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The Glue That Binds: Integration in a Time of Populism

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FOREWORD FROM TONY BLAIR

Over a significant period of time, including when we were last in Government, politics has failed to find the right balance between diversity and integration. On the one hand, failures around integration have led to attacks on diversity and are partially responsible for a reaction against migration. On the other hand, the word 'multiculturalism' has been misinterpreted as meaning a justified refusal to integrate when it should never have meant that. Particularly now, when there is increasing evidence of far-right bigotry on the rise, it is important we establish the correct social contract around the rights and duties of citizens, including those who migrate to our country.

Governments should make integration an explicit policy priority, with a coherent vision underpinned by principle and pragmatism. Alongside strengthening political accountability, policymakers should adopt a suite of reforms that cut across almost all aspects of domestic policy.

In this paper we make it clear that there is a duty to integrate, to accept the rules, laws and norms of our society that all British people hold in common and share; whilst at the same time preserving the right to practise diversity which is fully consistent with such a duty. Without the right to, for example, practise one's faith, diversity would have no content; but without the duty to

integrate, 'culture' or 'faith' can be used as a way of upsetting that basic social contract which binds us together.

So here we set out a series of measures which clarify what those rights and duties are. We make it clear that Government cannot and should not be neutral on this question. It has to be a passionate advocate and where necessary an enforcer of the duty to integrate whilst protecting the proper space for diversity. Integration is not a choice, it is a necessity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the reasons immigration and integration policy is contentious is because its effects are not experienced uniformly. In some communities, there is anxiety about the pace of demographic and cultural change. In others, growing diversity is welcomed as a source of strength. Many (perhaps most) citizens doubt the ability of governments to manage immigration and integration in the national interest. At the same time, there is growing concern about a perceived rise in anti-immigrant sentiment—specifically, that divisive public rhetoric is fuelling prejudice towards minorities, both newly arrived and long established.

With populism on the rise across the West, the challenge for progressives is to design immigration and integration policies that reconcile these concerns and secure the public confidence of a majority of citizens.

This report is the third in a series published by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change on immigration and integration. Our first two reports set out the basis of a balanced immigration framework that maximises the benefits of immigration economically, socially and culturally while addressing legitimate concerns about the management of migration flows¹.

This report focuses less on how to regulate flows of people and more on how to live together once people have arrived. At the heart of our argument is a simple proposition: far from being a means of denying diversity or pandering to prejudice, integration is the best way of protecting diverse multicultural communities from populists determined to sow division.

1 Harvey Redgrave, “EU Migration: Examining the Evidence and Policy Choices”, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 8 September 2017, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/eu-migration-examining-evidence-and-policy-choices>; Harvey Redgrave, “Balanced Migration: A Progressive Approach”, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 28 March 2018, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/balanced-migration-progressive-approach>.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Five broad trends are hampering integration efforts across the West.** Anxiety in host communities is being driven by the rapid pace of change, fears of segregated communities, competition for scarce resources, fears over values and fears of crime.
- **While progressive integration policies have strong public support, mainstream political parties have found it difficult to proactively drive and sustain progress.** This is partly because the term integration itself is contested and partly because of a reluctance by policymakers to engage in difficult conversations at the national level.
- **When governments have engaged with integration, they have often been clumsy in doing so.** Governments have either approached the issue through an overly narrow lens, thereby increasing polarisation and distrust, or in a reactive, piecemeal way, rather than as part of a long-term strategy.
- **Despite these challenges, successful integration offers important benefits.** There is strong evidence that social mixing can reduce anxiety and prejudice, increase trust and understanding between groups, and promote resilience to extremist ideologies. What is more, there is widespread public support for policies that promote social integration.

PRINCIPLES FOR REFORM AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments urgently need to establish a coherent vision for integration, underpinned by principle and pragmatism. This report argues that:

- **Integration is a process, not an event.** Sequencing is critical, with consensus required on essential foundations such as learning a common language, upholding the law and working hard before deeper integration can be realised.
- **Successful integration is defined by a convergence of economic opportunity, cultural values and social mixing.** Genuine integration cannot be one-dimensional, or simply apply to minorities, but must be about the whole of society.

To meet the challenge of fostering integration in the 21st century, governments should make integration an explicit policy priority. Policymakers should strengthen political accountability by designating a **cabinet minister with inter-departmental responsibility for integration**, or by creating a new **government department for integration**, to coordinate and drive progress.

Alongside this, governments should adopt a series of reforms that cut across virtually every aspect of domestic policy, including the following key areas:

- **Immigration:** An important dimension of an effective integration strategy is a coherent approach to immigration policy. This should include a system of digital identity verification, reforms to freedom of movement (while retaining the principle), and wider reforms to reduce demand for low-skilled migration.
- **Education:** Schools, colleges and universities have a crucial role in promoting integration, not only through the salience given to civic values, but also as a means of creating a society in which there is genuinely opportunity for all. Policymakers should place a greater focus on inclusive conceptions of national identity and pluralism in school curriculums, and put citizenship education on a statutory footing.
- **Work:** Integration policy must address the higher levels of unemployment among some migrant groups; otherwise, such groups will not feel invested in society. Governments should support early access to work for newcomers, including asylum seekers whose cases are not resolved within six months. They should also legislate to remove harmful anti-integration practices by employers, such as segregated shift patterns.
- **Language:** Fluency in the language of the host country unlocks opportunities in education and the labour market and provides a way for people to become active and integrated members of their local community. Policymakers should divert a proportion of migrant visa fees to pay for an increase in language provision, and they should do more to encourage employers to offer targeted language tuition.
- **Social mixing:** Considerable evidence shows the power of positive social contact in breaking down barriers, reducing prejudice and enhancing the well-being of both newcomers and

host communities. Governments should reform school-admission policies by requiring schools to reflect local diversity. They should also proactively support institutions that promote greater social contact, such as compulsory citizenship programmes for teenagers.

- **Citizenship:** The obligations and ceremonies associated with the granting of citizenship can be a powerful incentive for greater engagement in community life. Countries should introduce mandatory registration and civic integration contracts for new arrivals. These should become a gateway into assistance with electoral registration and advice on contacting relevant parliamentarians. Governments should also lower the cost of citizenship acquisition.
- **Extremism and hate crime:** The narratives of far-right and Islamist extremists, with their emphasis on the inevitable conflict between Islam and the West, are major obstacles to successful integration if left unchallenged. Policymakers should introduce tougher enforcement against perpetrators who incite hatred.

These policies are designed to balance principle with pragmatism, providing the basis of a political strategy that can secure greater social solidarity, strengthen consent for immigration and, in so doing, reduce the scope for populists to drive a wedge between communities.

THE CHALLENGE

Growing polarisation and populism have caused considerable challenges for progressive policymakers advocating the case for open and pluralist societies. While these debates have been consumed by disagreement over levels of immigration, progressives have all but neglected crucial issues of integration and national identity, which have been seen as too difficult to address politically. Fear of playing identity politics has meant these conversations have too often been ceded to those who pursue intolerant and closed-minded agendas and are blind to the potential of globalisation.

This chapter outlines the major challenges facing policymakers in integration policy and explores why mainstream political parties have found it difficult to make progress, despite a seemingly high level of public support.

DRIVERS OF ANXIETY

Across the West, increasing diversity in immigrant-receiving countries has brought different value systems into close contact, sometimes creating tension. Big increases in global migration, including the rapid arrival in 2015–2016 of significant numbers of refugees, have refocused attention on the rights and obligations of citizens. Images of French police forcing women to remove burkinis and of national leaders in Italy publicly declaring that newcomers should either adapt or leave have reinvigorated long-standing tensions about how to manage growing diversity.

Given this context, developing a credible policy agenda on integration is a crucial task for social democratic parties—not only because doing so is necessary to combat the electoral success of right-wing populism but also because securing a cohesive, integrated society ought to be of primary importance to progressives. Without integration, societies run the risk of greater polarisation, inequality and diminishing levels of participation. Divided societies are not only more anxious than cohesive ones; they are also less economically prosperous.²

² Eric Uslaner, *Segregation and Mistrust: Diversity, Isolation, and Social Cohesion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

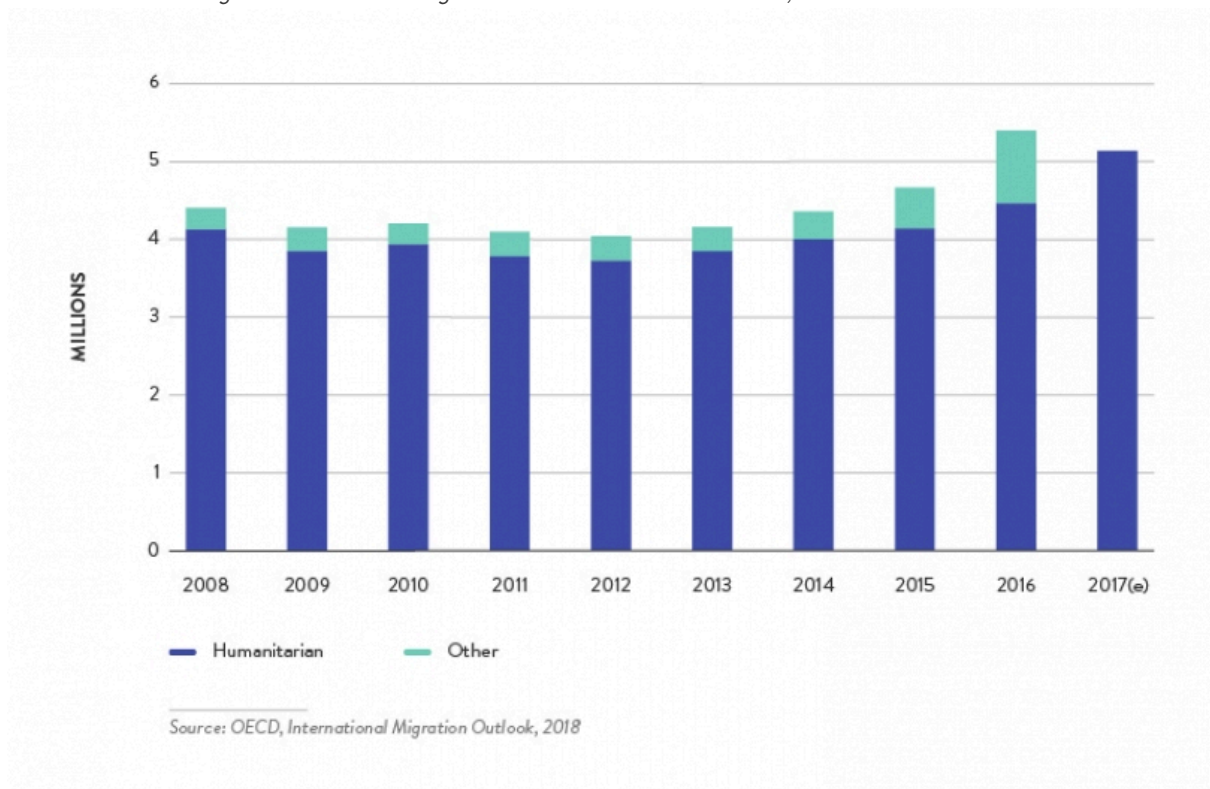
Clearly each country faces its own distinct challenges, but it is possible to identify five broad trends that are commonly affecting integration across the West:

- the rapid pace of change;
- fears of segregated communities;
- competition for scarce resources;
- fears over values and social norms; and
- fears of crime and security.

The Rapid Pace of Change

The recent scale and pace of global migration is unprecedented. Since 2011, migration flows into countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have increased by nearly 25 per cent, from 4 million to almost 5 million (see figure 1).³

Figure 1: Permanent Migration Flows to OECD Countries, 2008–2017



³ “International Migration Flows”, Migration Data Portal, accessed 11 December 2018, <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-migration-flows>

The pace of change appears to matter more than the absolute volume of migration. This is because change that marks too rapid a departure from the recent past will appear more threatening than large flows that are in line with public expectations. The evidence suggests that in many countries, anxious reactions to immigration tend to be strongest in regions or localities that have not historically experienced much immigration, where an increase in the pace of immigration flows upends public preparedness.⁴ When change is rapid, pressure on local services and differences between cultural and social norms can lead to tension and, in some cases, prejudice, discrimination and hate crime.

Fears of Segregated Communities

Residential segregation—the concentration of ethnic, national-origin or socio-economic groups in some neighbourhoods—is one of the most visible and troubling effects of urbanisation and large-scale immigration. While segregation in the form of ethnic enclaves can provide important social and economic resources for newcomers, it can become problematic if it persists across generations and starts to reinforce social exclusion.

Studies have linked such segregation to a host of negative effects on individuals, local communities and society, including unemployment, poor health and even social conflict. In the United States (US), high levels of black-white segregation have been linked to lower high-school graduation rates, higher unemployment, lower earnings and greater levels of single parenthood among blacks.⁵

At the extreme, segregation can lead to conflict, as the 2005 riots in France illustrated. Those involved in the unrest included many low-income immigrants in Paris living in isolated suburban public-housing communities. This geographical isolation—alongside poor transport, limited local job opportunities and

4 For example, see Stephen Clarke and Matthew Whittaker, “The Importance of Place: explaining the characteristics underpinning the Brexit vote across different parts of the UK”, Resolution Foundation, 15 July 2016, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-important-of-place-explaining-the-characteristics-underpinning-the-brexit-vote-across-different-parts-of-the-uk/>.

5 See Emily Badger, “Why Segregation Is Bad for Everyone”, CityLab, 3 May 2013, <https://www.citylab.com/life/2013/05/why-segregation-bad-everyone/5476/>.

discrimination—exacerbated social exclusion. These events demonstrated how problems of segregation and integration are interrelated: in this case, members of the second and subsequent generations could see the economic promise of their adopted country yet were having difficulty attaining it.

Competition for Scarce Resources

The recent growth in global movement of people has come hot on the heels of the most severe economic downturn in decades, making national citizens wary of increased competition for scarce resources and, in some cases, jobs. As some countries cope with painfully slow economic recovery, job insecurity, stagnant wages and youth unemployment, many citizens see their prospects for upward mobility constrained. Against this backdrop, immigrants are often perceived as a fiscal burden on the receiving society, contributing to the underemployment or wage stagnation of native-born workers with similar skill sets. In other words, immigrants are seen as taking more out of the system than they contribute to it.

While the evidence is clear on immigrants' net positive fiscal contribution, the economic benefits are sometimes more complicated and take longer to quantify than the costs, which are often immediate, particularly for refugees.⁶ Moreover, the benefits generally accrue to the broader economy through gross domestic product (GDP) and tax revenues, whereas the costs are typically borne locally in terms of pressure on local services.

Fears Over Values and Social Norms

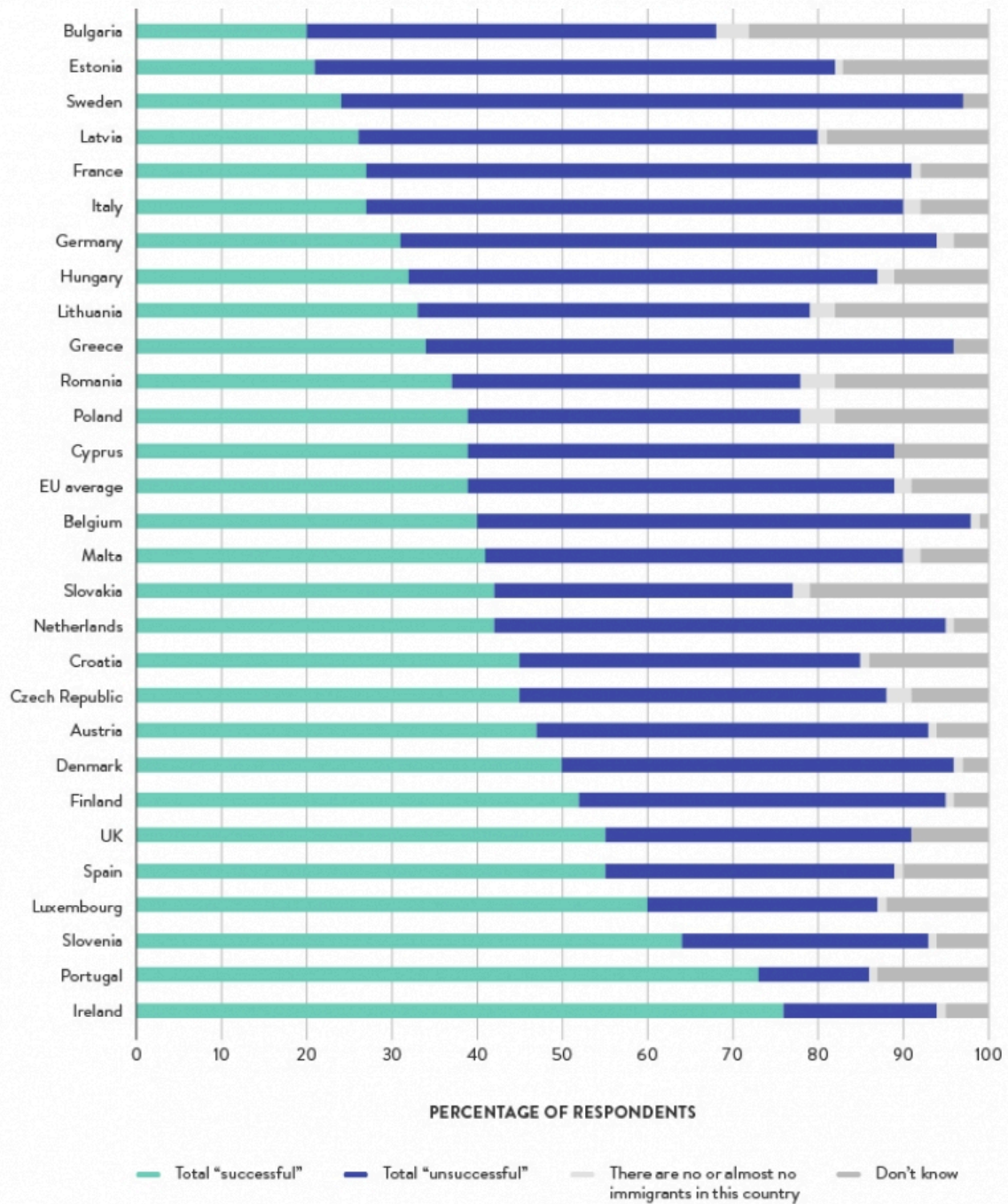
One of the principal fears associated with immigration is that it undermines the norms and values that bind society together. These fears are exacerbated when newcomers are perceived as not adapting to the host country's language, culture and identity—or, worse, when newcomers are perceived as retaining cultural norms and practices seen as fundamentally in conflict with those of the majority. Communities that live apart from the mainstream, whether religiously, ethnically or linguistically segregated, reinforce these fears and make publics wary of growing diversity.

⁶ Redgrave, "Balanced Migration".

A 2017 Eurobarometer poll found that in 20 of the 28 European Union (EU) member states, only a minority of respondents agreed that integration of immigrants in their country had been successful (see figure 2).⁷

⁷ “Results of special Eurobarometer on integration of immigrants in the European Union”, European Commission Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, 13 April 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/results-special-eurobarometer-integration-immigrants-european-union_en.

Figure 2: European Attitudes to the Success of Integration, 2017



Source: Eurobarometer, October 2017

As immigration flows become more complex, no country has yet figured out how to succeed in all aspects of immigrant integration.

Western countries have experimented with various models, ranging from accommodating differences to restricting practices deemed incompatible with liberal democratic norms. Policymakers continue to disagree about which approach along this continuum is most effective. Public anxiety is therefore driven in part by this uncertainty: the sense that governments do not have an effective strategy for integrating newcomers.

How well immigrants integrate is a dominant concern in all established democracies. But concerns do not end with the newly arrived, who tend to be the focus of most integration policy efforts. There are anxieties about the ability of second and third generations to integrate, such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities in the United Kingdom (UK), yet there are very few mechanisms to enable this⁸

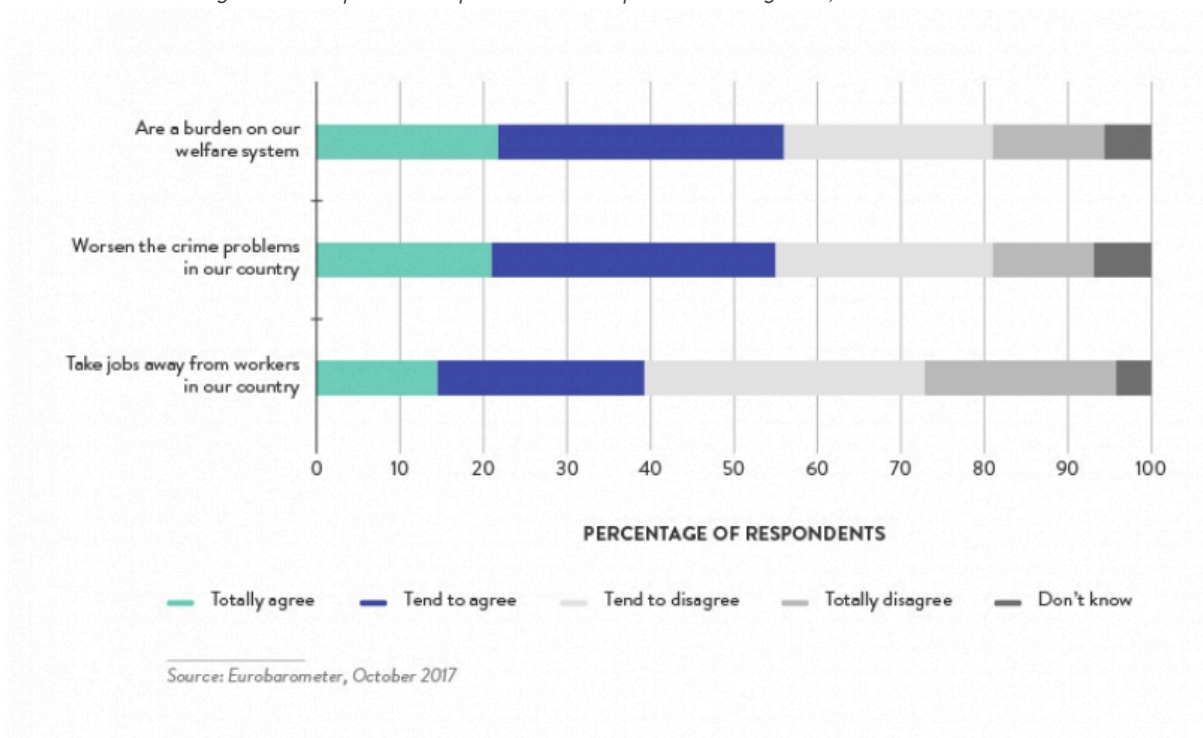
Fears of Crime and Security

Other factors, such as fear of crime and terrorism, have shaped the reactions of recipient populations to newcomers. Terrorist attacks in 2015 (Paris), 2016 (Brussels, Orlando) and 2017 (London and Manchester) triggered new rounds of security fears in Europe and the US and have acted as an additional barrier to integration. Particularly the chaotic way refugees and asylum seekers entered Europe in 2015–2016 fuelled concerns that terrorists could infiltrate those streams. This is reflected in attitudinal data: over half of Europeans (55 per cent) believe that immigrants worsen crime problems, according to a 2017 Eurobarometer survey (see figure 3).⁹

8 Dame Louise Casey, “The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration”, UK Department for Communities and Local Government, 5 December 2016, 15–16, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>.

9 Ibid

Figure 3: European Perceptions of the Impacts of Immigrants, 2017



Immigration flows have also increasingly been linked to broader narratives about crime. High-profile criminal incidents often attract disproportionate media attention and act as a rallying point for populist parties. Although the evidence is clear that immigrants are overall less likely than natives to engage in criminal activity, a perception has grown that migrants' misdeeds have been swept under the carpet because of an abundance of political correctness or fears of community cohesion, which has further fanned the flames of tension.¹⁰ The sexual assaults committed on New Year's Eve 2015–2016 in Cologne were made more scandalous by allegations that the German police and media had attempted to delay reporting that the perpetrators were migrant men.

¹⁰ For example, see “Analysis of the Impacts of Migration”, Migration Advisory Committee, January 2012, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf.

WHY INTEGRATION IS DIFFICULT FOR MAINSTREAM POLITICAL PARTIES

Politicians and policymakers have generally found it easier to talk about integration than to proactively drive reform. This is to a certain extent understandable. In a liberal democratic society, there will always be limits to how far the state can influence how people live together. But a laissez-faire approach, whereby integration is expected to occur organically, also leaves the risk of a dangerous policy vacuum. This section explores some of the common political and policy constraints facing mainstream parties.

A Contested Term

Part of what makes it so difficult for governments to successfully promote integration is that the term itself is contested. Historically, integration has often been confused with assimilation—understood as a one-way trajectory of becoming like the rest of the population, with a focus on adaptation by migrants. ‘Assimilationism’ has been criticised as both overly flattening and impractical, seeking to impose an unrealistic level of homogeneity on diverse communities and making citizenship conditional on migrants abandoning their distinctive culture and identity.

At the other end of the spectrum, integration has been muddled with multiculturalism, which prioritises a group-based identity politics. In recent years, however, critics have argued that multiculturalism overemphasises group differences, by creating vested interests in local ethnic political groupings, giving too much power to patriarchal community leaders and reinforcing separate identities, rather than helping to bridge community divides. As such, multiculturalism fails to build an inclusive common citizenship because its conception of identity is too fixed and static, lacking an account both of changing identities (for example, the rise of mixed-race categories) and of the ethnic majority. As Sunder Katwala, director of the think tank British Future, has noted, “a group-based multiculturalism is hoist with its own petard if the majority community feels that the natural response is to assert its own group-based ethnic interests”.¹¹

¹¹ Sunder Katwala, “How should we respond to the rise of mixed-race Britain?”, Unherd, 28 June 2018, <https://unherd.com/2018/06/respond-rise-mixed-race-britain/>.

These concerns have contributed to a serious questioning of multiculturalism in several European countries over the past decade, although it is notable that nothing has emerged to replace it.¹² In fact, as this report argues, neither of those two approaches is sufficient in describing true integration.

Difficult Conversations

Wary of the sensitivities of dealing with integration issues, political leaders have often not felt equipped with either the intellectual framework or the language to engage on the issue in a meaningful way. This has had damaging consequences. As the British Member of Parliament (MP) Chuka Umunna said in 2016, “the fact people live parallel lives in modern Britain has been swept under the carpet for far too long and deemed too difficult to deal with, which has left a vacuum for extremists and peddlers of hate on all sides to exploit”.¹³

A good example of this is the debate about Muslim integration, which has become increasingly toxic since the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the US and the rapid rise in numbers of refugees and migrants from Muslim-majority countries. Clearly it is important that progressive politicians push back strongly against the notion—peddled by extremists—that an inability to integrate is somehow innate to Muslims and arises from a fundamental incompatibility between Islam and Western values of democracy and liberalism. Many politicians harbour an understandable concern that even raising such questions risks fuelling anti-Muslim prejudice (which itself is rising) by seeming to stigmatise an entire community.

Yet in wishing to deny oxygen to the extremists, progressives have often gone too far in the opposite direction, by refusing to

¹² Tony Blair, “Speech on Multiculturalism and integration”, National Archives, 8 December 2006, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080909022722/http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page10563>; David Cameron, “PM’s speech at Munich Security Conference”, UK Government, 5 February 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference>.

¹³ Matthew Taylor, “Casey Report Criticised for Focus on UK Muslim Communities”, Guardian, 5 December 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/dec/05/casey-report-criticised-for-focus-on-uk-muslim-communities>.

broach the issue altogether. Their silence on these issues has left space for populists on the right to frame the debate in ‘them and us’ terms. It has also fuelled the suspicion, exploited to devastating effect by right-wing populists such as France’s Marine Le Pen, the Netherlands’ Geert Wilders and Britain’s Tommy Robinson, that elites are attempting to shut down a legitimate conversation.

Another difficult—and often related—issue is how the state should respond to illiberal cultural practices in minority communities, with examples such as forced marriages or Haredi Jews’ refusal to work. There is a sense that public institutions have too often been willing to turn a blind eye to such practices, for fear of causing offence and being accused of prejudice. As former UK Prime Minister David Cameron pointed out, “when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who isn’t white, we’ve been too cautious frankly – frankly, even fearful – to stand up to them.”¹⁴

Case Study: Controversy Over Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Lessons in English Schools

In March 2019 a primary school that taught pupils about homosexuality as part of a programme to challenge homophobia was forced to stop the lessons after around 600 children, aged between four and 11, were withdrawn by Muslim parents in protest. Parkfield community school in Saltley, Birmingham, was subject to weekly protests over the lessons, which parents claimed were promoting gay and transgender lifestyles.

The case has raised difficult questions about the role of the state in balancing mainstream liberal norms and the views of religious minorities. Shabana Mahmood, the MP for Birmingham Ladywood, spoke out after parents in her constituency complained that primary schools were teaching their children about same-sex relationships. She said parents did not oppose sex and relationships education, but “it is all about the age appropriateness of conversations with young children in the

¹⁴ David Cameron, “PM’s speech at Munich Security Conference”, UK Government, 5 February 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference>

context of religious backgrounds”.¹⁵ Mahmood, who has previously backed gay rights legislation in the House of Commons, said the government should ensure the rights of minorities were protected, but that included the rights of people with orthodox religious views, including some Jews and Christians as well as some Muslims. However, the chief inspector of the schools-inspection body, Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, supported the school, saying it was vital children knew about “families that have two mummies or two daddies”.¹⁶

Framing National Identity

Political scientist Francis Fukuyama has claimed that in the second decade of the 21st century, the traditional left-right spectrum is giving way to a new one defined by identity. While the right is reframing its mission around protecting traditional national identity, “an identity that is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity or religion”, the left “rather than building solidarity around large collectivities such as the working class or economically exploited . . . has focused on ever smaller groups being marginalized in specific ways”.¹⁷ In this sense, populists on both the left and the right obsess over and essentialise rigid conceptions of identity, rooted in race, ethnicity and religion, rather than focus on addressing the multifaceted nature of identity in an increasingly globalised world.

It is true that in recent decades, progressives have been slow to recognise that the desire to build and protect national identity is not in itself a racist or intolerant endeavour. For Fukuyama, “the problem . . . was not with national identity itself; the problem was with the narrow, ethnically based, intolerant, aggressive and deeply illiberal form that national identity took”.¹⁸ Rather than seeking to

15 Sienna Rodgers, “Shabana Mahmood under fire for comments on LGBT lessons in schools”, LabourList, 5 March 2019, <https://labourlist.org/2019/03/shabana-mahmood-under-fire-for-comments-on-lgbt-lessons-in-schools/>.

16 Sally Weale, “Ofsted chief backs teaching about same-sex couples after parent protests”, Guardian, 21 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/feb/21/ofsted-chief-backs-teaching-of-same-sex-couples-after-parent-protests>.

17 Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

18 Ibid.

duck such questions, progressives must instead articulate a positive and inclusive vision of national identity rooted in civic and democratic values.

A recent—and, for some, rather contentious—strain of thinking articulated by political scientist Eric Kaufmann has emphasised the need to proactively engage with ethnicity as a significant dimension of national identity, rather than seeing it as a harmful taboo. Kaufmann argues that a civic nationalism shorn of ethnicity is too “thin” to bind people together:

Pinning national identity, which is particular, to a set of universal values only works if your values are totally unique, such as those of Islamic State. For liberal societies, banging the drum about ‘our values’ erects a banal nationhood that fails to substitute for the rich symbolism that ethnic perspectives - including those of the majority - bring to national identity.¹⁹

Kaufmann is surely right to highlight the importance of majority identity in any integration framework, but his proposed policy response—a form of constructive ambiguity whereby politicians recognise different forms of race-based national identities—has the same flaws as the models he rejects. It amounts to a majoritarian version of multiculturalism, with the majority and minorities co-existing in parallel around fixed and unchanging identities, rather than building a shared national story and identity. Such societies would be likely to have polarised politics and lack resilience in the face of external threats.

Instead of focusing on competing claims between fixed group identities, progressives should concentrate on building a deeper, more emotionally engaging civic nationalism. This should recognise the importance both of a distinctive culture and history, by using national symbols that resonate with the majority and minorities, and of civic values.

Case Study: Civic National Identity in the United States

America’s national identity has never relied on ethnic conceptions of nationhood but has instead been rooted in its

¹⁹ Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

constitution and bill of rights, which grant Americans the liberties that enshrine citizenship. To be American is to live within this constitutional framework, which precludes its replacement by another set of laws claiming to be a higher morality and/or more exclusivist definitions of national identity.

The roots of this ethos arguably began in a Judeo-Christian religious outlook, but it has developed into a civic attitude and philosophy, shaping the themes and civic perspective that were part of America's founding story. It supplies a set of moral and philosophical principles regarding economic, social, personal and political life. Among its distinguishing features are personal responsibility, liberty, individualism, rights to property, and freedoms of religion and conscience. These have been reinforced through the establishment of collective rituals and stories, handed down from generation to generation, from Thanksgiving to presidential inaugurations.

The extent to which this project has succeeded is contentious. While the structure of US national identity has emphasised the civic aspect, ethnic conceptions of nationhood have proved stubbornly difficult to remove. For example, there remain parts of the white population that see American identity as synonymous with white identity. Nevertheless, the emphasis on civic identity in the American national story is instructive.

COMMON MISTAKES

In seeking to address questions of integration, policymakers have made a number of common errors, which have ended up hindering, rather than advancing, reform.

A Narrow Lens

One of the major difficulties of discussing integration is that it is routinely conflated with—and drowned out by—other intractable policy areas. Part of this challenge is that integration is often seen as a euphemism for other ulterior objectives. Across Europe and North America, discussions of integration have tended to take place through the lens of counter-extremism, with integration presented

as a bulwark in the fight against terrorism. In many respects that is understandable, given the substantive terrorist threat, but the risk is that the integration agenda becomes securitised, making it appear to communities that integration is a means to an end rather than a good in itself.

Any public-policy intervention perceived to be disproportionately targeted at a single societal group establishes a suspect-community dynamic, which can increase polarisation and distrust rather than building common cause. For example, in her review of integration policy in the UK, Dame Louise Casey found that in some cases, the only engagement some Muslim communities felt they had with the government was through their interaction with Prevent (a counter-radicalisation programme), or as part of broader counter-extremism efforts. This issue can too easily fall into a ‘them and us’ debate, with integration sounding like a question of migrant and minority affairs, with only the occasional nod to the responsibilities of the majority host community.

A successful integration strategy must be about everybody, or it is not really about integration at all. It needs to work as well for the ethnic majority and for third-generation migrants as for newer arrivals. Policymakers must also frame integration as a good in itself, rather than as veiled counter-extremism, and be clear about what it is positively seeking to achieve.

Case Study: Assimilationism in France

How French national identity is both defined and expressed has been the subject of a long and controversial public debate in France since the mid-1980s. In May 2007 the government created the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development, which among other things was tasked with promoting national identity. Two and a half years later, in November 2009, the government launched a “Great Debate on National Identity” with the objective of codifying what it means to be French.²⁰ More recently, since the 2015 and 2016 terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice, France’s relationship with

²⁰ “France launches public debate on national identity”, DW, 2 November 2009, <https://www.dw.com/en/france-launches-public-debate-on-national-identity/a-4849355>.

its minority communities has been repeatedly under the microscope.

Concerns that the split allegiances of ‘foreigners’ might weaken social cohesion in France are not new: similar claims have been voiced since the early Third Republic (1870–1940). In recent years, however, particularly since the latest terrorist attacks, debates on the questions of national identity and dual citizenship for French citizens have intensified, with critics questioning the commitment of second-generation North Africans and sub-Saharan Africans to French national identity.

This debate needs to be set against its historical background: the formation of the French republican model. The model’s objective was to achieve the assimilation of so-called nationals—Bretons, Corsicans and others. It was not designed to integrate the diverse range of groups in contemporary France. Instead, it serves to make minorities, and the challenges they face in French society, virtually invisible. The French state rejects any references to national, racial, ethnic or religious minorities and thus any form of targeted measures (including the collection of data) for these groups. It is under this absolute approach to equality and neutrality that the wearing of religious symbols has been prohibited in state schools.

Countries that have adopted multiculturalism, such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the US, treat multiple national or ethnic identities as positive marks of a diverse heritage. Meanwhile, assimilationist countries, of which France is the leading example, tend to insist on exclusive choices and consider the retention of an ethnic identity to be a sign of incomplete assimilation. This fear reveals a conception of identity as a zero-sum game: any sense of belonging to another country must necessarily weaken an individual’s sense of being French.

An Absence of Strategy

Across the established democracies of Europe and North America, there is democratic pressure to strengthen integration. Yet that pressure is often implicit, rather than explicit, revealed in

the concerns people express about immigration, for example, rather than framed as integration per se.

One of the consequences of this is that genuine trade-offs can sometimes be neglected. For instance, governments have often sought to encourage temporary, short-term migration to meet labour shortages, on the basis that such people will return home and thus not be a permanent burden on the state. Yet it is precisely such short-term migration that can have the most negative impacts on social integration.

The most infamous example of this was the guest-worker scheme implemented in Germany in the decades after the Second World War. The Gastarbeiter (guest worker) policy, focused on Turkish migrants, ran from the late 1950s to the early 1970s with the aim of filling labour-market shortages without encouraging permanent migration. The general assessment of this scheme is that it was not a success from an integration perspective. It has been controversial from the point of view of fairness and ineffective in its stated aim, with large numbers of supposedly temporary migrants staying permanently (but without the same opportunities as German citizens). In Germany, the Gastarbeiter policy led to the popular slogan “There is nothing more permanent than temporary workers” as millions of Turkish guest workers and their relatives ended up settling by default.²¹

Trade-offs are the stuff of politics, but integration policy has lacked a strategic framework that enables decision-makers to weigh competing policy objectives and make the relative costs and benefits transparent. As a result, government policy has often been driven by political short-termism, reacting to crises, rather than shaping integration proactively. These failures have undermined voters’ faith in the ability of democratic politics to manage integration and created a vacuum, allowing populists to exploit people’s genuine anxieties.

Case Study: A Lack of Strategy in Germany

²¹ Philip Martin, “There Is Nothing More Important Than Temporary Foreign Workers”, Center for Immigration Studies, 1 May 2001, <https://cis.org/Report/There-Nothing-More-Permanent-Temporary-Foreign-Workers>.

It was not until the current millennium—as Germans started to acknowledge the reality that guest workers, originally intended as temporary, were there to stay—that a consensus began to grow in Germany on the need for an integration policy.²² In 2005 a federal agency was for the first time commissioned to oversee integration: the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees. This was followed by a rapid sequence of government initiatives, perhaps most notably the annual integration summits. Starting in 2006, these gatherings brought the government together with community leaders, civil society and businesses, and culminated in 2012 in a National Plan of Action that covered the welcoming of new arrivals and boosted labour-market opportunities and language provision.

While Germany has sought to position itself as practising neither a strictly assimilationist nor a multicultural model, it has yet to positively define its distinctive vision of integration. (Perhaps reflecting this, the process of integration in Germany is laborious and complex in comparison with that of other countries. To become fully integrated, an immigrant must be socially, economically and politically integrated, which is highly subjective and can take several years.)

The refugee crisis of 2015, when Germany accepted almost 900,000 refugees in one year, has intensified the focus on integration in public policy debates.²³ In August 2016, Germany passed its first ever national integration act, designed to manage the influx of refugees and prevent the formation of asylum-seeker ghettos. The legislation focused on a combination of incentives and conditionality, including:

- expanding asylum seekers' access to—and obligation to attend—integration courses, regardless of their prospects of

22 We are indebted to Julia Idler at the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community for her valuable insight into German integration policies.

23 “Announcement of the latest refugee figures”, German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, press release, 30 September 2016, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/EN/2016/announcement-latest-refugee-figures.html>.

remaining;

- improving asylum seekers' access to the labour market;
- applying sanctions to asylum seekers' refusal to participate in integration measures on offer by reducing benefits; and
- designating asylum seekers' places of residence to ensure integration and avoid the development of social hotspots and ghettos.

The German case is marked by decades of political denial, resulting in reactive integration policies. It has also left Chancellor Angela Merkel politically vulnerable, with the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party having benefited from public anxiety over the lack of a long-term integration plan for the growing population of refugees. Without a progressive and overarching integration strategy, Germany will not be able to turn its enormous immigration into a source of growth and improved social cohesion.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Beyond the several political challenges associated with developing progressive integration strategies, countries have also faced significant practical barriers to implementation. Reviewing policy initiatives across different country contexts, there are several common difficulties that prevent governments from enacting and following through on policy.

Maintaining Political Will

There is often pressure on governments to make symbolic, short-term and rhetorical commitments to integration, triggered by negative events such as riots or terrorist attacks. But there are few pressures for the type of sustained strategic drive for integration that would make the most difference. Consequently, integration policy has rarely featured prominently in mainstream political parties' manifestos or programmes for government.

Part of the problem has been an absence of civil-society pressure. For example, among migrant and refugee organisations,

integration has been a lower priority than migrants' rights have, because a failure of integration does not have the same obvious individual impact that the refusal of an asylum claim or detention has.

Cross-Government Coordination

Coherent integration policy needs action from local, regional and central governments, making coordination more challenging. Furthermore, within central government effective interdepartmental working is needed, as many government departments have a stake in integration policy, including home affairs, housing, local government, citizenship and work. Such coordination is often problematic, and ensuring effective interdepartmental working, both locally and nationally, remains one of the biggest delivery challenges.

Involving Wider Civil Society and Business

Policymakers have focused mostly on what agencies of the state—local authorities, schools and others—can do to promote integration. What happens in the workplace and in private housing markets clearly has a large impact on integration, but politicians have sometimes been slow to engage with business and the voluntary sector on the issue, perhaps from fear of the potential for the state to over-reach.

Case Study: Welcoming America

Launched in 2009, Welcoming America is a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) that works to enable refugees and other migrants to integrate at the local level. Born out of concerns over community tensions caused by migration and rapid demographic shifts, Welcoming America's mission has been to build resilience in communities and reduce barriers to integration, working with newcomers and long-standing residents to encourage social mixing and open opportunities for citizens to come together and participate in economic, civic and social life.

Welcoming America has organised programmes in cities and communities all over the US, targeting areas whose immigrant populations have grown rapidly. For example, in 2011, the NGO

helped coordinate an initiative in Dayton, Ohio, that brought city leaders together to create a plan that expressed core values of inclusion and sought ways to attract (rather than expel) immigrants. This process has contributed to a reinvigoration of neighbourhoods and shopfronts as newcomers put down roots, open businesses, and contribute to the tax base and a renewed civic fabric.

WHY INTEGRATION MATTERS

Despite the myriad challenges and difficulties facing policymakers, successful integration offers many important benefits. This chapter outlines why progressives should prioritise integration policy.

A PROGRESSIVE CAUSE

Progressives take poverty, social exclusion and social mobility seriously, and for the most part, they do so across political divides. Creating a just, fair society in which everyone can prosper and get on is a cornerstone of liberal democratic values. This is in part because the consequences of economic exclusion are wide ranging. Children from low-income families are less likely to do well in school and more likely to suffer ill health and/or be mixed up in criminality.²⁴

The less integrated societies are, the greater the economic and social costs they face. Where communities live separately, with fewer interactions between people from different backgrounds, mistrust, anxiety and prejudice grow.

Conversely, closer integration can have positive impacts, not only in reducing anxiety and prejudice, but also in enabling people to achieve better outcomes in the labour market, contributing to shared prosperity. Similarly, integration and shared common values and behaviours—such as respect for the rule of law, democracy, equality and tolerance—are inhibitors of division, hate and extremism. They can make societies stronger, more equal, more united and better able to stand together against populism.

THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MIXING

There is strong evidence of the benefits that can derive from high levels of meaningful contact between people from different

²⁴ For example, see Sophie Wickham, Elspeth Anwar, Ben Barr, Catherine Law and David Taylor-Robinson, “Poverty and child health in the UK: using evidence for action”, *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 101 (2016): 759–766, <https://adc.bmj.com/content/101/8/759>.

backgrounds. Analysis of the academic evidence base and the case studies conducted for this report suggests that social mixing can:

- reduce anxiety and prejudice;
- enable people to achieve better outcomes in the labour market, contributing to shared prosperity;
- increase trust and understanding between groups (with a knock-on effect that allows negative perceptions of other groups to be challenged);
- lead to a greater sense of togetherness and common ground; and
- promote resilience to extremist ideologies and challenge dangerous worldviews.²⁵

Meanwhile, a lack of social mixing can reinforce ethnic segregation, increase community tensions and raise risks of conflict. High concentrations of some ethnic or faith groups—and the lower levels of opportunity they imply for social mixing between people from different backgrounds—are therefore a cause for concern when they exacerbate disadvantage and a lack of social mobility.

WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT

While politicians have found it difficult to articulate a positive case for integration, the good news is that there is widespread public support for policies that promote social integration. Indeed, whereas immigration generally polarises and divides voters, integration appears to garner consensus. The EU's 2017 Eurobarometer survey on the integration of immigrants found that 69 per cent of Europeans view integration as a necessary investment for the long-term future of their country.²⁶

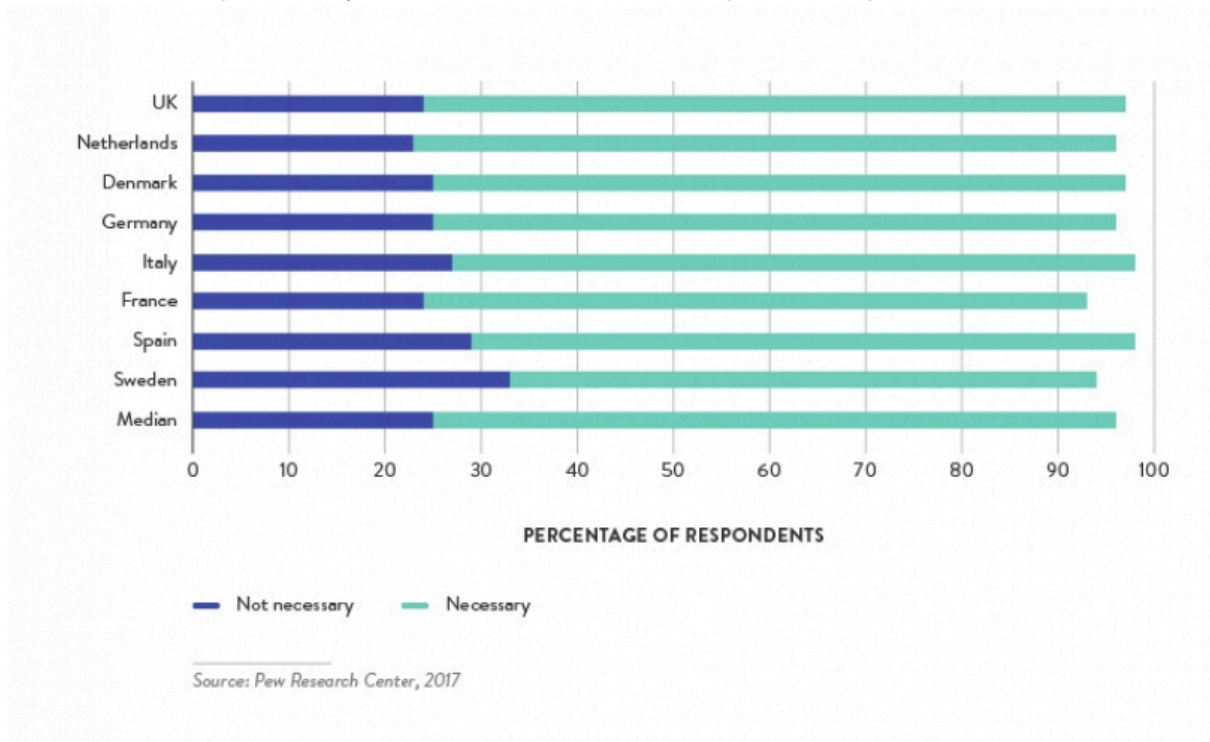
Similarly, a 2017 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center revealed that in eight Western European countries, around seven in ten people think it is necessary for the good of society that immigrants adopt the customs and traditions of their new country

²⁵ For example, see Uslaner, *Segregation and Mistrust*.

²⁶ "Results of special Eurobarometer", European Commission.

(see figure 4).²⁷ Fewer Swedes say integration is essential, although a majority (61 per cent) still endorses it.

Figure 4: European Attitudes to the Need for Immigrants to Integrate, 2017



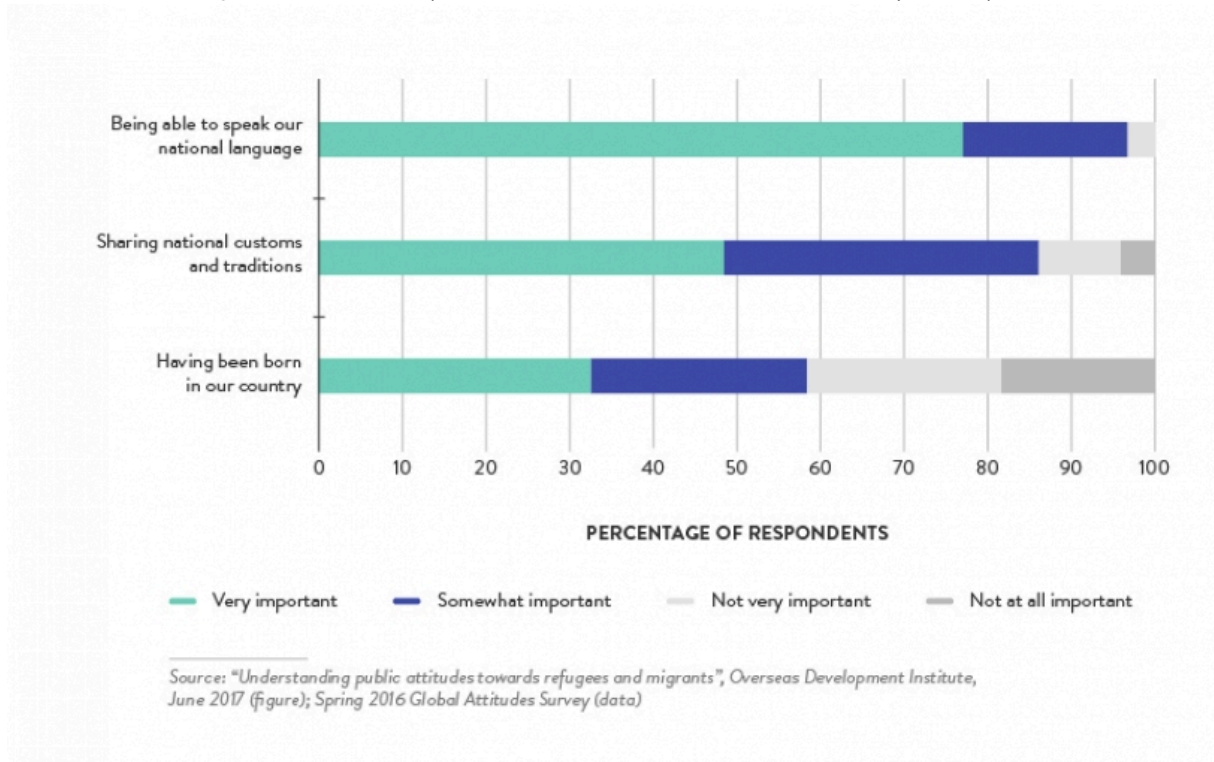
Attitudinal data suggest there is not only widespread support for the principle of integration but also a high level of consensus on the form integration should take. For example, the 2017 Eurobarometer survey on integration found that the public tends to prioritise what it sees as some essential foundations of integration—acquiring a language, paying taxes, being committed to the norms and values of the host society—over others.²⁸ Language is particularly considered a significant determinant of national identity in Europe (see figure 5).²⁹

²⁷ “Majorities say integration by immigrants is necessary”, Pew Research Center, 11 July 2018, http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/07/12/stark-left-right-divides-on-attitudes-about-immigration/pg_2018-07-12_westerneuropepolitics-4-05/.

²⁸ “Results of special Eurobarometer”, European Commission.

²⁹ Helen Dempster and Karen Hargrave, “Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants”, Overseas Development Institute and Chatham House, working paper 512, June 2017, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11600.pdf>.

Figure 5: Perceived Importance of Determinants of National Identity in Europe, 2016



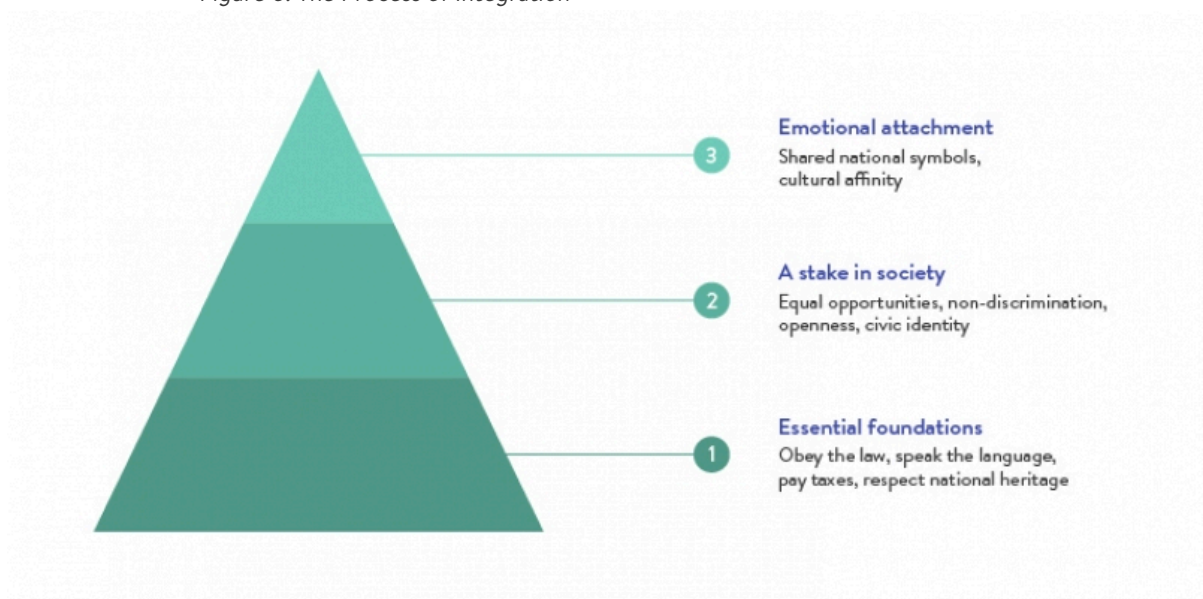
There is variation, however, in the relative weight given to these preferences. The Dutch and the Germans tend to value language by a large margin (87 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively, think it “very important”) compared with the Spanish (65 per cent). The Danish and British populations tend to focus on migrants’ contributions to the welfare state through taxes (81 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively, think this is “very important”) compared with, say, the French (57 per cent).

VISION AND PRINCIPLES OF REFORM

Numerous factors shape integration. Other than the pre-existing characteristics of individual migrants, the receiving country's immigration history, general climate of openness, political context and dialogue on integration, labour market, welfare model, and social and demographic trends all colour newcomers' individual experiences as they settle in. Nonetheless, governments have it in their power to proactively shape integration outcomes, through the policies they design and implement.

A progressive integration agenda must avoid simply splitting the difference between a flattening assimilationism, on the one hand, and an overly rigid multiculturalism, on the other. It must instead offer a positive, holistic vision of how minorities and the majority can work together to enable more integrated local communities. That is what this chapter attempts to do.

Figure 6: The Process of Integration



THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

Integration is a process, rather than a single event. Sequencing is critical, with consensus on the ground rules required before deeper integration is established. This report argues for a process that consists of three discrete steps (see figure 6).³⁰

First, governments must clarify what is required in terms of the essential foundations of integration: respect for the law, democratic norms, the ability to speak a common language and the desire to contribute positively to society. This is the platform on which integration is built.

Second, these foundations unlock a broadly held commitment to equality of opportunity. Naturalised citizens who join the club and play by the rules deserve to be treated as full and equal members of it, not as second-class citizens. This is the *quid pro quo*: in return for newcomers demonstrating respect for the host country's traditions and values, there must be mutual respect for the cultural diversity that newcomers bring and a substantive commitment to freedom of religion, respect for free speech, and rooting out prejudice and discrimination. Integration is not possible unless everyone feels they have a stake in society. As such, this model rejects exclusive approaches to citizenship or identity, for example those based on ethnic grounds, which clash with commitments to equal treatment.

The third level of integration is about emotional attachment to national identity. This is often popularly perceived as proof of full integration, yet it should have a lower priority, partly through a pragmatic understanding that this takes time (and would be artificial if there were a claim to fully embrace it on day one). The point is that in a democracy, people must be allowed to differ on the value of national symbols, such as the monarchy or the military. These are personal choices, although one may expect, over time, some degree of convergence with majority attachments.

Getting the sequencing right allows expectations to be set in the right way. The majority in a host country is right to expect minorities to adopt the core values that underpin integration. However, it is unrealistic to expect unintegrated groups to subscribe to a shared identity simply through residence in a country. Policymakers must recognise that individuals will struggle—at least initially—to feel an emotive bond to a new country if they lack a sense of ownership or stake in its future.

30 The importance of sequencing was a key insight from research carried out by Deborah Mattinson, founding partner of Britain Thinks, for British Future.

Our model forges a new path through the divisions identified above between economics and culture and between multiculturalism and assimilation. It views the values of a country as critically important and expects every group to make a concerted effort to abide by them, while maintaining a role for diverse cultural perspectives. It accepts that access to long-term opportunities is a crucial part of making that happen. It favours a single unified story over parallel lives and asks every group to contribute to a common culture.

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

Genuine integration cannot simply apply to minorities.³¹ It must be about the whole of society, entailing both a sense of belonging for newcomers and a sense of ease with the pace of change for majority citizens. Equally, a positive vision of integration cannot be limited to economic or cultural factors in isolation. To date, conversations about integration among the political right have tended to focus on values, while the left has focused on economic aspects. Instead, a holistic approach must encompass the various components of everyday life, from securing a job to sharing cultural norms.

This section sets out three broad dimensions of successful integration: opportunity convergence, values convergence and social mixing.

Opportunity Convergence

This dimension relates primarily to economic integration—specifically, whether inequality in educational and labour-market outcomes (measured by migrant parentage, ethnicity, faith or social class) reduces or disappears within one or two generations or not at all.

Many scholars believe that ultimately the most important vehicle for full integration is sustainable employment. Work, it is argued, helps new arrivals become self-sufficient, bridge ethnic and cultural divides, and learn about the host country's society.³² As such, work

³¹ We are indebted to Sunder Katwala for his insight in helping us develop the ideas in this section of the report.

can be a gateway to other dimensions of integration (though it can also act as an impediment to integration if migrants get stuck in low-skilled, segregated jobs). A key prerequisite for opportunity convergence is the existence of robust anti-discrimination laws, such as those enacted by the UK's last Labour government in the 2000s, enabling minorities to compete fairly for labour-market opportunities.

Values Convergence

Integration in this context is not about economics. It is about the common values citizens share. Specifically, this relates to whether there is evidence that minority groups adopt broad shared values—and, just as importantly, whether the majority adopts the foundations of a fair and integrated society, namely equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The countries most likely to succeed are those that can define in inclusive, non-ethnic terms a set of national values that nonetheless are distinctive and respect the host country's shared heritage. This dimension is fundamentally about who 'we' are: the shared boundaries in which we are obliged to live, precisely to preserve our right to our own different faiths, races and creeds.

Social Mixing

The third and final dimension of successful integration relates to whether there is evidence of greater social contact between different groups over time. Numerous studies show that the level of social mixing is a major determinant of people's attitudes to their fellow citizens and of whether such attitudes become more or less positive over time.³³

It is this ecosystem of opportunities, values and attachments that constitutes the sort of inclusive model that can bind people

32 For example, see Meghan Benton and Liam Patuzzi, "Jobs in 2028: How Will Changing Labor Markets Affect Immigrant Integration in Europe?", Migration Policy Institute, October 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/jobs-2028-changing-labour-markets-immigrant-integration-europe>.

33 For example, see "Integration not demonisation", UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, 2017, <https://socialintegrationappg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/Final-Report-into-the-integration-of-migrants.pdf>

together. When people are isolated from this system and from the collective identity it embodies, competing paradigms may arrive to fill the gap. This model does not mean that minority groups are forced to sacrifice their own identities or the values by which they live their lives. Instead it ensures that those perspectives are brought into, and are conditioned by, a common story about a country and its purpose.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROACTIVE GOVERNMENT

In his 2011 examination of migrant integration in the US, sociologist Tomás R. Jiménez argued that laissez-faire approaches succeed only when underwritten by a system that allows such migrants to become invested in society:

*The laissez faire approach to integration has worked because the United States traditionally has had a strong system of public education and because economic expansion has allowed immigrants and their descendants to pursue their economic aspirations, which, in turn, facilitates integration along multiple dimensions. If the laissez faire method continues to be the preferred approach, then the state of public education in areas of considerable immigrant settlement and the stagnating economy are significant areas of concern.*³⁴

In today's unstable political climate, and without a robust civic national identity built into the fabric of many states, progressive leaders cannot afford to adopt this kind of complacency. In her 2016 report into the state of integration in the UK, Dame Louise Casey underlined this point: "For generations we have welcomed immigrants to the UK but left them to find their own way in society while leaving host communities to accommodate them and the growing diversity of our nation."³⁵

34 Tomás R. Jiménez, *Immigrants in the United States: How Well Are They Integrating into Society?* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2011), 21.

35 Dame Louise Casey, "The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration", UK Department for Communities and Local Government, 5 December 2016, 15–16, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>.

If governments are serious about addressing the challenges facing local communities, they must resist the temptation to focus only on reducing immigrant numbers, while leaving minority groups to make their own way. Without the requisite processes in place by which groups could buy into a civic national story and set down roots through education and work, this approach is destined to fail. Instead, governments should focus on designing and implementing strategies to enable engagement with the country and its identity, with concrete policies to achieve this aim.

Case Study: Migrants' Rights in Sweden

Sweden has moved along the spectrum of integration over the years as it has grappled with the arrival of immigrants.³⁶ From an ideal of assimilation in the early 1950s to multiculturalism in the 1970s, the country has since landed on a model of integration based on migrants' rights, formed in the 1990s.

In 2010, Sweden established labour-market participation as its main integration objective. In that year the government implemented a major integration reform, Etableringsreformen (the establishment reform), emphasising labour-market integration as well as incentives for newly arrived immigrants and opportunities for self-support and gender equality. Although recent inflows, particularly of refugees, have put pressure on the Swedish model, labour-market integration remains the core objective of the country's integration strategy. As the government stated in 2009, "the goal of Sweden's integration policy is to ensure equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural background".³⁷ This is "to be achieved primarily through general policy measures for the whole society, including employment, education, health and housing, supplemented by targeted support for the introduction of newly arrived immigrants".³⁸

³⁶ We are indebted to Ida Holmgren at the Swedish Ministry for Employment for her valuable insight into the history of Swedish integration strategies.

³⁷ "Swedish Integration Policy", Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, December 2009, <https://www.government.se/contentassets/b055a941e7a247348f1acf6ade2fd876/swedish-integration-policy-fact-sheet-in-english>.

³⁸ Ibid.

The integration measures taken towards labour-market participation and anti-discrimination have been very successful. According to the Migration Policy Index published by the US-based Migration Policy Institute, Sweden ranks as the most integrated of 38 Western countries.³⁹

³⁹ The US-based Migration Policy Institute hosts an expansive and thorough database on integration measures. The Migrant Integration Policy Index maps 38 countries over 167 integration indicators and is thus one of the most useful comparative resources on individual integration policies. Although a comparative debate about individual integration policies and their efficiency is beyond the scope of this report, it is worth referencing this tool for policymakers in assessing the implications of specific policies. See <http://www.migrationpolicy.org> and <http://www.mipex.eu/>.

POLICIES FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

When integration succeeds, all members of society feel they have a strong mutual bond with, and mutual regard for, every other member of society. The optimal way to build such a society is to reinvent civic nationalism and ensure that all groups can become invested in the story of their country, allowing them to integrate from within and go on to shape the economic, social and cultural patchwork for years to come.

Achieving this vision demands innovative and mainstream public policy that spans the constituent parts of a person's relationship with society: education, work, language, housing, social contact, citizenship, cultural practices, and crime and extremism. This chapter sets out a series of emblematic policy recommendations in these areas that are not country specific but that aim to provide a sample of the options open to progressive policymakers who treat integration as a priority and are proactive in designing the strategies necessary to make it happen. Yet integration cannot be delivered by national governments alone. Achieving it requires a range of actors—local and regional government, business, civil society and public services—to play their part.

POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

To bring about the changes required, national-level coordination is needed across government and leadership from the very top of politics. Yet governments have struggled to prioritise integration policy, and changes in governments and ministers have often pushed integration down the policy agenda.

To strengthen political accountability, policymakers should:

- Designate a cabinet minister with inter-departmental responsibility for integration or establish a new government department explicitly focused on it, to oversee activities in all parts of the country and coordinate the work of other parts of government.
- Adapt the model of Germany's annual integration summits, to provide a focal point for policy and public debate about the

progress made and the future challenges, share learning, and mobilise sustained stakeholder engagement from local government, business and civil society.

IMMIGRATION

An important dimension of an effective integration strategy is a coherent approach to immigration policy—one that seeks to balance the need to maximise economic benefits with the desire to secure public consent through managed borders. Our Institute’s previous two reports on immigration set out a series of recommendations, summarised below.⁴⁰

Policymakers should:

- Introduce a system of digital identity verification that would not only make it easier to identify illegal migration but also potentially give people greater access to their own personal data.
- Develop a differentiated approach to economic migration, including by adopting a human capital points-based system to increase the flow of skilled migrants into the country.
- Enact domestic labour-market reforms—for example, through tougher enforcement of minimum-wage laws—to avoid cheap migrant labour being used to undercut workers’ wages and conditions.
- Respect but renegotiate free movement of people in the European Union, for example, to enable an emergency brake in periods of exceptionally high inflows and pressures.
- Introduce a comprehensive package of measures—including upstream aid, joint enforcement against traffickers and smugglers, greater access to labour markets for refugees and a proper system of burden sharing—to more fairly manage refugee flows.

40 See Redgrave, “EU Migration”, and Redgrave, “Balanced Migration”.

EDUCATION

Education institutions—from schools to colleges and universities—have a crucial role in promoting integration, not only through the salience given to civic values, but also as a means of creating a society in which there is genuine opportunity and aspiration for all. Initiatives such as our Institute’s mentoring programme Compass show how educational settings can be used effectively to promote co-existence and social integration.⁴¹

Policymakers should:

- Place a new focus on inclusive conceptions of national identity in school curriculums, backed up by a statutory entitlement to citizenship education from primary to the end of secondary education.
- Combat the shift towards social segregation in schools, by reforming admissions policies (for example, so that schools match local diversity) and exploring what more faith schools can do to promote social mixing.
- Introduce training programmes for teachers on integration and civic national identity.
- Ensure stronger safeguards for children who are not in mainstream education, including those being home-schooled.
- Spread the social and economic benefits of universities, both as a source of social mobility and as a symbol of openness and civic pride, with a new wave of university building in locations that have experienced significant economic decline.

WORK

Integration policy must address the higher levels of unemployment experienced by some migrant groups, particularly refugees, who in many countries are kept from working due to government policies. Otherwise, such groups cannot be expected to feel invested in the mission of their society, nor encounter the

⁴¹ See <https://institute.global/co-existence/compass>

kind of social mixing necessary to break down entrenched prejudice.

Situations in which migrants are prevented from working or are encouraged to take jobs alongside other migrants are not conducive to integration, as they isolate demographics and prevent people from identifying with a common story. Employers and businesses therefore need to be included in developing integration strategies, partnering with government to improve workplace diversity and advising on how to prepare less integrated communities for local and national labour-market needs.

Policymakers should:

- Support early access to work for newcomers, including refugees and asylum seekers whose cases are not resolved within six months.
- Encourage business to invest in skills recognition and training, including for new arrivals who may not always have proof of their qualifications but nonetheless possess a high degree of skills or capabilities.
- Legislate to remove harmful anti-integration practices by employers, such as segregated shift patterns.

LANGUAGE

Fluency in the language of the host country is a foundation of integration. It unlocks opportunities in education and the labour market, and allows people to progress in work by accessing high-skilled and highly specialised jobs on stronger wages. Furthermore, it opens a range of opportunities that permit people to become more active and integrated members of their local community, from volunteering at a local food bank to joining the school sports team.

Yet often there is a lack of appropriate provision for new arrivals who work long hours, and for young people who arrive late in their educational careers. While it is incumbent on individuals to learn a language, states should provide support to facilitate this process as a key pillar in subscribing to the new civic identity.

Policymakers should:

- Divert a proportion of migrant visa fees to pay for an increase in language provision.
- Encourage employers and colleges to work together to develop effective e-learning programmes for migrants seeking to learn a language, offering flexibility to employees with long working days.

HOUSING

The lack of a systematic approach to integration in housing policy can accelerate the entrenchment of parallel lives, with communities becoming more isolated on grounds of class and race and individuals leading lives devoid of contact with different groups of people. The dangers stretch beyond a simple lack of interaction; residential segregation can undermine progressive integration initiatives in areas such as education and sport, because social programmes cannot overcome significant physical distance between communities.

To avoid social engineering, governments should focus on new housing developments, and ensure that these promote a social mix and provide attractive public spaces for residents to meet up. Residential mobility affects people's ability to establish local attachments and form friendships with their neighbours; this indicates the need for longer family tenancies, reducing the level of population churn in inner-city areas and encouraging families to set down roots.

Policymakers should:

- Regulate new-build housing to ensure diversity of cost and facilities.
- Introduce a minimum three-year tenancy term for private renters, especially in areas with poor rates of social mixing, to encourage less population churn.
- Prioritise longer-term residents in social-housing waiting lists.

SOCIAL CONTACT

Social contact matters to migrants and minority communities as well as to native populations. Positive social contact can help unintegrated communities feel part of a larger group, united by a collective national mission and with a joint stake in making that mission a reality.

Policymakers should:

- Proactively support institutions and programmes that promote greater social contact, with compulsory citizenship programmes for teenagers.
- Encourage civic participation, including through legal provisions in employment contracts for volunteering.

CITIZENSHIP

The obligations, ceremonies and rituals connected with the granting of citizenship matter hugely to the process of integration. For example, the US has a long tradition of using citizenship ceremonies to embed new arrivals into American life. In contrast, the UK government actively discourages migrants from seeking citizenship by setting high financial charges. This encourages short-term migration and population churn that prevents arrivals from setting down roots or identifying with their new country.

Routes to citizenship should instead be opened up. As Demetrios G. Papademetriou of the Migration Policy Institute argues, “even if not all immigrants will become citizens, the fact that they are viewed as potential permanent members of society after an initial (but finite) period in the migration process can serve as a powerful incentive for greater engagement in community life on the part of both natives and newcomers alike”.⁴² Technology can play a key role here: governments could enable citizenship through

⁴² Demetrios G. Papademetriou, “Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration (Transatlantic Council Statement)”, (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012).

modernised forms of electronic identity, helping control illegal immigration and streamlining interactions with citizens.⁴³

Policymakers should:

- Reduce the costs of citizenship to incentivise new arrivals to set down roots.
- Establish enhanced public citizenship ceremonies built on the collective values and civic identity of the host country.
- Introduce mandatory registration and civic integration contracts for new arrivals. These should become a gateway into assistance with electoral registration and advice on contacting relevant parliamentarians.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Integration involves confronting difficult issues, such as those regarding illiberal cultural practices. The law normally provides clear boundaries; those who perpetrate a hate crime or domestic abuse, for example, risk a criminal sentence. But there are also many grey areas that public servants grapple with on a daily basis, such as arranged marriages, sharia law and the wearing of the burqa.

The integration model advanced in this report requires a proportionate approach. This means restricting cultural practices that are clearly in tension with the national identity but allowing a legitimate space for new perspectives and the freedom of expression.

Policymakers should:

- Place a renewed focus on citizens' rights and responsibilities in school curriculums, to support young people in navigating the tension between religious freedom and liberal democratic norms.
- Involve communities in resolving issues of religious dress (such as wearing the hijab or burqa) through negotiation and

⁴³ Chris Yiu and Harvey Redgrave, "A New Approach to Digital Identity", Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 29 March 2018, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/new-approach-digital-identity>.

discussion rather than through crude blanket laws. The current legal framework in the UK—where aside from some restrictions on face covering in specific circumstances (such as security at airports), people are free to dress as they wish—is sensible.

EXTREMISM AND HATE CRIME

Both far-right and Islamist extremists, with their divisive narratives of inevitable conflict between Islam and the West, are major blockages to successful integration. While regressive and prejudiced attitudes may not break the law, if such positions are widely held, they can provide tacit support to those with extreme or violent views.

Governments need to find ways to empower community responses to extremism rooted in the values of pluralism and co-existence, and better understand the relationship between a lack of integration and the growth of extremism. In particular, it is important that governments separate their strategies for countering extremism and promoting integration in the public consciousness, so that communities do not view valuable efforts to promote more cohesive societies purely through a security lens.

Policymakers should:

- Adopt tough enforcement against hate crimes, with aggravated sentences for those found guilty of perpetrating such crimes.
- Use citizenship education to inform young people about the drivers of prejudice, closed-mindedness and the importance of critical-thinking skills. Our Institute has developed a robust toolkit for educators to lead these kinds of discussion in the classroom based on nearly ten years of working with students in over 30 countries through our Generation Global programme.⁴⁴
- Work with tech companies to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to rapidly remove hate speech and incitement from the Internet.

⁴⁴ See <https://institute.global/co-existence/generation-global>

CONCLUSION

Immigration and diversity have enriched Western countries in innumerable ways. Economies have been strengthened, eyes have been opened to the cultures of the world, and interactions have helped forge new friendships, relationships and connections with people of different heritages. Progressives should never falter in their defence of these benefits, nor seek to appease those who use migrants as a scapegoat for wider social malaise.

However, avoiding questions of social integration is anything but progressive. It is in fact highly reactionary, relegating the importance of social solidarity below the desire not to offend and prioritising laissez-faire over state involvement in building a strong and open society. It is not enough to champion tolerance and unity in speech while avoiding the policy that seeks to protect it. When policymakers take this approach, populists seize the narrative and threaten liberal values. What is more, the communities that progressives seek to shield through inaction are the ones that suffer most.

This report provides a progressive framework for policymakers grappling with social integration. It features a renewed civic national identity, built not on ethnic lines but on the principle of inclusion. A sustained effort to establish some essential foundations of integration that are non-negotiable is central to this endeavour. This will in turn encourage a broadly held commitment to openness and equality of opportunity, ensuring all communities become and feel invested in their country.

One of the reasons there has been such limited progress on this agenda is that seemingly common-sense propositions have often been allowed to be caricatured by opponents. Too frequently politicians have acted as though people must choose between a discredited multiculturalism, which prioritises diversity over common values, and a suffocating assimilationism, which assumes everyone has to be the same. These are false choices. Genuine integration combines the best elements of both models; it is correct for governments to demand assimilation in some areas (such as speaking the language and paying taxes) but not others (like cultural norms and lifestyles). An openness to cultural diversity

is critical, provided it is not used as a pretext to create fixed, static identities.

Balancing the right to be different and the duty to integrate is a fundamental challenge and responsibility in an era of tension and change. If progressives want to protect the liberal values they hold dear, they must quickly and effectively rise to the task.

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Governments should make integration an explicit policy priority, with a coherent vision underpinned by principle and pragmatism. Alongside strengthening political accountability, policymakers should adopt a suite of reforms that cut across almost all aspects of domestic policy.

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