

Achieving Race Equality in Scotland

Papers by Sir Jamie McGrigor, Robert Brown, Humza Yousaf and Johann Lamont
with responses from Professor Kay Hampton and Ephraim Borowski

Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic Britain

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Runnymede

7 Plough Yard, London, EC2A 3LP

T 020 7377 9222 **F** 020 7377 6622

E info@runnymedetrust.org

www.runnymedetrust.org

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This publication is part of the Runnymede Platform series, the aim of which is to foment free and exploratory thinking on race, ethnicity and equality. The facts presented and views expressed in this publication are, however, those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Runnymede.

ISBN: 978 1 906732 49 3 (online)

ISBN: 978 1 906732 48 6 (print)

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Foreword

One of the less remarked upon outcomes of the devolution settlement has been the reminder that Britain is indeed a community of communities and individuals. In the eleven years since the establishment of the modern Scottish parliament it has become clearer than ever that Scotland has its own dynamics and historical drivers that inform its politics. In terms of race equality, the make up of the Scottish population and the particular histories that have brought increased ethnic diversity to Scotland distinguish it from the experiences of those in other parts of the UK.

Devolution was met with concern by some from minority ethnic communities who considered the constitutional changes as posing a threat to the political voice of communities that were more numerous in the cities of England. It was argued that devolution could lead to narrow ethnicized nationalisms in which people from minority ethnic backgrounds would struggle to find a place. It was thought that the struggle which informed race equality in England would become detached from that in Scotland, with less attention being given to the needs and experiences of minority ethnic Scots.

Many of these fears have proved unfounded so far. While the Scottish Parliament has not been devolved powers over equality legislation or immigration, which remain 'reserved issues', it has had control of the levers for change – in education, health, housing, criminal justice and welfare policy. It has used these levers to influence public attitudes and tackle persistent race inequalities. The papers in this collection suggest that there is some way to go, as in all parts of the UK, but highlight the many tools that politicians in the Scottish Parliament have at their disposal to lead change.

We have been less successful in keeping open lines of communication and mutual support between voluntary sector organizations concerned with race equality in England and those in Scotland. In part, this has been due to a lack of resources on both sides, but it has led to a lack of learning about what has worked in the Scottish context for organizations in England. Runnymede is a national organization, concerned with race equality in all parts of the UK, but has understandably focused much of its energy on Whitehall and Westminster in recent years. For these reasons we are particularly pleased to be working with members of the Scottish Parliament, and Scottish race equality organizations. We are keen to work out with our partners in Scotland what role a national organization in this field can usefully play, and hope to develop a shared strategy alongside them that augments the exemplary work that they undertake.

Ten years on from the publication of the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi Ethnic Britain, which examined the nature of modern Britishness, but had little to say about the then novel devolution arrangements, is an ideal time to reflect on progress. We have a lot to learn from each other and a lot to be gained from working in solidarity.

The papers collected here show a welcome willingness to engage with the issues of race equality in Scotland at the highest political levels. Through the additional papers which offer a candid critique of the 'political' papers, we also hope to highlight the contours of the debate in Scotland. As this parliament draws to a close, we hope that we can play our part by encouraging debate and engagement with the concerns of Scottish people from minority ethnic communities, and re-establish a new connection between civil society in England and Scotland for the benefit of us all.

Rob Berkeley

Director

Runnymede Trust

Scottish Conservative Thoughts on Race Equality Issues in Scotland

Sir Jamie McGrigor
Member of the Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Conservatives recognize and are very proud of the fact that Scotland is a modern, diverse and multicultural society and stronger and more vibrant for being so. We are vehemently opposed to racism in all forms, both direct and indirect, and are always willing to participate in any initiatives we believe will help to eradicate the problems Scotland has in this regard. We want to create a society where opportunities are available to all, irrespective of creed and colour, and where no one is left behind.

Racial equality is a fundamental belief and something we seek in every avenue of Scottish life. It is a subject that I have been pleased to have as part of my Communities brief since 2007 and something I know my successor as Communities Spokesman, Alex Johnstone MSP, will also treat as a key policy issue. I am delighted that my colleague Baroness Sayeeda Warsi has become the first female Muslim to sit in a UK Cabinet; this is another major stride forward.

The Scottish Parliament has an active Cross Party Group on Racial Equality in Scotland, of which I am a member, which provides a forum for issues relating to race and anti racism and to seek solutions to the discrimination faced by Scotland's Black and minority ethnic communities, including through learning from the experiences of BME groups. I commend all those involved in it and believe it is an extremely positive grouping. A large number of groups are involved including the African Caribbean Women's Association, Africa Centre Scotland, Black Community Development Project, Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland), Edinburgh and Lothian Racial Equality Council, Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance (GARA), Irish Diaspora in Scotland Association, STUC Black Workers Committee and Thai Women's Association of Scotland.

Islamophobia has become an increasingly prominent issue – and one that has the potential to risk undermining racial equality – and I have been delighted to represent my leader Annabel Goldie and the Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Party at events organized by Show Racism the Red Card Scotland. It is an excellent organization whose high profile and effective campaigning is to be commended. As a young man I spent time in Turkey and Iran as well as several months in Afghanistan followed by Pakistan and India and during that entire period I was made to feel most welcome and never suffered from racial or religious persecution or tension. We all know that terrorism is not a new thing – history shows it has been present in many spheres from Genghis Khan to Nazi Germany to Stalin to Northern Ireland – and it is usually always a minority that creates terror with an agenda of murder, fear and intimidation. Islamophobia is not a new concept by any means.

But the fact that the whole world media is focusing more than ever before on the tiny minority who wish to perpetuate terrorism against communities of the free world means that now, more than ever, we need to build greater understanding of Islam by others, and of Western society and culture by Muslims. There is nothing in Islam that could ever justify the blatant acts of aggression that we witnessed most notably in 9/11, 7/7 and more recently at Glasgow Airport and confronting the false basis of this perversion of Islam is a key part of what needs to be done. Most Muslims I speak to believe strongly in this too. We must also tackle the problem of radicalization in vulnerable places like prisons. The growth of extremism within prisons is serious and much remains to be done to develop and implement guidance across the prison service to help it to develop effective counter strategies (for example, education programmes). In relation to the management of extremists within the prison system, experience in other countries needs to be examined for best practice and for ways forward in rehabilitation and de-radicalization.

The fact is that once people have been killed or maimed by terrorist actions, obsessive hatred can be carried by relatives of those murdered for many generations. And who can blame those who have suffered such terrible loss? There are a few shining beacons like for example Gordon Wilson who publicly forgave the bombers who killed his daughter after the savage bombing at Enniskillen.

It is people like him who realize the value of personal sacrifice for the better good of all. There are angels in every religion and also some devils but as Mahatma Gandhi said 'An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind'.

I respect very much the comments of the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Goma'a, when he said a few years ago that 'Islam calls on Muslims to be productive members of whatever society they find themselves in. Islam embodies a flexibility that allows Muslims to do so without any internal or external conflict'. The media also has an important role to play in putting the message across that Islam is a religion of peace. And Muslim organizations themselves have worked very hard since September 11th to espouse a new and strengthened voice. I myself was sent a copy of the Koran and although I have not read it from cover to cover, I appreciate much more the virtues which Islam promotes.

While the vast majority of Muslims in this country are decent, hard-working individuals who make an incredibly positive contribution to our communities, it must be a concern to all of us here that some elements of the next generation of British Muslims appear to be more separate from mainstream opinion than their parents. There is much still to be done to tackle the problem of growing cultural separatism based on religious separatism. Everyone in public life has to recognize that the growth in anti-Muslim hatred is a stain on our society and something that deeply concerns us all. We are determined to confront and defeat this new form of hatred in this country and beyond. We have to be tough on both anti-Muslim hatred and the causes of anti-Muslim hatred.

Scotland and the UK have a commendable reputation for breadth of outlook and positive vision and a willingness to include all people who wish to do the best for themselves, their families, their communities and their country. Our common values – of freedom under the rule of law, pluralism and tolerance – are more powerful than the backward-looking, distorted, negative messages of the extremists. With education and dialogue, and thus a greater understanding of Islam, I am confident that we can tackle the scourge of Islamophobia, just as we seek to tackle every kind of racism wherever it is found. And I hope in future we can see more and more members of the Muslim community becoming key figures in Scottish public life. We welcome them as candidates at every level of Scottish political life and look forward to more Muslim MSPs in future.

And while it is for government at all levels and individuals to inculcate the right values in society and not just the function of the police, the police have important roles to play in sharing information with community leaders, schools and youth and community services about local vulnerability to extremism to allow these bodies to intervene in ways which do not criminalize individuals but move them away from ideas or activities which would lead to criminality. Effective partnerships between the police, public bodies and community groups and leaders are essential to this; and to develop trusting relationships within communities so that individuals themselves are forthcoming with information about risk, as communities, families and friends are best placed to notice the early and subtle indicators of disaffection.

Forced marriage is another cultural issue which I have debated in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Conservatives agree very strongly that there is a very clear distinction between forced marriage – that is a marriage where one or both members of the marriage are forced to marry against their free will and which often involves abduction, abuse or imprisonment – and arranged marriages where both parties give their free consent. We recognize and have respect for the fact that arranged marriages have played and continue to play a significant role in the culture of some of our religious and ethnic minority communities. We support strongly the rights of people in those communities where arranged marriages are a cultural norm to continue to use this model and we recognize that it has operated successfully for many families and individuals for many generations.

The Scottish Parliament has been able to send a strong and unified message that forced marriage violates basic human rights and is completely unacceptable. Any British citizen should be able to look to their legislators and government to protect them against such fundamental infringements of their human rights. The Foreign Office's dedicated Forced Marriage Unit, since its establishment a few years ago, tends to deal with around 300 cases each year in the UK and I share the opinions of many campaigners in this area that there is likely to be massive under-reporting of the incidence of forced marriage since many people are too scared or are simply unable to report it to the authorities. I am also aware of the 2004 research of the Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland), the Incompatible Marriages Project, which suggests a much higher incidence of forced marriage, accounting for half of those marriages involving an Asian living in Scotland and a partner from outside the UK.

It is clear, however, that forced marriage affects children, teenagers and adults from all races and religions, including Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. And we need to be very clear as well that while it is a significant problem in the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, it is not just a problem for our Asian communities – the UK sees cases every year from the Middle East, the Western Balkans and Africa as well as elsewhere. Around 90 per cent of forced marriages involving a UK citizen take place abroad.

While many looking at this issue from the outside will see it as a problem affecting women, this is a problem that affects men too. The Foreign Office Forced Marriage Unit calculates that around 15 per cent of the cases it deals with are reports by male victims. And the Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland) suggested in 2004 that no less than 38 per cent of victims were male. We need to bear this factor in mind at all times and ensure that the solutions offered are suitable for both women and men. This is another area where I suspect there is even greater under-reporting due to stigma and fear among male victims.

Awareness raising is very important, not least so that victims, who often have little formal education and perhaps have no or poor English, know what rights they have and what help is available. In 2006 the UK Government's 'You Have a Right to Choose' campaign involved a series of radio and press adverts, TV fillers and poster campaigns. It also usefully involved two well-known Asian actors, Meera Syal and Ameet Chana. We need to be imaginative about how we communicate most effectively on this sensitive subject with different approaches tailored to the needs of different communities. I also commend the BBC documentary producers for its excellent 'This World' programme 'Forced to Marry' which brought very vividly to the screen the human misery involved which we must all work to eradicate.

The Scottish Conservatives acknowledge the good work that has been done by the Forced Marriage Network which was established by the last Scottish Executive in bringing together so many stakeholders. We pay tribute to the charity groups and individuals who campaign to raise awareness of forced marriage and offer support to victims. We hope that the Forced Marriage Network will continue to play a positive part throughout the consultation and beyond.

The detention of the children of asylum seekers at Dungavel has been a major issue in Scotland and I share the pleasure of many in civic Scotland that

the new Westminster government will be tackling this as a priority. The Scottish Conservatives believe that the UK Government and Parliament must retain reserved powers over asylum and immigration so that a consistent approach is taken throughout the UK. The fact that families spend so long in such centres is indicative of the chaos that the last UK Government has created in the asylum system. The Scottish Government has, of course, already been exploring alternatives to detention, including the three-year pilot in Glasgow that is aimed at reducing the number of children who are held in Dungavel, and encouraging and assisting the voluntary return of families.

As Scottish Conservative Communities Spokesman for the last few years I and my staff have had constructive and regular contact with BEMIS, the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland. BEMIS has developed a large database for over 500 Black and minority ethnic (BME) organizations and community groups all over Scotland. These organizations represent and support diverse BME communities and provide various services including: health, housing, advocacy, training, education, employment, older people, women, youth, faith, asylum seekers, art and leisure, equality and anti-racism. I commend their work for raising the profile of Scotland's diverse ethnic organizations.

I think that engagement is one of the key issues. All of the mainstream political parties in Scotland share the desire to see genuine racial equality in every aspect of Scottish life. We recognize that great strides have been made in recent decades and years but that more work is needed in certain areas. We stand ready to work with all interested stakeholders to act on concerns that exist in our ethnic minority communities and we welcome contact from them and the chance to hear their views, worries and aspirations.

A Liberal Democrat Framework for Race Equality in Scotland: One Scotland – Many Cultures

Robert Brown

Member of the Scottish Parliament

There is a resonance and excitement to the great slogan 'One Scotland – Many Cultures' which has been used as the masthead for race equality for some years now. It describes what I see in many primary and secondary schools in Glasgow, for example where children and young people from many different cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds are brought up together with very considerable success and with much benefit to our whole society.

Liberal Democrats 'exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity'. In other words, our vision is a dynamic one in which every individual has the right to achieve their potential in life, but that is balanced by responsibility for their local community and for the well-being of the wider world.

This is a vision which overlaps with other mainstream political philosophies in Britain but which is particularly identified with themes of liberty and personal opportunity and which treats people on their individual merits, not according to their class, race, or indeed sexual orientation.

Responsibility for equalities issues in the Scottish context is a partnership across all levels of Government. The United Kingdom Government is responsible for legislation and has, of course, recently established the single Equality and Human Rights Commission, taking on the functions of the former Commission for Racial Equality, and the Disability Rights and Equal Opportunities Commissions. Equalities issues are reserved to the UK Government but the Scottish Government has a duty to encourage and promote equality, and the Scottish Parliament has the issue at the heart of its founding principles and operates its work through the Equal Opportunities Committee.

1st Challenge – Identification with Scotland and the United Kingdom

Race relations policy in 2010 should be part of a wider vision of the type of world – and world view – we want for ourselves and our children in years to come. Most of the young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, unlike previous generations, will have been born and brought up in the United Kingdom. These young people – like all of us – must feel that they belong to our country, that their cultural traditions can be validly expressed in a Scottish and British idiom, and that they can achieve the same aspirations in life as anyone else.

Whilst issues of immigration and asylum are important in their own right, they should no longer be central to discussion on race equality. Indeed the language and environment of immigration policy, as we already know in Scotland, is more restrained where there are traditions of mutual respect, integrated life and work, and normality in ordinary society.

Accordingly issues of race equality should focus on the central issues of education and employment opportunity, justice and civil liberties, economic prosperity and access to health care. Contemporary Scotland is rightly proud of its distinct heritage and of the new cultures, faiths and traditions it continues to embrace. We want a modern dynamic Scotland that fosters integration but respects diversity; where everyone is able to help shape Scotland's future and to share in what it has to offer.

This means, amongst other things, that successful role models from different community backgrounds must be seen in all walks of life, whether it be elected representatives, Government employees, athletes, engineers or train drivers. There remain occupations where ethnic minority people are totally unrepresented or substantially under-represented.

2nd Challenge – Equality of Opportunity in Scotland

Equality of opportunity for Black and ethnic minority communities still requires statutory interventions. Liberal Democrats in Government in Scotland helped to kick off many initiatives designed to support equality of opportunity for people from ethnic minority communities.

We also introduced the important Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which placed a general statutory duty to promote race equality on the Government and other public authorities – a significant driver for progress. The Race Equality, Integration and Community Support fund was also introduced to facilitate grants in pursuance of race equality aims.

It is vital to have information on the real situation and to be able to assess the impact of policies on racial equality. Liberal Democrats supported the Scottish Executive's Race Equality Assessment/Action Database which was introduced in 2006. The database records a range of information on Executive policies and functions, including whether they are relevant to race equality, if they have been screened for their impact or potential impact on the promotion of race equality, the outcome of race equality impact assessments, action to be taken to remedy any adverse impact identified, and other work being undertaken on race equality in that area.

I myself, as a Minister, took through the Bill to establish the Scottish Commission for Human Rights. The Commission now works closely with the GB Commission on Equality and Human Rights, and the two Commissions play a vital role in ensuring that the rights of minority communities are safeguarded.

Many young people from a Black or ethnic minority community have done extremely well. But, even now in 2010, if you're from an ethnic minority group, you are still more likely to be poor or unemployed and the neighbourhood you live in is more likely to be deprived.

Despite the progress that has taken place in the last decade, Scottish Liberal Democrats believe that more needs to be done. Until young people from ethnic backgrounds are afforded the same opportunities as their White Scottish counterparts our work remains unfinished. We need to improve employment rates among minority groups in particular and we need more minority representation in public office.

The election of ethnic minority MSPs is important, both symbolically and for the contribution they can make. This will only be securely established when each Party has a pool of good quality candidates from minority communities from whom to choose. That means more party members from minority communities in particular and requires a determined effort by the parties to achieve this. The first Asian MP in Britain was a Liberal, Dadabhai Naoroji, who represented Finsbury Central as long ago as 1892–5.

Recently we had an Asian MEP. Scottish Liberal Democrats too have a number of Asian Councillors, most recently Councillor Ashai Ghai, elected at a by-election this year in Bearsden but we are yet some distance from electing an MP or MSP from an Asian background.

It is also too easy for people from minority communities to be cut out of the job application process right at the start because their background is clear from the name on their CV or application form. Liberal Democrats want employers to use name-blind job application forms to reduce sex and race discrimination in employment, initially in companies which employ over 100 people. Employers will not be able to include questions intended to reveal the gender, age or race of an applicant. This policy already works in organizations which use standardized application forms and remove personal details.

To stamp out discrimination, Liberal Democrats propose that every company that employs more than 100 people should have its pay arrangements examined with an Equal Pay Audit. Under these proposals, companies would be required to compare the pay of people doing equal work. Any pay gaps identified that cannot be satisfactorily explained would require the company to produce plans to eliminate them, giving everyone a fair deal.

3rd Challenge – Exploiting the Talents of All our Communities

Minority communities are often younger and more dynamic than the average. There is some superb talent coming through in the next generation of people whose parents or grandparents came to Scotland from elsewhere. It is vital that this talent is nurtured and supported to achieve its best.

That is why we have committed the new UK Government to provide internships for under-represented minorities in every Whitehall department, and to fund a targeted national enterprise scheme for Black and ethnic minority people who want to start a business – part of a wider commitment to improve opportunities for minority communities.

Young people from communities with family links to other countries are an enormous but underused asset for our country. Many people are bi-lingual or multi-lingual, being able to speak both English and their family language or sometimes languages. Furthermore they are often equally at home in different societies. It is a huge business and employment asset, allowing company representatives, for example, to tap into the huge and growing markets in the Indian sub-Continent, China or the Middle East as ‘insiders’ rather than as foreign visitors, who too often have an inadequate knowledge of the local culture and language.

But, in other fields too, a comparative knowledge of different education or legal systems, health services or engineering, scientific or technical communities can be an enormous asset.

A challenge of a different sort relates to proficiency and confidence in use of the English language. In this context, facility in English is an empowering ability. There can be a problem, with children from homes where English is not the first language having an inadequate feel for the language, which inhibits education. In other words, children who are superficially competent in day-to-day communication can lack real fluency in English, which in turn can be a bar to learning, and hold back opportunity. This should be a problem that lessens with the generations but it is often supplemented by marriages with a non-English speaking spouse from abroad. It is a high priority to make sure that both parents and children are equipped with an effective and fluent facility in English.

4th Challenge – The Limits of Liberty

The development of a genuine multicultural society must change attitudes in both the host community and amongst those coming in from elsewhere. This is mostly a dynamic and positive process but must proceed against a background of commitment to universal human rights.

But the process also throws up challenges. Some of these centre round attitudes to the position of women and to sexual orientation. Some arise from the threat and fear of terrorism. Some arise from extreme attitudes and actions, whether from racist bigots like the BNP or the Scottish Defence League, or from intolerant Mullahs preaching violence and supporting terrorism.

Liberal Democrats believe in the rule of law. Current legislation rightly criminalizes the propagation of racist hostility – or indeed other forms of violent, sectarian or intimidatory hostility – directed against individuals or groups, but the law also supports the right of free speech if it stays within the law.

We are committed supporters of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This can lead to a radical review of long-established practices, irritate people in authority who have to make changes because of it, and challenge many people with strong views across all communities. But it is nevertheless the bulwark on which race equality rests and is based on the premise that the rights which protect some people against discrimination on grounds of colour or race also protect other people against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or religious or political views.

Liberal Democrats have committed the new UK Government to build on the ECHR by establishing a Commission to investigate the creation of a British Bill of Rights which protects and extends British liberties on that sound basis. A Bill of Rights is a longstanding Liberal Democrat aspiration as part of the reform and modernization of our constitution.

5th Challenge – Ethnic Minority Communities and Social Policy

There is sometimes an inadequate connection between some minority communities and the legal, social and health policies and frameworks which have grown up over many years in Scottish society. Some organizations respond to this by establishing specialized services to reach out to minority communities. RNIB Scotland, for example, have established a project in Glasgow to engage with minority communities on identifying and tackling certain visual impairment issues of which

there can be a greater prevalence amongst some communities and where engagement with traditional health services is inadequate. The Scouts have established several specifically Muslim scout troops to attract young people who were not joining traditional Scout groups. Curiously the Cadets seem to be able satisfactorily to recruit young people from Asian backgrounds to their ranks, perhaps as a result of long-established military traditions in India and Pakistan.

Different family and marriage traditions also throw up issues. Marriage breakdown is more unusual in certain communities from which Western society could learn much. On the other hand, when it does occur, it can be even more traumatic and isolating for the parties, particularly the wife, and support services have to be both sensitive to cultural pressures and to reach out in innovative ways to help those involved. Many issues of women's rights and how they play out in Asian communities are raised by these complex challenges.

Arranged marriages were not particularly alien to Scotland in earlier times, even if uncommon today, but it is clear there is no place for forced marriages or for marriages with people under 16 who have, under our law – and rightly – no capacity to marry.

Finally it is appropriate to touch on issues of culture and clothing. In Britain, we have not gone down the route taken by some European countries like France, or indeed some Muslim countries like Turkey or Tunisia, in banning certain forms of clothing like the burkha. Nevertheless issues of clothing can raise problems of safety, security and socialization which are legitimate matters of public concern. An obvious example is driving whilst wearing a burkha, together with matters of security and identification in public places. There are also issues for staff carrying out public functions such as teaching or nursing.

This is not an issue for most Muslims, since there is no Koranic injunction to wear such clothing, but it is a cultural issue for certain communities.

Liberal Democrats have not taken a formal Party position on this but I venture to suggest that the basic principle is one of individual choice, modified by limitations where issues of safety, security or socialization arise. It would seem, for example, inappropriate for a teacher in a public school to wear clothing which concealed their face. It is, however, a sensitive matter and needs to be approached in close consultation with the communities and individuals affected.

It may indeed be time for a full independent examination of some of these issues as a guide to future policy development.

6th Challenge - A Liberal Democrat Approach to Immigration and Asylum Policy

Liberal Democrats believe that immigration has enriched our culture and strengthened our economy but that it must be controlled so that people have confidence in the system. We want a fair immigration system that works and promotes integration. That means a system that is speedy, humane, objective and which prioritizes entry for people fleeing from oppression abroad together with those whom our economy needs. The present system is flawed.

Liberal Democrats in Government in London have ended the detention of children in Dungavel and are committed to end the detention of children for immigration purposes generally. Nevertheless not everyone requesting entry has the right to stay and there must be improved procedures for returning people to their country of origin if they are not qualified to come here.

Britain has a responsibility to welcome refugees fleeing wars and persecution around the world. Liberal Democrats will abide by our international obligations and restore confidence in the asylum system by making it firm and fair.

We have secured a specific commitment in the United Kingdom Government Partnership Agreement to stop the deportation of asylum seekers who have had to leave particular countries because their sexual orientation or gender identification puts them at proven risk of imprisonment, torture or execution.

We are committed to exploring new ways to improve the current asylum system to speed up the processing of applications. As part of this agenda, we will campaign to allow asylum seekers to work, saving taxpayers' money and allowing them the dignity of earning their living instead of having to depend on handouts. We will make sure visa applications, especially for relatives, are dealt with fairly.

Liberal Democrats in Government in Scotland established, with our coalition partners, the Fresh

Talent scheme in 2005 which allows students to apply to stay and work in Scotland for two years after the end of their course without the need for a work permit. The Liberal Democrats believe that this is a pragmatic approach and encourages the best of our international students to make Scotland their home following their years at university – a significant boost to our economy.

The Scottish Refugee Integration Forum was also reconvened to produce a revised action plan to address new and emerging issues affecting refugees in Scotland. It will continue to examine specific issues in the areas of Health, Housing, Justice, Young People, Community Development and Positive Images, among other areas.

Liberal Democrats do not believe that immigration should be used as a political football. Instead we seek to create an immigration system that is firm and fair - to restore public confidence without pandering to hatred. We will welcome those who have a right to seek residence here, and those who are willing to contribute to Scottish society, but we shall not tolerate those whose objectives are to threaten and endanger our way of life. We will fight the ever present threat of terrorism by prosecuting terrorists instead of persecuting innocent people and communities. We believe that anti-terrorist legislation has often had an unnecessarily disproportionate effect on members of minority communities.

Tackling People Trafficking

Liberal Democrats, both in Scotland and in Government at Westminster, are committed to tackling human trafficking as a priority. It is particularly important in the lead up to the London Olympics in 2012 and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014 that the evil of women and children being trafficked for sex is targeted and stopped.

There are also gaps in the legislation. For example, unlike England, there are no powers of arrest in Scotland directed against gang-masters operating illegally. And the definition of gang-masters is more narrowly defined, being limited primarily to agriculture and food processing, rather than to work in care homes or supporting independent living where there is said to be a growing issue of labour exploitation of workers from abroad.

Ensuring Justice for All

Labour wanted to throw away more than half a billion pounds on wasteful and ineffective ID cards. This is in the process of being scrapped now that Liberal Democrats are in Government in London. Apart from other considerations, it is a costly measure at a time of huge financial stringency. We will also scrap plans for expensive, unnecessary second-generation passports that will require your fingerprints.

Britain also has the largest DNA database in the world, with details of a million innocent people's genetic profile. Black people are hugely over-represented because they are so much more likely to be stopped by the police. Liberal Democrats have strongly backed the more proportionate Scottish system which limits the retention of DNA from people acquitted or not proceeded against.

Liberal Democrats aim to scrap Control Orders and replace them with measures designed to secure convictions of terror suspects, because it is vital to convict terrorists rather than putting entire communities under suspicion. We support efforts to make it easier to charge suspects genuinely suspected of terrorism through a temporary lowering of the 'threshold test', the use of the post-charge questioning and intercept evidence.

Liberal Democrats are committed to combating discrimination in all its forms, including on the grounds of race and religion. We backed the legislation to make racial prejudice as a motive for crime an aggravation attracting higher punishments, and, more recently, we have supported the passage of the UK Equality Bill.

Conclusion

Scotland has made great strides towards a society where people are valued for their qualities and abilities rather than their skin colour, mode of dress or religious identification. Nevertheless, people in minority communities still face discrimination, physical and verbal abuse, and a restriction of their life opportunities.

Legal rights and protections create a framework where the grosser forms of invasion of individual rights can be stopped and remedies provided. They can also provide a driver towards real inclusion and inclusiveness. It is vital to build on

Scotland's tradition of a network of voluntary sector and public sector groups with a liberal attitude towards race equality, providing champions who ensure the equalities agenda is taken forward across all sections of society.

The job now is to mop up the remaining manifestations of discrimination and prejudice, protect the rights already obtained and move forward to a society which is confident in its liberalism, instinctively inclusive and which offers fair and equal opportunities to all its citizens.

One Scotland, Many Cultures is what it is all about!

Threads of the Scottish Tartan: The SNP's Vision for Race Equality in Scotland

Humza Yousaf Scottish National Party

The debate about race equality and multiculturalism often finds itself manifest in the heartlands of middle England and, more often than not, is won and lost in the melting pot of London. However, little attention is given to Scotland's multicultural landscape which has its own unique challenges and offers some of its own very fresh solutions.

In this paper I hope to explore and touch upon the following themes and issues:

- The demographics of BME Scotland;
- The integration and identity question;
- The Scottish National Party (SNP)'s stance on race equality and the role of nationalism as a tool for fostering inclusive communities;
- The priorities of Government in tackling race inequalities and in combating racism;
- The future of multicultural Scotland.

Demographics

Scotland has, over the last century, seen a lower level of migration through its borders than England. Perversely, this trend has carried on at a time when increased skilled migration is needed in many specialist fields across the country.

The result is a smaller BME population in Scotland and, by many measures, a less diverse society.

The latest statistics (census figures for 2001) show that there are 101,677 BME people in Scotland, this equates to 2.1 per cent of the population (General Register Office for Scotland, 2003), compared with 9 per cent in England (Office for National Statistics, 2003).

As well as a significantly larger BME population, England also has a very different and more diverse composition of ethnic minorities. It is important to highlight these differences as they present unique challenges and opportunities.

In Scotland the largest BME community is Asians, of which 70 per cent are of a Pakistani origin. In addition, Black (African, Caribbean and other) only make up around 0.2 per cent of the Scottish population *(Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance, 2008).

In England a more diverse picture is presented. While Asians still make up the largest percentage of the BME community, the Black population is significantly higher than in Scotland and is closer to 2.2 per cent of the overall population in England (Office for National Statistics, 2003).

The BME population is also more likely to reside in urban areas with the vast majority living in the city of Glasgow. Statistics confirm that 74 per cent of Indians, 80 per cent of Pakistanis and 74 per cent of people of African origin live in Glasgow (Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance, 2008).

Glasgow has also recently seen a further diversification of its BME community with the implementation of the asylum dispersal scheme in the city since 2000. As of January 2008, there were 4468 asylum seekers in Glasgow, the largest groups amongst them being from Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and China (Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance, 2008).

Taking all the above into account, it is fair to say that BME engagement in Scotland has weighted heavily in favour of the Asian community.

The Nature of the Debate

Recognizing diversity and promoting the merits of a multicultural society are essential to healthy communities, this broad statement will undoubtedly be agreed upon by every mainstream political party. However, points of contention and disagreements arise when examining the strategies we use and the approaches we take in our attempts to create a more harmonious society.

All too often political parties are quick in pointing the finger at proposed policies by their rivals.

However, these same political parties tend to shy away from a more honest discussion about how we frame the debate and, all too often, the negative impact this has on community cohesion.

It is the SNP's view that the racial equality discussion has focused too narrowly on the issues of identity, the questioning of people's loyalty based on this identity and the demands for certain BME communities to assimilate and integrate into wider society.

By focusing solely on the issue of integration, the burden of responsibility, for effective community cohesion, is unfairly weighted upon the shoulders of ethnic minorities – as integration is often portrayed as a one-way process.

Such unfairly balanced debate often results in sensationalist stories such as 'Muslim Integration has Come to a Halt' (Wavell, 2006) and 'Muslims Refuse MRSA Gel' (Troup, 2006) and other similar headlines designed to perpetuate a certain myth.

The need to sign up to a core set of values and the demand on BME communities to choose an identity has, unfortunately, been propagated by certain political parties and politicians alike.

The SNP views these demands as unnecessary and counter-productive to effective societal cohesion.

During the 2010 General Elections we had David Cameron's Conservative's proposing a 'British Bill of Values' and former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, promoting his 'Britishness Agenda'. While there is little doubt that their motives were to foster community cohesion, the effect of what they are proposing is likely to divide people further, rather than bring them together.

Attempts to categorize people's identity ignore the reality of a multi-ethnic UK and Scotland, where ethnicity is far more mixed and fluid than is often presented. Taking my own example, I was born in Glasgow to parents who came to Scotland from Kenya and Pakistan in their teens. In addition, my fiancée is a white Scot who was born in England. If we have children in the future it will be a difficult task for anyone to categorize their ethnicity or indeed their identity.

In addition, making people choose an identity often leads others to unjustifiably question their loyalty. A countless number of ethnic minorities are

now being asked if they are 'British or Muslim' or 'English or Bangladeshi'; such questions drag us backwards towards the days of Norman Tebbit's infamous cricket test.

The SNP has an effective solution to challenges that are presented by the identity/loyalty question. This solution manifests itself in the brand of civic, inclusive nationalism that has come to define the party. Civic nationalism is probably best explained by the late Bashir Ahmad, Scotland's first BME MSP, who said:

It is not important where we have come from; it's where we are going together.

This forward-thinking notion does not attempt to force people into choosing a particular identity but allows individuals to define themselves, if they feel the need to do so.

In addition, it does not attempt to put forward tests or criteria in order to categorize people on the basis of ethnicity, while at the same time respecting and recognizing the uniqueness of individual communities.

The result has seen many people choose to define themselves as Scottish. Studies indicate that Pakistanis find it easier to identify with being Scottish than English and are more likely to define themselves as Scottish than their White counterparts (Hussain and Miller, 2005).

We are only too familiar with the hostile atmosphere of suspicion between communities that is prevalent in some parts of the UK. Manipulative, and often wholly untrue, stories regarding 'political correctness gone mad' make regular appearances in our day-to-day media. Headlines about hot cross buns and Christmas decoration being replaced by fruit scones and 'festive holiday decorations', so as not to offend other minority religious communities, are now commonplace. In the majority of these cases the supposed offended minority group has never raised a complaint. However, this fact is ignored and the impression of a country pandering to its minorities, while rejecting the oppressed majority, is clearly portrayed.

As this narrative is continually planted in people's minds, having an honest debate about cultural diversity and how to progress towards a more multicultural nation becomes a much more difficult task.

By promoting civic and inclusive nationalism, the SNP is attempting to create a less hostile atmosphere, in which we can accept people's dual and multiple identities, without questioning their loyalty to one or the other.

It is within such an atmosphere that an honest debate can be had between communities about challenges and practices that may harm or undermine our progress towards a fairer and more equal society.

Priorities in the Fight against Racial Inequality

The above discussion is not an attempt to portray a false picture of a completely harmonious Scotland free of racial intolerance. Racism, in its many ugly forms, is still dangerously prevalent in the mindset of too many Scots. Statistics, taken from a recent Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, tell us that over 50 per cent of Scots see Muslims as a cultural threat to their identity. In addition, it is extremely worrying to see the reported rise of anti-Semitism across the UK, which Scotland is not immune to (Community Security Trust, 2009).

Any approach to community cohesion is useless if not accompanied by practical measures and guidelines to tackle inequalities. The SNP's progressive vision of multi-ethnic Scotland can be used to help combat racism and empower disadvantaged groups in society. As well as setting out a visionary approach to nationalism, the SNP firmly believes that tackling race inequalities is a cross-Governmental priority, rather than being the sole focus of one department or Minister.

Five key sectors that the SNP believes should be targeted are:

- Health Inequalities;
- Education and employment gap;
- Engaging with communities;
- Political representation;
- The equality legislative framework.

Tackling race inequalities and combating racism must be a multi-pronged strategy that includes practical measures as well as an attempt to change the culture surrounding how we view diversity and those of a different race.

A Healthier Scotland for All

Scotland has, regrettably, carried the label of being the 'sick man of Europe' for far too long. From heart disease to cancer rates the statistics are truly disturbing. However, there must be recognition that BME communities within Scotland have many distinct health needs that require particular attention. While Scotland has the highest heart disease rate in Europe, it is ethnic minorities that have the worst rates of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) across the country. Among the Scottish Pakistani community the most common cause of death is CHD, with 50 per cent more Pakistanis suffering from it than the average population (NHS Scotland, 2004).

This concerning trend is also clearly visible when examining the prevalence of diabetes in Scotland. Statistics tell us that the incidence of type 2 diabetes amongst Pakistani Scots is eight times higher than in the average Scottish population and three times more prevalent in the Chinese community than the Scottish average (NHS Scotland, 2004).

Resources should be allocated to research the causes behind such health inequalities. Government funded research from NHS Greater Glasgow has already helped in this regards, with their research telling us a lot about the dietary and physical activity habits of certain ethnic minority groups. Our goal must be to use this information in order to create a healthier Scotland for all.

Education and Employment – Bridging the Gap

Taking Black and minority ethnic groups as a whole, statistics show that they generally perform better than their White counterparts in regards to education. Tariff scores are often used as a measure of educational attainment among pupils and can be calculated by assigning a numerical value to a combination of qualification type and qualification grades. The average tariff score for S4 pupils of a white background is 172: this number significantly rises among the BME community with pupils of a Chinese origin performing at the highest level, with an average tariff score of 215.

However, the other side of the same coin shows that the most underachieving pupils also come from the BME communities with Black Caribbean and Black African pupils having an average tariff score of 114, well below the national average (Scottish Government, 2008).

In regards to further education, BME communities are progressing well, with 4.5 per cent of further education awards being received by members of the BME community, despite only making up 2.1 per cent of the overall population (Scottish Funding Council, 2006).

Although generally performing well in education, Scotland's BME communities seem to be faced with a barrier to meaningful employment. While current unemployment in Scotland stands at around 7.6 per cent, figures for the BME community show unemployment rates of up to 15 per cent. The most up-to-date figures on BME unemployment are taken from the Labour Force Survey 2004 and due to the current economic climate the situation is likely to have worsened.

The challenge for any government is to address this gap that exists between ethnic minorities performing well in further education, but struggling to find meaningful employment. We have to look at what the root causes of this may be. Why are employers less likely to take on ethnic minority staff, who may well be better qualified than their White counterparts?

Although equal opportunities is largely reserved to Westminster, a topic I will touch upon later, Scottish Ministers do have the powers to encourage and promote racial equality in the workplace. The SNP firmly believes that publishing statistical data on the diversity of employees, in the Scottish Government, is a welcome step in the right direction. More public bodies should be encouraged to take this step.

Finally, the SNP firmly believes that tackling the culture of racism from an early age, among school pupils, should be a priority. Scotland was famously described as a 'mongrel nation' by Scottish author William McIlvanney. However, this history of racial diversity is rarely discussed in our schools today. By showing young children that diversity is, and previously has been, a cause for celebration in Scotland we can help shape the attitudes of the future and contribute towards tackling racist attitudes in society, which so often stem from the family home.

Engaging with Communities

Mainstream political parties share the common belief that engaging with BME communities will lead to a more cohesive society. However, engagement can mean many things and entail very different ideas and concepts.

Working with established third sector and voluntary BME organizations is important, their experience and knowledge of the local community is vital in assisting political parties, elected officials and the Government on race equality issues. However, there are dangers with only adopting this approach and not seeking a deeper more meaningful dialogue with Black and minority ethnic individuals.

It is convenient for those seeking engagement with the BME community to sectionalize it into individual faith or race based groupings, in the hope of ticking much needed boxes. While it can, at times, be helpful to do this we must ensure our engagement with the BME community goes beyond the Mosque, Synagogue and Temple.

Far too often, minority communities in Scotland are treated as one homogenous group, without the recognition that there is much to learn from the internal diversity that exists within. This internal diversity will undoubtedly become ever more prevalent as generations go on and some traditional values are challenges.

A key tool in achieving our race equality objectives is through the funding of the voluntary sector. Organizations looking to engage with the BME communities and address their needs have helped to foster a greater understanding of the ethnic minority sector in Scotland. Our party has demonstrated its commitment to such organizations with the SNP-led Scottish Government investing £5.5 million into community organizations through its Race, Religion and Refugee Integration Fund.

Continuing on, the Scottish National Party's approach is not to simply support those organizations that are solely focused on their representative group. In line with our belief in civic nationalism, which emphasizes the importance of 'where we are going together', the need to support organizations that are outward looking and seeking to use their unique insight and cultural values to tackle social ills, across the whole of society, is vital.

Public bodies in Scotland also have a role in fostering deeper engagement amongst their organizations, especially in recruitment to senior positions. All too often, interaction with the BME communities has not gone much further than sponsoring the odd event and putting a logo on a leaflet. However, many public bodies, such as the police, are actively recruiting among the BME communities and working with BME individuals to

improve their skills in order to help them progress within their field. The creation of Strathclyde Muslim Police Association, and other similar bodies, is viewed as a positive step in the right direction.

Legislative Framework

The equalities sector has been subject to a massive upheaval over the last few years, with all equality strands being amalgamated under one body – namely the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

This has had some serious implications for the race equality sector in Scotland and issues, such as the disbanding of CRE Scotland which has arguably left a vacuum in the race equality sector, need to be addressed sooner rather than later.

The major systems for the implementation of race equality are reserved to Westminster. Currently, Scottish Ministers only have the ability to promote and encourage racial equality; however beyond this they are limited in what they can do.

It will come as little surprise that the SNP believes that full powers over equality should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament and be the responsibility of Scottish Government Ministers.

As has been demonstrated, our unique demographics and make up of BME communities differs from those in England, this can present problems on many levels where policy and funding will often reflect circumstances which are not relevant in Scotland. Many Scottish organizations will miss out on vital funding opportunities as the funding streams being presented may well reflect race equality priorities in England, and have little relevance to vital work that needs to be carried out in Scotland.

Therefore, our party believes that Scottish Ministers will have a better idea of policies that are more suited to tackle racial inequalities in Scotland, than UK Government Ministers, and therefore full powers over this sector should be the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.

Political Representation

Unfortunately, political participation amongst Scotland's BME communities has been traditionally quite low. The SNP has felt that the diversification of the Scottish Parliament will help to enhance it and only then can it be a truly representative body.

Our efforts to reach out and work with the BME communities resulted in the election of the late Bashir Ahmad, Scotland's first BME MSP, to the Scottish Parliament in 2007. This was an important milestone that was achieved and a vital barrier overcome.

Unfortunately, after the tragic passing of Bashir Ahmad the Parliament is, once again, without a BME representative. We believe this is a wrong that must be righted as soon as possible and are actively encouraging members of the BME communities to get involved in the political process. Our brand of inclusive civic nationalism is continuing to bring members of all communities towards our party. It is a source of great pride for us that we recently launched the 'Bashir Ahmad Memorial Scholarship'. The scholarship will provide the brightest members of the BME community with the opportunity to have an invaluable experience across every layer of the political process. In addition, we hope, it will put them on a steady path to becoming future leaders and influencers of the Scottish political landscape.

In addition to our own scholarship programme, SNP elected representatives are encouraged to work with community organizations, such as Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance, who run their own shadowing schemes to promote political participation among the BME community.

By taking positive proactive steps we can help to create a truly representative parliament.

Conclusion

Over the last few years a heated debate has taken place over whether or not multiculturalism is in its death throes. The Conservatives blame it for creating a culture where political correctness has gone mad; this idea has been accentuated by sensationalist media headlines, which give an impression of politicians and public bodies pandering to minorities and ignoring the majority.

We know this perception to be false; however, it has played its part in creating a hostile atmosphere where distrust and suspicion has grown between communities.

Our belief is that the promotion of inclusive civic nationalism very much facilitates multiculturalism, as described by Lord Parekh, who compiled the Runnymede Trust's report *The Future of Multi Ethnic Britain* (Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain, 2000). He described multiculturalism as a 'realisation that no culture is perfect' but

society will benefit from a 'critical dialogue between cultures', and this can only happen with increased interaction and understanding between communities. It is our strong belief that civic nationalism creates the atmosphere in which this can be done, by not forcing people to choose loyalties to one culture over the other.

Finally, to reiterate, the approach to tackling racial inequalities must be a cross-Governmental priority. However, under the current devolution settlement the Scottish Parliament does not have the appropriate means by which to do this. Scotland's unique challenges, in respect to race equality, require unique solutions. We believe our call for full powers over equality measures will help aid us in the pursuit of a fairer Scotland for all.

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Developing Labour's Race Equality Policy

Johann Lamont

Member of Scottish Parliament

Labour is the party of equality and diversity. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated equally, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, religion or belief.

In 2009, we introduced into the Westminster Parliament the new Equality Bill, a landmark piece of legislation which will streamline, modernize and strengthen Britain's anti-discrimination laws. This law will help Britain's Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities by allowing employers in the public and private sector to use positive action to recruit or promote more ethnic minority candidates to diversify their team, if they want to, and to use public procurement to promote diversity.

We established the Equality and Human Rights Commission as an independent public body responsible for driving equality across government and society.

The Equality Bill also expanded the public sector duty so that people would not be discriminated against on grounds of their religion or belief and would toughen up the tribunal system where employers are found guilty of racial discrimination. And it would allow political parties to use positive action measures to support and select more ethnic minority candidates at local and national level if they want to.

With the advent of the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition there must be real concerns about their apparent plans to dismantle the protections established in the Equality Act.

Before the election in May 2010, the Labour Party broke new ground with the first Black and minority ethnic Members of Parliament, of the government and of the cabinet. Today Labour has 13 Black and Asian MPs. The Tories have just two and the other parties have none.

Labour's Record

Extended protection against discrimination on grounds of religion and belief in employment (Employment Equality Regulations 2003) and when accessing goods, facilities and services (Equality Act 2006).

We established the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2007 to act as a strong independent champion to tackle discrimination and promote equality. The EHRC launched a formal investigation into race in the construction industry and successfully challenged the British National Party to review its policy on its all white membership.

Labour has supported the first Muslim, Sikh and Hindu state faith schools in England and initiatives like the Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme. In primary schools the Black Children's Achievement Programme has helped narrow the achievement gap between Black and minority ethnic pupils and the national average.

Labour put race equality at the core of primary care services through the 'Race for Health' programme and helped tackle issues such as diabetes, strokes, heart disease and cervical screening within minority ethnic communities.

We introduced the Human Rights Act in 1998, legislated for aggravated sentences for racially motivated crimes (in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) and strengthened and broadened the definition to include assaults and threatening behaviour where there is evidence of religious hostility in connection with the offences in the Crime and Disorder Act 2008. Labour also legislated for aggravated sentences for racially motivated crimes (in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) and strengthened and broadened the definition to include assaults and threatening behaviour.

The Race Equality Duty was introduced in 2000 and applies to over 43,000 public bodies, improving the diversity of their workforce and the services they provide.

We also launched the BAME Women Councillors Taskforce in May 2008 to take practical action to increase the numbers of ethnic minority women councillors.

Labour's Record in Scotland

From the outset of devolution, the Labour-led Scottish Executive committed itself to mainstreaming equality and ministerial portfolios were created to formalize approaches to tackling inequalities. This work was supported by an Equality Unit, set up in 1999.

As part of the devolution settlement, the Scotland Act 1998 reserves the power to legislate on equal opportunities to Westminster and the UK Parliament.

However, the promotion and encouragement of equal opportunities is devolved to the Scottish Parliament, placing duties on Scottish and cross-border public authorities to observe equal opportunities requirements.

In November 2000, the Labour-led Scottish Executive launched an extensive five year equality strategy, 'Working Together for Equality', aided by the Executive's Diversity Working Group.

This strategy set out five main drivers towards the Executive's diversity policy: being the right thing to do, with all Executive staff entitled to respect; putting the promotion of equality at the heart of policy-making; Civil Service Reform, committed to representing and being representative of all walks of society; the law, which demands the Executive not to discriminate; and the business case, leading to the attraction and retention of talent from minority groups.

Five main objectives were also identified: to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues ensuring all staff understand what equality of opportunity and valuing diversity mean; to ensure leaders demonstrate commitment to equal opportunities; to equip and support managers to promote and be accountable for equal opportunities; to ensure all staff enjoy equality of opportunity; and to secure an increase in people from under-represented groups joining the Scottish Executive.

The race equality strategy 'Working Together for Race Equality', launched in 2002, also set out practical steps to promote race equality and eliminate racism through embracing the

commitments set out in the Scotland Act to mainstream equality in policy making from how it is made to the objectives of those policies. This led to the publishing of the Race Equality Scheme, assessment of existing policies and functions, wide and diverse consultation, monitoring processes and outcomes, publishing these findings and providing training.

The outcomes of this strategy were consistently monitored and a summary of progress in 2004 followed up this monitoring, going on to inform the refreshing of the 'Working Together for Race Equality' strategy published in 2005.

The anti-racism campaign One Scotland was also launched by the Labour-led Scottish Executive in 2002 under the banner, 'One Scotland; Many Cultures'. This aimed to raise awareness of racism among the general public, highlight its negative impact and promote the valuable contributions that other cultures have made and continue to make to Scottish society.

Before we left office in 2007, we had in place a monitoring review of action taken and proposals for the future.

As Scottish Labour prepares for the Scottish Parliament elections next year, we are determined to build on our record of putting equality at the heart of government, working for a fairer country where there is no place for racism and putting in place measures which translate the rhetoric of equality into practical measures which make a difference. The equality legislation provides a framework for action but this must be tested, maintained and reviewed at every level of government.

Labour is determined that proper equality impact assessments of budget decisions are taken and we have long been pressing for local government single outcome agreements to be equality impact assessed.

Critically, as Scottish Labour prepares its programme for government, we recognize the crucial role of working with BME communities, with anti-racist organizations and campaigning groups to ensure that our priorities are shaped by their experience, concerns and solutions.

Response

Professor Kay Hampton Glasgow Caledonian University

In responding to the four main parties' position on race equality in Scotland, it is necessary to understand the political context underpinning them. Unlike elsewhere in the UK, until recently, Scottish politics rarely engaged with race issues. It was not until the turn of the 21st century that serious political engagement with race began in Scotland. Racial inequality was initially viewed as an 'English' phenomenon and local awareness of rights to racial equality was minimal (Hampton, 2001). Following a long period of denial, political interest in race equality grew post-devolution (Scottish Executive, 2000a; Hampton, 2008a, 2008b). Interestingly, this move co-incident with the Amendment of the Race Relations Act (RRAA, 2000) which placed a legal requirement on Government to develop a race equality strategy (CRE, 2001).¹

Scottish interventions on race equality currently reflect a mixture of local 'special' projects, informed by ad hoc 'needs driven' contract research and British legislation on race (Scottish Executive, 2000a, 2000b; Hampton, 2001). The effect of these influences are clearly reflected in papers presented by the four main parties. These contributions suggest that the sustained, consistent progress of race equality in Scotland remains vulnerable. Often dismissed as a politically reserved matter, race equality is often invisible in Scottish mainstream political agendas and election manifestos, despite widespread pronouncement about commitment to equality and fairness.

Post 2000, while acknowledging the centrality of equality and fairness in the Scotland Act (1998), debates on race equality in Scotland continue to be led (or constrained) by UK equality legislations. The sometimes over-exaggeration of the constraints of the devolved arrangements seriously hampers race equality progress in Scotland, as at times too much attention is paid to the tensions between reserved and devolved powers at the expense of core concerns around lived experiences. In effect, political action in Scotland tends to be strictly driven by the UK legal framework rather than by the principles enshrined in the Scottish Constitution or moral and social imperatives.

Reviewed collectively, it is apparent that there are more similarities in the positions of the four main parties than there are differences. The diverse range of issues covered by each party is interesting as they reflect several elements of the previous Labour Government's race equality strategies (Scottish Executive, 2000a). In effect, while the rhetoric has changed, the fundamental approach to race equality in Scotland has not altered significantly over the last ten years.

Despite party political differences, political thinking on race equality in Scotland continues to be viewed as a marginal 'social problem' (by at least three of the four parties) rather than a mainstream political or structural one. In the case of Labour, although the important role of governments in delivering race equality is acknowledged, the contextual difference in racial experiences (in Scotland and the rest of the UK) is not fully appreciated. Indeed, collectively, many of the issues covered by the parties represent areas that are more generally associated with social change and aspects of globalization rather than with race equality per se. In particular, the issue of locality and the implications of major social changes on race equality in local contexts are not fully explored by any party. Indeed, policies and strategies offered by the parties are less than explicit about how racial inequalities, in its diverse and unique forms, will be improved. In particular, little mention is made by any party of balancing collective and individual rights with some initiatives being in danger of facing accusations of 'special treatment' or 'tokensim'.

Three parties appear to endorse multiculturalism, claim to be proud of Scottish diversity and decry any form of racism. Yet disappointingly, their conception of racism remains ethnocentric with 'ethnic minority groups' being problematized. The parties generally attempt to address individual areas of concern rather than seek major structural and cultural change. Moreover, all parties fall foul of notions of Black-White dualism (us and them), perceiving racial inequality and racism as sole concerns of small colour-coded groups or foreign ethnic minorities (so-called BME). None, for example, mention major concerns relating to 'White' on 'White' racism in the form of sectarianism in Glasgow, anti-English sentiments in the north or negative experiences of Gypsy-Travellers across Scotland.

The SNP...

The SNP's position is overtly tartan, making a strong case for creating an integrated nation underpinned by a national collective sense of Scottishness (rather than Britishness). While they propose interesting notions of identity, integration and nation building, their ideologies are nevertheless exclusive and subtly excluding. Notwithstanding this, the SNP appear positive about increasing immigration to Scotland and there is evidence to suggest that they are actively encouraging it (Scottish Government, 2008). Their ideas on integration are similarly laudable in principle, as they see integration as a two-way process with adjustments to be made all round rather than placing pressure solely on incomers to change their cultural ways and assimilate. In this regard, they quite rightly argue that 'questioning the people's loyalty based on identity' and placing the 'burden of responsibility, for effective community cohesion, is unfairly weighted upon the shoulders of ethnic minorities' is unacceptable.

However, the SNP's brand of civic, inclusive nationalism, as described here is questionable as inclusivity appears to stop at the borders of Scotland. The inherent value of their proposed approach to building solid, safe and successful societies in a rapidly globalizing context is somewhat lost in that the SNP paradoxically promotes a 'Scottish only' version of multiculturalism. This version of inclusion builds on a type of nationalism, which calls for the acknowledgement of diverse identities within a Scotland brand yet at the same time remains selective about the grounds for inclusion. Despite their claim that ethnicity is far more mixed and fluid, their 'brand' does not, for example, appear to allow for the choice of being 'British'—plus or 'Irish'—plus in Scotland.

On structural inequalities, the SNP assessment of the present conditions in relation to trends in education, health, employment and political representation is valid yet the philosophical approach taken here is questionable. The positive commitment made by the SNP government in the Race Equality Statement (2008) is not necessarily reflected in practice. More specifically, the statistics relating to inequalities are not analysed in a consistent manner. At times, reference is made to a collective interest group (so-called BME), and at others, to 'Asians', 'Chinese' or 'Muslims'. Thus the benchmark for measuring progress is unclear. Are comparisons to be made with an undefined, homogeneous 'White' majority despite

the presence of a significant number of different ethnicities within this majority group?²

Moreover the SNP proposes a multi-pronged strategy (dual in reality): 'practical measures as well as an attempt to change culture surrounding how we view diversity and those of a different race'. The latter if not fully inclusive, will be problematic and the question arises whether or not the proposed dialogues will include sensitive issues surrounding position and treatment of other UK nationals in Scotland. Notwithstanding this, the SNP are more rounded in their approach in that consideration is given to both structural inequalities and cultural (social) experiences of discrimination, underlined by an intention to achieve fairness and justice for all.

Finally, it is a regrettable that the substantive concerns relating to political representation (Scottish Parliament) and legislation on race equality is discussed here in a party political manner. The latter part of the document is especially negative as it implies that little more can be done by the SNP in Scotland to address race inequality, given the reserved status of equality legislation. The primary explanation given is that of limited powers relating to an issue reserved to Westminster. On the contrary, while accepting that the challenges facing Scotland are unique to Scotland, this does not necessarily mean that the Scottish Government or Parliament cannot progress this agenda with the powers they already possess (Scotland Act, 1998 and Scottish Human Rights Commission Act, 2004).

The Scottish Parliament recently (2008) established the Scottish Human Rights Commission and given its powers, the Scottish Parliament and government can address race inequalities, outwith the Equality Act (2006) should it desire. In particular, the rights based approach (which is underpinned by principles of participation, inclusion and negotiation) is ideal for achieving the SNP's objective to change the climate within which dialogue around sensitive issues like race inequalities can be conducted (Hampton 2008a). Moreover, the establishment of two cross-party groups³ by the Scottish Parliament provides an excellent forum for progressing race equality in Scotland. Finally, The Equality Act (2006), while setting minimum standards of good practice, does not prevent any organization, agency or government from taking additional, progressive actions to address race equality.

The Liberal Democrats...

Interestingly, Robert Brown MSP uses the previous Labour Government's strapline (One Scotland, Many Cultures) in the title of his contribution yet sits his party's position on race within the context of the UK legislative framework (Equality Act) and UK institutions (EHRC). Much of what Brown MSP says appears appealing at first glance. Steeped in liberal tradition, the paper is generously dotted with sentiments of 'fair, free and open society' and 'liberty and equality'. In spite of this, a number of statements made throughout the paper appear rhetorical and tokenistic. The Minister lists six challenges (and adds two more: people trafficking and ID cards!), which makes the contribution slightly confusing.

Despite the endless list of the party's achievements since 1976⁴ and claiming credit for a number of successful interventions in relation to race equality in Scotland, this contribution is nevertheless shallow. Still, the paper is rooted in strong traditional, liberal principles and is clearly value driven. Brown MSP makes several interesting observations on how groups in Scotland can be affected by inequalities in the public sector, suggesting, in this regard, a more sustained and effective enforcement of the Race Duty (I assume the amended one in the new Equality Act).

Beyond that much of his contribution focuses on immigration, immigrants and asylum despite arguing that 'whilst issues of immigration and asylum are important in their own right, they should no longer be central to discussions on race'. For example, in his discussion of the potential for exploiting talents of all communities, he speaks mainly of third generation immigrants and potential immigrants from India and China. For him the challenge here lies in immigrants' inability to speak English – a matter that is highly sensitive in Scotland yet is dismissed in a somewhat glib manner here. Similarly, in what is an otherwise principled discussion on immigration and asylum, the reference made to people trafficking implies an unnecessary association between trafficking and race equality.

The most problematic part of Brown's paper is his approach to 'ethnic communities and social policy'. Instead of exploring ways in which the mainstream might adjust to accommodate issues of access and equality, Brown seems to support the idea of specialized projects for groups outside the mainstream. The inherent danger of this approach in a small nation like

Scotland is that it disconnects certain groups from the mainstream, creating tangible situations of isolation and marginalization. Moreover, this approach does little to address deeply rooted social concerns pertaining to race and racialized inequality nor does it necessarily advance wider social policies on race in sustainable ways. Rather than encouraging interaction between ethnically defined groups, this approach serves to widen the divide between and within minority groups and mainstream majority groups (Hampton, 2001). This approach (despite being somewhat dated) is clearly influenced by UK-wide practices and previous Scottish administrations that favoured a two-strand approach (mainstream plus) to social policies on race (Scottish Executive, 2000a).

The Conservatives...

McGrigor's contribution is confusing and gives the impression, in parts, of being a personal opinion rather than the position of a political party. Having said that, the paper does reflect certain questionable ideologies from previous Conservative policies. McGrigor starts on a positive note by indicating that the Conservative Party is 'vehemently opposed to racism' and that they are willing to participate in any initiatives that will help eradicate any forms of racism. Beyond that, there is little evidence to illustrate that the party has any coherent strategy on race equality for Scotland. Moreover, McGrigor gives no clear indication of the party's principled position on race or the approach they will take to address issues of racial inequality should they be in power.

The initial part of the paper centres on convincing the reader of the party's commitment to race equality and while this commitment is not questioned, his personal testimony appears at odds in a paper of this kind. It is an uncomfortable paper to read as it feels defensive, yet at the same time makes reference to highly sensitive and contemporary issues in ways that are not fully supported by sound evidence. Starting with Islamophobia, McGrigor pledges to be tough on 'anti-Muslim hatred' and its causes. While McGrigor rightly identifies that Islamophobia 'has the potential to risk undermining racial equality' and acknowledges that extremism is a feature of a small minority, he nevertheless associates the growth of radicalization with time spent in prisons. He provides little reliable evidence to support this contention except to say that that it is a serious problem.

Moving on to integration, McGrigor claims that

much still needs to be done to tackle the 'problem of growing cultural separatism – based on religious separatism'. Yet again, he provides nothing substantive by way of evidence to support this contention except to say Scotland and UK have a commendable record in being tolerant (sic!). Interestingly, while McGrigor discusses, at length, the need for education, a greater understanding of Islam and the need for dialogue with the Muslim community as potential solutions, no mention is made of similar sectarian issues and religious hatred between and amongst, other groups in Scotland.

Finally, if there is any doubt that McGrigor incorrectly conflates race and racism with culture and ethnicity, then his lengthy discussion on forced marriages confirms this. While his stance on the issue is commendable, it is unclear why this issue is even included in this context. Similarly, while the detention of children at Dungaval is of great significance in its own right, its mention in the context of this document is curious.

Labour....

Labour's contribution opens with a UK-wide perspective on past achievements. Indeed, the references made to a number of initiatives in the paper have little direct relevance for race equality in Scotland. (Reference is made to representation at Westminster Parliament, Faith Schools, Black Children's Achievement Awards, Race for Health.) As a result, many in Scotland, who read this paper will question the inclusion of such information as it is unlikely to impact on the lives of people in Scotland given the devolved responsibilities in these areas. The Labour document also lists a series of legislative developments around the turn of the century, which gives the impression of their strategy being fundamentally driven by legislation and nothing else. Similarly, progress on race equality appears to be measured by the number of Equality Acts passed rather than by the impact of these developments on experience in Scotland. Similarly, a great deal of attention is paid to the emerging Equality Bill (2006) and the establishment of the EHRC but little is said about how these might operate in Scotland (via EHRC Scotland and the presence of the Scottish Human Rights Commission).

The opportunity to evaluate the impact of new legal arrangements on racial inequalities since the demise of the CRE is lost as is the possible added value of the new arrangements. Legislation and enforcement is viewed by Labour as an end in

itself rather than a means to an end (race equality). This is compounded by the observation that the paper makes no reference to the daily concerns and experiences of people in Scotland and leaves a false impression that local experience, population diversity; patterns of immigration and social circumstances are the same across the UK.

The discussion pertaining to Labour's record in Scotland centres on the mainstreaming approach adopted by the then government, post-2000, which in principle is positive. Yet much of what is mentioned as Labour's contribution is not additional to the legal requirements enshrined in the RRAA (2000). The Act requires all public bodies, including the Scottish Government, to have in place a well-researched, robust Race Equality Scheme, the conduct of Impact Assessments and monitoring of progress. While fully supportive of a mainstream coherent approach to achieving equality and justice, it is concerning to note that little mention is made of how the new Equality Act (2006) will be applied in practice (in Scotland). Additionally, the contribution offers no assurances regarding the status of previous successful initiatives and the fear of dilution that some express in relation the introduction of a generic equality approach.

Curiously, limited attention is paid here to one of Labour's more successful interventions – the national anti-racism campaign ('One Scotland, Many Cultures'). There is no evidence to suggest that there are plans to develop this further nor is there any mention of their proposed national strategy on race while in Government (Hampton, 2008c). Such omissions suggest that previous successful interventions are likely to be abandoned should Labour succeed in the next election.

In Sum...

The contributions made by the parties reveal an overall consensus that race equality is unacceptable. However, understandings of race and the role of government in addressing racial inequality remain patchy and incoherent. By and large, it is clear that the existing UK legal framework is the main impetus for responding to race inequalities in Scotland. The emerging strategies and policies on race equality in Scotland therefore appears to be less of a moral and social imperative, giving the impression that had there been no legal requirement to respond to race equality, action in this area would not be a priority.

From a social justice perspective, the responses received are concerning. Race equality still appears to be viewed as an unnecessary intrusion in the routine activities of government and agencies. Despite good intentions to address race equality as a mainstream issue, it is still seen as a sole concern of minority groups. More generally, political understandings of ethnicity and race equality tend to be shaped by legislation rather than academic research. There is therefore a tendency by all parties to view race equality through dated colour-coded lens. This is consequently reflected in political discourses and subsequent social policies. Incoherent conceptual understandings of ethnic and racial issues strongly influence the ways in which the parties develop political positions on race equality, in Scotland. By viewing racial inequality as a 'social problem' rather than a structural-political one, fundamental concerns around intra-cultural conflicts and the complexity of racial inequality across the Scottish nation are missed in Scottish political strategies

Notes

1. RRAA 2000 (via Scottish Parliament) places a duty on Scottish Bodies and the Government to eradicate racism and promote good race relations.
2. Many of whom are recent immigrants from Eastern and Western European countries.
3. Cross-party Group on Race Equality and Cross-party Group on Human Rights.
4. Reference to their role in the introduction of the Race Relations Act in 1976.

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Response – Beyond the Tartan: Nurturing the Diversity of Diversity

Ephraim Borowski Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

One of the first decisions of the devolved Scottish administration in 1999 was to appoint a Communities Minister (later restyled Minister for Social Justice), who in turn set up the Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) with a wide remit to promote community cohesion and integration. Its report, *Making it Real, A Race Equality Strategy for Scotland*, was published in October 2001, and covered a variety of areas – education, health, housing, local government, enterprise, and the voluntary sector, as well as general considerations about communication and consultation with minority communities and equalities groups. Coinciding as it did with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, this in essence set forth a work plan for the Scottish Executive, to which it responded formally the following year with *Committing to Race Equality*, with a subsequent review in 2004,¹ as well as informing the drafting and implementation of their Race Equality Scheme.

Perhaps the most significant public outcome of this process was the establishment of the One Scotland, Many Cultures campaign, with widely disseminated advertising, both in the media and on roadside hoardings. Johann Lamont, in her contribution to this discussion, describes the background of this campaign in some detail, and Robert Brown writes of the ‘resonance and excitement’ of this slogan. Others accused it of being smug, even to the point of self-deception, but I believe the opposite to be true: if we were already a united but diverse society, there would be no need for the campaign. It expresses an aspiration precisely because it is not yet the reality, and it is to the credit of Scottish political and civic society that it had full cross-party support, and that with some rebranding² and changes of emphasis, it still continues today.

Perhaps it was the very fact that this initiative sprang from and coincided with the establishment of an entirely new political order in Scotland, with institutions that, if not actually entirely autonomous, at least felt somehow emancipated, that gave us the impression of starting with a clean slate. And perhaps that in turn is why community relations

policies have developed very differently in Scotland from England, and indeed elsewhere in Europe.

I simply do not recognize the ‘multiculturalism’ that is often attacked for creating physical or psychological ghettos, the multiculturalism that Angela Merkel has recently declared to have failed in Germany. But as Jamie McGrigor acknowledges in his contribution, ‘cultural separatism’ is a problem to be solved. Separate but equal is, to put it rather inelegantly, not multi-anything! It’s not for nothing these isolated and ghettoized minorities have come to be known as silos, compostors of alienation and resentment.

Perhaps we would be better adopting the rather self-congratulatory self-image of the United States as a ‘melting pot’ (at the same time as, with some cognitive dissonance, the so-called Tea Parties promote ever more isolationism and xenophobia)? However, we need to beware of signing up to slogans without looking behind them at what they mean, and that is an image that fills me with horror: in a melting pot all diversity is dissolved; pattern becomes sludge; everything becomes the same, as all difference is stirred away.

As I suggested in my Baillie Lecture in 2006,³ there is a distinctively Scottish middle way:

the tartan, with its intersecting pattern, each thread visible as itself against the background, but all holding together, not despite their intersections, but because of those intersections. A tartan has different colours, different directions, but combining to form a single pattern. A cloth of parallel threads is no cloth; it readily falls apart; it is divergence, difference, even disagreement, that holds society together.

... the point is not for one colour or thread to overwhelm the others, but for all to coexist for the sake of a coherent whole. That is where strength lies – not in uniformity, but in pattern, which is to say the coexistence of difference. I see this Scotland of many cultures as a society in which each community makes a valuable contribution to the whole, while still retaining its own unique identity. It is our diverse identities that are the weave that holds the fabric of Scotland together.

I still believe this to be so, and even although I claim no copyright over the metaphor, I have been gratified by how often politicians and equality activists have picked up the theme. However, it does concern me that this cannot be the whole story. We need, as a society, not merely to recognize and embrace diversity, but the diversity of diversity.

Take, for example, the Grundnorm, the fundamental law, of the new Scotland, the Scotland Act 1998. We pride ourselves on the way it enshrined human rights and equal opportunities in Scots Law before the Human Rights Act, and yet I would argue that the definition of 'equal opportunities' in Schedule V⁴ is itself discriminatory!

That definition famously reads:

... the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

I have set out the list of potentially discriminatory characteristics, or as we now say, 'strands') to show graphically how some are subordinated to others. Of course I am not objecting simply to the order in which they appear – any list has to be in some order – but it is the grammar that signals that some equalities are more equal than others. Here, religion is just a matter of opinion, and so just a 'personal attribute', and so secondary to the main grounds of discrimination, and so no more worthy of protection than other opinions. Unfortunately this is no mere person of straw – the courts have already made clear that they rank sexual orientation above religion,⁵ and indeed are prepared to give more protection to vegetarianism⁶! I trust we could agree that, as a matter of policy, religious diversity is as worthy of protection as racial diversity. To quote the striking phrase of John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, commenting on a number of recent similar *causes celebres*,⁷ 'Asking someone to leave their belief in God at the door of their workplace is [like] asking someone to remove their skin colour before coming into the office'.

Nor is it only the diversity of the diversity strands that needs attention. I have a particular beef about

people who – I hope unthinkingly – talk about 'the minority community' in the singular. This is patently nonsense: it should be obvious – even to the unthinking! – that an elderly Chinese woman who speaks only Mandarin has no more in common with a third-generation British teenager of Pakistani origin than she has with the indigenous community. It is difficult to think of even one public service which is equally appropriate for both, and that remains true even if they are both described as Asian, or, as was once so fashionable, 'black'. As Humza Yousaf says, 'Far too often, minority communities in Scotland are treated as one homogenous group, without the recognition that there is much to learn from the internal diversity that exists within'.

Robert Brown rightly remarks that 'it is vital to have information on the real situation and to be able to assess the impact of policies on racial equality'. Whatever purpose data-collection serves, it is not served by concealing difference rather than making it evident. What purpose did it serve to refer to the Notting Hill Carnival murders as 'black on black violence' – other than to stigmatize everyone that the pundits had consigned to that box? How did it assist understanding of any aspect of people's lives to ignore every personal characteristic other than pigmentation? And indeed do those so described even have a common skin colour? The common reply in some circles is that 'black' is a political, not a colour term, but how can it advance the interests of those who suffer discrimination and detriment by describing them in terms that alienate them further?

This is, of course, a particular concern about the forthcoming 2011 census, which will be the baseline for all manner of monitoring for the next ten years. But if we, as a society, are properly concerned about the under-representation of certain communities in the labour force, or under-achievement in education, or reduced life expectancy, how can it help our understanding of the underlying causes of these detriments if those who experience them are aggregated with the very people with whom it would be instructive to compare them. We learned from the 1991 census not only that the term 'Indian subcontinent' was rejected by many respondents as insulting, but that it obscured the differences that it should have exposed. Yet we seem to have learned neither lesson, and persist in using what the Registrar General himself called an 'irrational' mix of geography, geopolitics, and colour (i.e. skin pigmentation) in the vain hope of capturing 'ethnicity'. As a first step to treating our neighbours

as we would wish to be treated ourselves, surely the least we can do – as REAF recognized in the principles it set out in its report – is the courtesy of allowing them to describe themselves in terms with which they can identify!

It is interesting to see a new cross-border consensus developing. Humza Yousaf commends ‘not attempt[ing] to force people into choosing a particular identity but allows individuals to define themselves, if they feel the need to do so’, and says that ‘attempts to categorize people’s identity ignore the reality of a multi-ethnic UK and Scotland, where ethnicity is far more mixed and fluid than is often presented’. Just this week, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, made much the same point: ‘I want to move away from the identity politics of the past – where government thought it knew all about you because you ticked a box on a form or fitted into a certain category – and instead start to recognize that we are a nation of 62 million individuals’.⁸ However, we need to be cautious about basing policy on ideology rather than research: the fact that one set of tick-boxes was unfit for purpose does not mean we should abandon the enterprise. Categorization does not make stereotyping inevitable; on the contrary, it is essential if we are to obtain meaningful data and recognise patterns – how else, for example, could we discover risk factors for disease? – so we have to beware an individualism that even more conceals discrimination and prejudice.

There are additional twists to this issue because of the use of ‘mixed’ as an ethnic category. Once again it is obvious that the term conceals more diversity than it can reveal, to say nothing of its echo of the not quite forgotten vocabulary of the racial pseudo-science that gave us Hitler and Apartheid. Yet, alongside this homogenization, we have the hybrid hyphenated categories such as ‘Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British’. Just this month, the news broke that academics had discovered the astonishing fact that this terminology ‘carried connotations of offensive expressions previously deemed acceptable, such as “half-caste” and “mulatto”’, and that ‘it may be wrong to put all mixed-race people into one group’.⁹ Instead of clear and unambiguous questions, we have pre-selected for us ever more complex, confusing, alienating, and irrational answers. It can hardly be a surprise that the resulting data are no more reliable than the questions are intelligible!

This will matter perhaps more than ever in 2011 because ‘localism’ is the political flavour of the year.

There are many worthy reasons for devolving policy-making to the local level, such as responsiveness to local democratic pressures, or even recognizing that the urban–rural divide is yet another diversity issue that requires attention. However, there are some policy areas where that is not possible, and diversity is one such. In many parts of, principally rural, Scotland, the total minority population is a fraction of one per cent, and diverse, distinct, individual minorities barely detectable. Add to that how the census questions inhibit correct identification, and individual minorities may be literally invisible.¹⁰ Yet the smaller and more isolated these groups are, the more vulnerable they are. This is not a matter just of central direction to ensure local delivery,¹¹ but is inherent in the nature of the need that requires to be met: the only way to support isolated individuals is to connect them – but that can only be across boundaries, perhaps with a central network, and that will clearly never be a priority – or even a candidate – for any individual authority’s funds.

If we want our many cultures to flourish in our one Scotland, they therefore have to be nurtured – and protected – from the centre. We have come far in the last ten years though not yet far enough. Only this month, in a ground-breaking case, a man was convicted in Edinburgh Sheriff Court for posting inflammatory antisemitic comments on the *Scotsman* website.¹² The determination of the police and Crown Office to pursue this case to its conclusion, and the unequivocal condemnation by the Sheriff, demonstrate that the law will not tolerate the abuse of freedom of speech to spread hatred. The recognition by ACPOS that hate crime does not just affect the victim, but by its nature the entire group against which it is directed,¹³ it a sign that society is starting, as Johann Lamont put it, to ‘translate the rhetoric of equality into practical measures’.

‘Engagement, as Jamie McGrigor says, ‘is one of the key issues’. Politicians of all stripes have to ‘stand ready to work with all interested stakeholders to act on concerns that exist in our ethnic minority communities, and... to hear their views, worries and aspirations’. It is to our credit that there is cross-party commitment, as proposed by REAF ten years ago, to encouraging communities to speak for themselves, empowering isolated and disadvantaged groups, removing the gatekeepers who purport to speak for them, but in fact isolate them further, direct targeting of resources at need rather than vested interests, and mainstreaming of equality into all areas of policy. The near absence of the far right from the Scottish political landscape

is a welcome indicator that we must be getting things largely right, but there are disturbing signs, as Bertold Brecht warned, that the bitch that bore them is in heat again. So if we want a truly fairer, safer, healthier, smarter, stronger, more cohesive and welcoming Scotland, this is no time to let up.

Notes

1. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47251/0028665.pdf>

2. Now known as 'Scotland Against Racism' http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/onescotland/CCC_FirstPage.jsp

3. http://www.scojec.org/news/2006/06xi_baillie/baillie.pdf

4. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/46/schedule/5>

5. For example, in the leading case of London Borough of Islington -v- Ladele, (Islington LBC v Ladele [2009] EWCA Civ 1357) the President of the Employment Appeal Tribunals, Mr Justice Elias, said, 'The right to manifest religious belief must give way to the right of same-sex partners to have their partnership recognized by law'. Could he have said 'The right of same-sex partners to have their partnership recognized by law must give way to the right to manifest religious belief'?

6. Grainger plc and ors v Nicholson, EAT 0219/07. *IDS Employment Law Brief* reports that 'the EAT emphasized the wide range of beliefs that potentially qualify as philosophical beliefs, including vegetarianism and beliefs based on political philosophies and science'. (*IDS Brief* 892, January 2010)

7. In particular, Eweida v British Airways plc [2010] EWCA Civ 80. See <http://www.archbishopofyork.org/2174>

8. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/speeches/equality-vision>, 17 Nov 2010.

9. 'Britain is "example to world" of how to integrate mixed-race communities', *Times*, 8 November 2010, citing a report by the University of Kent for the Office of National Statistics.

10. Minority faith communities are even more at risk of vanishing from the data, and so from public policy, not only because the question is voluntary and so many will not answer it, but because the Scottish census asks 'What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?', so that where there is no formal body to belong to, the answer is likely to be 'none'. In England and Wales the question is simply 'What is your religion?'

11. The Scottish Government has just published *Equality Analysis in the Budget and Spending Review 2011 Onwards: A Report by the Equality and Budget Advisory Group (EBAG)*. See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/331608/0107910.pdf>, which includes:

36. *The opportunities presented by the new relationship between central and local government are not always recognised by communities and stakeholders.... It is understandable that some organisations are calling for a return to ring-fencing as a way of protecting services to 'vulnerable' groups at a time when reform of services may fundamentally change the relationships between providers and users. We appreciate the Scottish Government's view that local government is best placed to understand the needs of their communities and that support may be directed accordingly. However, communities need assurance that their needs will be considered.*

This simply misses the point. It is not a matter of doing localization better in order to provide reassurance, but that local government can never be best placed to understand the needs of small communities and isolated individuals that by their nature are invisible to them. They need all the more support to feel safer and better integrated, and that can only be delivered on a national basis.

12. See http://www.scojec.org/news/2010/10xi_sandia.html

13. 'It has also been shown that any single hate crime can potentially have multiple victims... fear of hate crime escalates dramatically in those who share with an immediate victim, the same group identity that has made a victim a target.' See http://www.acpos.police.uk/Documents/Policies/ED_ACPOS_HateCrimeManual_Sept2010.pdf, quoting Herek, G.M., Cogan, J. and Gillis, R.J. (2002) 'Victim Experiences in Hate Crimes based on Sexual Orientation', *Journal of Social Issues* 58(2): 319-339.

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Runnymede Platform

Serious Minds on Race Equality

Runnymede Platform aims to create a space in which senior political figures can discuss issues in race equality, with critical comment from the academic community.

About the Authors

Ephraim Borowski is Director of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Robert Brown is a Liberal Democrat Member of the Scottish Parliament.

Kay Hampton is Professor in Communities and Race Relations, Glasgow Caledonian University.

Johann Lamont is a Labour Member of the Scottish Parliament.

Sir Jamie McGrigor is Highlands & Islands Conservative MSP and Scottish Conservative Communities Spokesman.

Humza Yousaf is a Scottish National Party Policy Officer and SNP Candidate for Glasgow.

Runnymede

7 Plough Yard, London, EC2A 3LP

T 020 7377 9222 **F** 020 7377 6622

E info@runnymedetrust.org

Registered in England 3409935

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www.runnymedetrust.org

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