer are likely to include a disproportionate number from ethnic minorities. Even the best policies and procedures can be operated in a grudging or condescending spirit of 'Look what we're doing for them', 'We're doing it because we've been told to', or even 'We have to be politically correct'. Most public and private sector organisations know that their advertising and publicity has to be inclusive if it is to be effective, but the organisation itself, or parts of it, may still be institutionally 'white' in a way that is difficult to describe and challenge (it is then quite likely to be male and middle-class as well). And there will always be critics to say that none of this matters, and that an attempt to do anything about it would be a subversive and dangerous form of 'social engineering'.

A sense of 'not belonging', of being isolated or alienated, is still quite common and can affect people in different ways. It affects mainly people from minority groups, but it can also affect white people who will sometimes say that they feel the country is 'no longer their own', or those mostly young people whom sociologists have for many years categorised as 'deviant' and as coming from a disaffected or criminalised sub-culture.¹⁵

The Wider Context

Patterns of social disadvantage, migration and prejudice are constantly changing. The distinction between 'white' and 'black' or 'Asian' is gradually coming to be seen as only one of the differences within British,



¹⁵ Described for example by David Downes and Paul Rock in *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule Breaking*, 4th edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

or English, society and by no means the most important. Class distinctions still remain, and may often be just as significant: their nature may be changing but they still affect many areas of national life. Issues of race, gender, class and opportunity are often connected and sometimes confused. An issue which is primarily about class or opportunity – for example the situation of working-class young men in areas of high unemployment – may become treated as an issue of race if a large number of people from a racial minority are present in the area. Black and Asian women are achieving success in certain middle-class careers; but some working-class women, especially from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, still suffer exceptional degrees of hardship and deprivation, often for complex reasons. There is diversity between cultures but also within cultures: young black or Asian men and women may feel more affinity with their white contemporaries (and vice-versa) than with older members of their own ethnic group. In some areas the ‘minority’ may come from a single ethnic group, but in others the ‘minority’ may locally be the majority, or may itself comprise many different ethnic or cultural groups.

Hostility towards asylum seekers, refugees and other ‘new’ immigrants is rapidly displacing the former prejudice against the settled minority population. That hostility is often shared by members of those populations themselves, and may be directed especially towards white newcomers from eastern Europe.¹⁵ Social support for asylum-seekers or refugees is patchy and often of poor quality, and those organisations which campaign for racial equality have not so far paid much attention to the situations in which such people are likely to be placed. Such people may themselves come from a culture which has its own racial prejudices, for example against Roma. But their experiences include exploitation, abuse and sometimes torture of a kind which has not been known in Great Britain in recent times; and that exploitation, for example in the sex industry, may last long after their arrival. They receive little understanding, sympathy or support. Many bring professional skills which the country needs, and most are willing to work in occupations where there is a shortage of labour. While their situation is being



¹⁵ See for example Katharine Mumford and Anne Power, *East Enders: Family and Community in East London*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2003; and the review by Kate Gavron, ‘Broken Windows Need Fixing’, in *Runnymede’s Quarterly Bulletin* No. 335, September 2003, p. 25.

determined, their cases should be dealt with quickly and efficiently and they should be treated in accordance with the values of the society of which they hope to become members. Those who are to remain are entitled to a position of equal dignity, respect and citizenship, both as people and as prospective citizens in the sense discussed in the report *The New and the Old*, already mentioned. David Blunkett has acknowledged the argument in his pamphlet *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*.

The Nature of the Debate

The debate on citizenship and communities has moved on since the CFMEB Report was published in 2000. Citizenship is being taught as part of the national curriculum for schools; the Cabinet Office and the Office for National Statistics have published material on 'social capital';¹⁷ as noted above, the Home Secretary has called for a programme of 'civil renewal' and announced his intention to set up a new Centre for Active Citizenship and a pilot 'community justice centre' in Liverpool.¹⁸ Questions of race have not, however, featured prominently in these developments. When they have, the language has often been ambiguous, especially in the significance which different speakers or writers attach to words such as diversity, equality, racial, racist, multi-cultural and cultural, and in their attempts to associate such words with points of view which they wish to defend or, more often, attack.

The liberal tradition, which the CFMEB Report saw as important although needing to be balanced with a more 'plural' or 'communitarian' view of citizenship, has come under increasing criticism, from different directions. From one point of view, it is criticised as reflecting the notion of the 'nation state', whose time Philip Bobbitt argues came to a close



¹⁷ Cabinet Office, *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, London: Cabinet Office, 2002; Office for National Statistics, 'Investing in Each Other and the Community: The Role of Social Capital', *Social Trends*, 33rd edn, 2003, pp. 19--27. Social capital is defined as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups'. The main aspects are 'citizenship, neighbourliness, trust and shared values, community involvement, volunteering, social networks, and civil and political participation'.

¹⁸ David Blunkett, op.cit. Note 6.

with the ending of the Cold War, to be replaced by the ‘market state’ based on maximising opportunities and satisfying expectations and demands.¹⁹ From another, it is seen as too tolerant and complacent, as allowing too pluralist an understanding of citizenship and national identity, and as failing to insist on the unified culture, values and discipline which are thought to be needed to meet the modern threats to morality and social cohesion. From an opposite point of view, it fails to provide adequate recognition for ethnic and cultural minorities. From a fourth, it may be criticised as expecting too much from citizens and civil society, and as diminishing the role of the state to a point where its effectiveness could be undermined and its legitimacy called into question. From a less intellectual position, several writers and commentators, and even some Ministers, have expressed dissatisfaction with what they see as ‘liberal’ systems of law or legal process which are designed to formalise and protect human rights.

Fresh opinions are regularly added to the argument about ‘what it means to be British’ (or ‘English’). They are divided between broadly speaking ‘exclusive’ and ‘inclusive’ points of view, or as Robin Cook has put it, those of ‘chauvinists’ and ‘cosmopolitans’.²⁰ Neither theorists nor politicians have had much success in finding any description on which everyone can agree. There are many characteristics which some people consider essential parts of the British ‘character’ or ‘way of life’ but which others find repugnant (for example fox hunting). But there should be general agreement to a set of values along the lines that all people are of equal value and deserve equal respect; to a sense of ‘common belonging’ so that all groups can feel at home in the society of which they are all members; and that they should have a voice, or at least the opportunity for a voice, on issues which affect them and are able to make that voice heard. The Advisory Group on Life in the United Kingdom has said:

To be British seems to us to mean that we respect the laws, the elected parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for equal rights and mutual concern, and that we give our allegiance to the state (commonly symbolised in the Crown) in return for its protection.



¹⁹ Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History*, London: Penguin Press, 2002.

²⁰ Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, London: Simon and Schuster, 2003; and the extract ‘Labour must look beyond the Pebbledash People’, *The Guardian*, 21 October 2003.

There must in any civilised society be some limits beyond which behaviour cannot be tolerated, even if that behaviour is claimed to be acceptable or even expected in some of the cultures which are part of that society. Killing to defend a family's 'honour', female mutilation and forced (but not arranged) marriage are some examples about which there is not much dispute. The balance between freedom of thought and speech and respect for other people's convictions and identity, or between 'normal' behaviour and the expectations of a particular culture, for example in matters of dress or use of symbols, is more difficult to resolve. The issue is most likely to arise in matters of religion, and it will always be hard to decide where the boundary should be drawn either generally or in particular circumstances.

It is difficult in this situation to frame a sensible public debate about questions of race, culture and diversity. Many people still think instinctively that it is a debate about 'us' and 'them'. The deliberate attempts to misrepresent and ridicule the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the CFMEB Report – on the ground, roughly, that they attack the fabric and values of traditional British society and denigrate those people to whom the country 'belongs' – might still be made today. Many people are still reluctant to raise questions of race for fear of seeming ignorant, giving offence, provoking hostile opinions or even being made to appear in some sense 'on the other side'. Sensible discussion when it does take place may be awkward and inconclusive. The facts may be hard to establish or interpret or the effects difficult to calculate.²¹ Very often, it may just be easier to say and do nothing, especially if there is no obvious problem which demands an urgent resolution. The great advantage of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is that it requires organisations to which it applies to have a discipline and procedures for raising the question and giving an account of themselves, whether or not they have a problem which they can no longer ignore.



²¹ Concern has from time to time been expressed about the differential impact which criminal justice legislation might have on different sections of the population. Legislation which has the effect of disproportionately criminalising, say, black people is at first sight discriminatory, but black people may benefit disproportionately from the protection it is claimed to provide. In connection with the Bill for the Criminal Justice and Sentencing Act 2003 the Government prepared a Race Equality Impact Assessment to consider whether the Act might be discriminatory in its effect: the main conclusion was that the Act should be carefully monitored.

Today's Agenda

The CFMEB Report still provides a valuable framework for action, and a necessary and demanding agenda. The action required may sometimes be criticised for 'political correctness', or for the work and perhaps the bureaucracy which it involves, but mostly it is accepted as representing good practice. Few organisations or responsible individuals would publicly deny its importance or wholly disregard it in practice. The Report's framework of ideas, especially its conception of a community of citizens and communities, is a point of reference against which new legislation and policies, and new and existing professional and operational practices, can be tested. But its recommendations for training, monitoring and mainstreaming, even though largely accepted in principle and now reinforced by the public services' duty to promote racial equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, demand continuous attention and commitment. At national level, the Commission for Racial Equality has developed the guides and codes of practice which have already been mentioned, and organisations such as the Thames Valley Partnership can promote local discussions and publish guidance which can be of value both locally and nationally.²² There are important roles both for internal review and for independent inspection and audit, which Rob Berkeley and others have discussed in the Runnymede Trust's publication *Guardians of Race Equality: Perspectives on Inspection and Regulation*.²³ The continuing racism in the police service, revealed by the BBC's television programme *The Secret Policeman* on 21 October 2003, has prompted new measures to improve procedures for recruitment and programmes of training.

Recognition and Representation

Even so, it is important periodically to review the situation and its social and political context, and to examine and refresh the arguments. The



²² An account of the Partnership's work can be found at <http://www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk>.

²³ Runnymede Trust, *Guardians of Race Equality: Perspectives on Inspection and Regulation*, edited by Rob Berkeley, London: Runnymede, 2003.

focus of the campaign for racial equality changed from, roughly, preventing discrimination and promoting integration in the 1960s and 1970s, to encouraging and demanding recognition and respect for diversity at the turn of the century. The subject has however been treated throughout that period – by supporters and critics alike – as being separate from, or an ‘add on’ to, the main social and economic issues of the day. It has gained its own legislation, institutions, structures, expertise and literature. In an organisation, race relations are often seen as a job for a specialist occupying what may be an influential but separate position in the structure. In higher education or in training courses, the subject may be taught as a separate and self-contained part of the syllabus and not as one which necessarily affects its main content.

There is more or less general agreement that elected and appointed bodies, from Parliament to quite small charities and local committees, should include people from minority groups among their members. If those bodies have a geographical responsibility, their membership should broadly reflect the composition of the local population. The richness which comes from a diverse membership is widely acknowledged. The CFMEB Report strongly endorsed that view, and made specific recommendations about the selection of candidates for Parliamentary elections and appointments to the House of Lords. But the situation is by no means straightforward. There has been a temptation to look for and appoint ‘token’ members of such bodies who can be seen as ‘representing’ minorities as a whole, even though the person may have little in common with minority groups other than their own – or to complain, and even blame minority groups themselves, when no such person can be found. Members should always be chosen for the professional or personal contribution they can make in their own right. Those from minority ethnic communities may often be able to speak from experiences which white people will not have shared, and they may from time to time remind colleagues of the need to take questions of race and ethnicity more fully into account. But that should not be seen as their role, and their presence should never absolve their white colleagues from their own obligations in that respect. By the same token, white people should never feel disabled by their colour from speaking about race issues.

Moving On

The approach described in the previous paragraphs has achieved a great deal. It is still needed today, and its energy should not be lost or undervalued. But something more may now be required. The present and quite new emphasis on 'mainstreaming' and 'capacity building' is welcome and important, but the meaning of those expressions is sometimes ambiguous. The words may imply simply reinforcing the present 'specialism' and giving it more status and influence; or they may be associated with more subtle, but also more fundamental, changes in the dynamics and relationships of British society itself. Some of those changes as they affect so-called minorities have been mentioned earlier in this paper. But they also include the Government's proposals for reforming public services, with their emphasis on 'choice' and local accountability and control; its plans for constitutional reform of the courts and the House of Lords; its recent work on social capital and its proposals on 'civil renewal' and 'active citizenship'; the convulsions which are taking place within the two main political parties, and the potential growth of smaller parties; the isolation or even alienation which many people feel from the political system; and the implications of all of those for representative democracy and for the values of public service and citizenship. The conception of citizenship should not for example be narrowed to a set of conditions required for naturalisation and an accompanying ceremony, any more than it should be restricted to volunteering to do 'good works' – or helping the police to keep order and 'stamping down' on anti-social behaviour.

The prospect may be of a politics and a society which are increasingly authoritarian, punitive and opportunistic, or of a more compassionate and inclusive set of public and political attitudes and values with which citizens and public servants will be able to associate themselves with some pride. The country could move in any of several directions; it is unlikely to stay where it is. The changes now taking place will affect different sections of the population in different ways. People who are thought of as ethnic minorities will themselves have different aims to pursue and interests to protect. As in the population as a whole, some will gain and some will lose. For the next generation or the one after that, the issues may not be so much about racial equality, ethnic diversity, and the treatment of disadvantaged minorities, as about fairness and social justice for the population as a whole and about the kind of society in which

people want to live. The later chapters in the CFMEB Report – on Politics and Representation, Government Leadership, Legislation and Enforcement and Organisational Change – are especially significant in this changing context.

The Government has not so far done much to apply the concepts of citizenship and social capital directly to legislation, policy and practice. Several of its social and economic policies, in areas such as education, employment and urban regeneration, are however intended implicitly to increase social capital and to make it more accessible. The expectation is that communities will become more cohesive, stable and prosperous and individuals more self-reliant and resourceful – although there is not much in those policies to help them to become more socially responsible. It has been suggested elsewhere that if building social capital became an aim of criminal justice, and especially of sentencing and penal treatment, communities would be strengthened in their capacity to reduce crime and repair the damage it causes, and individuals in their ability to avoid offending and to act as responsible citizens.²⁴

Writers on racial equality have not made much use of the term ‘social capital’, but they are beginning to examine the issues more in terms of, in essence, building social capital and less of preventing discrimination. The arguments for encouraging proficiency in English and applications for citizenship in the report of the Advisory Group on Life in Modern Britain are in effect based on the need to build social capital and to give people access to it. Michelynn Lafleche’s article ‘From Employment Policy to Corporate Social Responsibility’, Sarah Mody’s report on ‘Race Awareness and Diversity Training’, and Omar Khan’s review ‘Basic Income: Equality Issues beyond the “Baby Bond”’, all in the September 2003 issue of the Runnymede *Bulletin*, are other examples.



²⁴ David Faulkner, ‘Taking Citizenship Seriously: Social Capital and Criminal Justice in a Changing World’, *Criminal Justice* 3(3), 2003: 287–315. Also Sue Rex and Loraine Gelsthorpe, ‘Using Community Service to Encourage Inclusive Citizenship’, in Ros Burnett and Colin Roberts (eds) *Evidence-Based Practice in Youth Justice*, Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2004. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides an opportunity.

Conclusions

There are still instances of racism in Great Britain which need to be dealt with firmly and decisively, both when they occur and to prevent them from happening in the first place. The means of doing so include enforcement, education and training, careful selection for positions where racism might be an issue, the creation and maintenance of a balanced workforce, and systematic monitoring. Improvements have still to be made, not least in the police service, and the capacity and the will may not everywhere be present; but for the most part it is clear what needs to be done. One increasingly sensitive issue for the future is likely to be religion and the relationships between organised religion and the state, between and sometimes within faith groups themselves, and between faith groups and secular society. Another will be the settlement of refugees and of other disadvantaged migrants, including those who have a right of entry, for example from other parts of the European Union. Beyond those two issues there lies a range of larger sets of questions about the changing nature of British society, its social composition and dynamics, the sources of power and influence, and the distribution of wealth. Those questions come together in the conceptions of what this paper has called citizenship and social capital.

A paper such as this does not lead naturally to any specific recommendations. But its arguments do have implications for government, public services, the voluntary and community sector, faith groups, and local communities. They point to the need for a continuing and energetic commitment, by the whole of society and the body politic, to the elimination of racism and improper discrimination, in all their forms. The country is reminded all too often of that need, as by the television programme on the police which has already been mentioned. But beyond that they call for a longer-term process of reflection, discussion and evolution, with different points of focus but with a common understanding of the principles and values. There is a need to loosen the distinctions between race and other sources of disadvantage and injustice; and for a more flexible but at the same time more rigorous approach to defining ethnic groups and to using those and other definitions in assessing the effect of existing policies or the expected outcomes of new policies. There is for example a strong and already well-understood case for combining the existing bodies and legislation in a single 'equality' commission and a single 'equality' Act.

There is probably not yet a sufficient basis for agreement on substantial new legislation affecting matters of religion. But there is a need for flexibility and understanding in the relationships involved, and intolerance can do serious harm. Views will continue to be divided on the extent to which religion should be formally recognised in the apparatus of the state, but faith groups will have a legitimate voice and an important contribution to make.

Few people would deny that the Government needs to find a means of managing immigration and applications for asylum which is faster and more efficient than the arrangements which exist at present. But the country's longer-term interest demands that serious and urgent attention be paid to changing the kind of treatment experienced by those who arrive as migrants, particularly when it amounts to humiliation and the denial of human dignity. To deny those opportunities for civilised living and employment on which dignity depends can prejudice a person's outlook, settlement and future prospects as a citizen of this country.²⁵

Outside the direct influence of government, but potentially powerful in the long term, are the relationships and dynamics of civil society. Typical examples are the groups of citizens with diverse backgrounds and interests who come together to promote some shared objective or concern – perhaps the success of the local school which their children attend, an issue affecting the local environment, or the quality of a public service on which they rely. Victim support groups, mentoring schemes and circles of support for ex-offenders are more specialised examples. 'Active citizenship', if it is promoted in a spirit which is inclusive and outward-looking, could create others. Such groups can provide a sense of 'belonging' which has life and practical significance. Government cannot create them by legislation or administrative instruction, and they are not amenable to accreditation or the imposition of targets, indicators of league tables. But Government can encourage and support the local education and leadership which can help to create the energy and vision to make things happen. That encouragement, and the country's



²⁵ Perhaps the most powerful argument used by some of those who were opposed to the proposed accommodation centre for asylum seekers near Bicester was in effect that the local community did not have the resources of social capital to give the residents the support they would need if they were to be located there in the numbers proposed. They went on to say that if the centre were nevertheless to be established, they would as responsible citizens do their best to help in providing whatever support they could.

response, should be what 'active citizenship' is all about.

The lesson for those who are concerned about racial equality, and the position of minorities in society more generally, may be that as well as challenging discrimination and hostility wherever it occurs, they should take a well-informed and active part in the detail of national and local debates on the issues of the day. Those issues will include child poverty; the neglect and abuse of children; proposed reforms in health, education and policing, especially where they involve extending choice and local control; the treatment and re-settlement of offenders; housing; local government; and the various programmes for urban re-generation. How their contributions to those debates should be organised, prepared and made effective, at a time when the formation of policy is to such a large extent based on a combination of political judgement and a two-dimensional view of 'what works', is one of the most serious challenges facing British society.

David Faulkner
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RUNNYMEDE PERSPECTIVES

David Faulkner's invited paper on Civil Renewal, Diversity and Social Capital is the first in a series of occasional papers – Runnymede Perspectives. It represents an early engagement with government's new policy agenda for addressing disadvantage in the workplace, and the Home Secretary's declared intention of making civil renewal 'the centrepiece of the government's reform agenda'.

The potential for utilising the concepts of civil renewal and social capital through policy may be great; but overt or even 'quiet' references to the impact that these ideas are having or could have on issues of anti-discrimination and promoting racial justice are few at this stage. This paper opens up avenues for wider discussions of both policy development and working practice implementations to come.

Runnymede Perspectives will aim, as a series, to engage with government – and other – initiatives through exploring the use and development of concepts in policy-making, and analysing their potential contribution to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.



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