

## The Authors

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## Introduction

Of all the cities in the UK, Leicester is the most suitable city to initiate a study of this kind. It has been predicted that by the time of the next census (2011) Leicester will become the first city in the UK where its migrant minority will become the majority and the indigenous English population will become the minority.<sup>1</sup> This prediction caught the attention of national and international media. *The Times* reported:<sup>2</sup>

Leicester is expected to become the first city in the UK with a non-white majority population in as little as ten years... by 2011 the white population will be in the minority for the first time... the City Council disclosed that the ethnic minorities now account for about half the city's school children... city and community leaders said that the changes in Leicester's ethnic make-up had had a profound and positive effect on the community.

This led journalists from the USA and all over Europe to descend on Leicester to ask the question: 'how does Leicester manage its cultural diversity?'<sup>3</sup>

The question posed by the foreign journalists was not easy to answer. Cultural diversity is a buzzword of current socio-political thought in the UK. It is a fashionable term used instead of multiculturalism. Both are descriptive terms relating to the existence of several cultures in a

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<sup>1</sup> The migrant majority referred to relates to the Asian community. We recognise the use of the terms migrant / indigenous is problematic, especially when many Asians and African Caribbean are born in the UK.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Wright, 'Leicester to be the first city with ethnic majority', *The Times*, 8 December 2000, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *New York Times*, 8 February 2001.

society. There is diversity among cultures and there are multiple cultures in a society. The important concern of cultural specialists is how they can be managed. Clearly, such cultural management is far too important to be left to chance. Often, policy-makers may believe that they have succeeded in managing diversity, when they have succeeded only in producing attractive words on glossy brochures.

There is no doubt that Leicester does enjoy good community relations, but this cannot be considered a sufficient justification for past policies of managing cultural diversity. The management of cultural diversity across a city is an ongoing process, where the players change, and the rules of the game may change as well. So far Leicester has been lucky with good elected leaders in the local government and non-elected leaders in other institutions in the city. But cultural diversity can throw up a number of problems. We were investigating some of these difficulties.

The survey undertaken by SICUL focused on the views and attitudes towards cultures of some segments of the city's general population. The principal question asked was: 'Leicester may be a multicultural city, but is it culturally integrated at the grassroots level?' The rioting in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford occurred at the grass roots level where cultural diversity had not led to harmony, but hostility. Mixed with racism, it became a time bomb waiting to explode.

The idea of multiculturalism has dominated the minds of UK leaders for the past half a century. Migrants from many Third World countries arrived in the UK to satisfy the

requirements for labour caused by manpower shortages following World War II. However, many assumptions of multiculturalism failed to catch the attention of desperate policy makers. While many cultures had existed in the UK before World War II, the dominant culture was that belonging to the indigenous community. In other words, it could be said that to a considerable degree monoculturalism predominated in the UK. Other cultures assimilated into it and therefore cultural problems did not emerge to the surface. But as more and more immigrants started arriving, the predominant culture (or monoculturalism) was gradually undermined by an increasing diversity of cultures. These cultures were not of European origin and their value systems and religions were totally different. It was assumed that multiculturalism was an agreed outcome. It was not. The UK had never 'decided' to become a multicultural society. Instead, the policy was one of drift. Policy-makers, both at the national and local levels, were forced, after the event, to accept such social changes as had occurred. It is not surprising that in the earlier decades of the immigration process, when such diverse cultures began to arrive and settle in the UK, concerns for immigration control and race relations were issues in the national elections of the country.

The majority of migrants came from countries that were former colonies of the UK and many at first held UK passports. Thus, both migrants and the indigenous people possessed some knowledge of each other. People from South Asia had made a significant contribution to the running of the British Empire. For example, Punjabi and

Gurkha recruits had fought in many of the wars in which the British were involved, both before and after the 'Great Mutiny' of 1857. Many immigrants arrived in the UK to fill the gap in manpower that became acute during the reconstruction after World War II. British colonialists had also used South Asian manpower earlier on, in the late nineteenth century, transferring them to their African colonies.

Leicester's migrant population therefore developed with one significant characteristic. As Valerie Marett correctly expresses it:<sup>4</sup>

The single feature which makes Leicester different from other cities which experienced post-war immigration [was] its East African connection.

So it was that in the 1950s.

The immigrants came to fill gaps in the labour force in key industries which indigenous workers did not want, or would not or could not perform. Then, in the 1960s, East Africans came because of the 'push' factor from those newly independent African countries intent on Africanising their economies.

A significant feature of immigration from the East African countries was that the families concerned (though not necessarily the same individuals) were on a 'second migration'. According to the American historian Joseph Seliga:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Valerie Marett, *Immigrants Settling in the City* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Seliga, 'A Neighbourhood Transformed: the effect of Indian Migration on the Belgrave Area of Leicester, 1965-1995', *The Local Historian*, 28/4 (1998), 230-231.

East African Asians arrived in the UK under circumstances which differed from the South Asians: the East African Asians were 'twice migrants', already once removed from their homeland, and refugees rather than colonial migrants. Several factors assisted East African Asians in their transition to British life. For one, they came as complete family units; most South Asian migrants were solitary males, only later to be joined by wives and children. The East African Asians were often well educated, familiar with urban living from their experience in East Africa, and of middle-class backgrounds, which made them more concerned with achieving social and economic success in the UK. Leicester's migrants were predominantly of a Gujarati Hindu background, which made the city unique as a centre not only of East African migrants but of Gujarati Hindus in particular.

They had worked closely with the British in the African colonies and in fact had migrated because the British had taken them from South Asia to East Africa to establish a buffer between themselves, as the ruling elites, and the colonised Africans. The Africanization policies resulted from the perception (a perception that often reflected the reality) that the Asians had prospered economically more than the Africans; indeed, since the Asians were traders, that they had prospered to some extent at the expense of the Africans. After the British left, the hostility of the Africans turned to the Asians. Their wealth was expropriated and they had to flee and seek a new country of residence. Many of them arrived in Leicester, which had a significant Asian population already.

The migration flow to Britain did not, however, take place automatically. British people resented the inflow of immigrants and the British Nationality Act of 1948 was

amended on a number of occasions to restrict the inflow. The British Nationality Act of 1948 divided<sup>6</sup>

British citizenship into two categories – citizenship of independent countries of the Commonwealth, and citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies. Citizens in both categories remained ‘British subjects’ but were also ‘Commonwealth citizens’. The two terms were interchangeable but it was status as British subjects that gave the right of free entry to the UK. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act broke with the principle that all citizens of Commonwealth countries including citizens of the British colonies had free and unrestricted entry. Perhaps the most controversial of all the British Immigration Acts was the Commonwealth Immigration Act passed by the Labour government in March 1968. This aimed at extending control, and denying the right of entry except to those who had substantial connections with the United Kingdom, by birth or by descent. The main thrust of the legislation was to impose tighter controls on the immigration of UK passport-holders from East Africa.

The migrants won their battle to come to the UK because African oppression was glaring and evident and made their case more pressing. The British were nevertheless reluctant to take them into their country until they had no choice because, for example, ‘the Indian government regarded them as the UK’s responsibility’.<sup>7</sup>

The Indian government was right. It was with great hardships and struggles that the East African migrants forced the British to honour their promise and rescue them from their plight. It was not the British Indian who had opted to go to Africa. In fact, in the history of the Indian subcontinent, there has never been a voluntary migration

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<sup>6</sup> Marett, *Immigrants Settling in the City*, 5.  
<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 6.



to Africa or for that matter to any other country, for India was a rich country from the ancient till the Mughal times. That was the reason why it attracted the attention of British traders in the first place, under the name of the East India Company. The profits the company made brought the British government eventually into direct contact with India, in an endeavour to channel all the profits out of India into the UK. India became the UK's own 'Jewel in the Crown' colony for a relatively short-lived period of nearly a century, from the replacement of the East India Company by a form of direct rule in 1858 to the Partition of the sub-Continent in 1947.

The important point is that the British were forced to honour their promises and East African migrants came to Leicester in considerable numbers. They established their homes and used their talents and skills gained in their second migration for upward mobility. They also enriched the city with their cultures.

Why multiculturalism flourished in the UK was because various communities in the UK had enjoyed cultural freedom. The credit for this goes to the UK for, in spite of racist groups and politicians who capitalised on such issues, there was a level of tolerance in the country of other cultures which was greater than in any other European country. Each community was free to celebrate its culture and live in, or recreate, its own cultural world. However, the mainstream culture itself was concerned, for it had not opened its doors to the new migrants willingly.

In fact, the City Council of Leicester put out an advertisement in 1972 telling Asians in Uganda that<sup>8</sup>

in your own interests and those of your family you should accept the advice of the Uganda Resettlement Board and not come to Leicester.

Each community became an island living within its own boundaries separating it from the cultural boundaries of the 'Other'.

If for one culture another is the 'Other', then Leicester has not managed diversity in the way that it should. It has not managed to get communities to cross the boundaries of the 'Other' through interculturalism. The concept of the 'Other' is a serious impediment to cultural coexistence. It creates social distance and stereotyping of peoples and their cultures. It stifles communication and creates 'cultural phobia', which forbids boundary crossings. This tendency leads to increased racism, for racists argue that migrants do not integrate into mainstream society. The racists want migrants to assimilate, rather than integrate, into mainstream society. There is a great difference between the two concepts, assimilation and integration. Thus, for example, we talk of European 'integration' (meaning closer links between European countries), but not of European 'assimilation' (which might imply the total loss of national identities). 'Assimilation' implies the suppression of differences. Sometimes individuals choose to assimilate of their own free will, but this process is mostly forced upon groups against their wishes. Assimilation forces one group to give up its culture in

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<sup>8</sup> Seliga, 'A Neighbourhood Transformed', 230.

favour of another. Usually the minority takes over the culture of the majority.<sup>9</sup> 'Integration' is a process of unifying individuals and activities into a new system. It means that minority groups and the majority group develop a new way of living, which includes elements of the values and ideas of both groups. Integration also means that everyone finds a place in society. There are no fundamental divisions between groups.<sup>10</sup>

Multiculturalism and interculturalism are two different terms and need to be clearly understood. Multiculturalism means 'the existence or the promotion of the existence of different cultures alongside each other, usually in one country... but multiculturalism can also mean the mutual isolation of cultures. Some racists believe in a kind of multiculturalism that is close to the apartheid system that existed in South Africa where different cultures were separated.'<sup>11</sup> The crucial point to be noted here is that multiculturalism does not mean cultures come to know or mix with each other in spite of coexisting with each other. There can be a great social divide between them.

On the other hand, interculturalism 'is the belief that we become richer people by knowing and experiencing other cultures. Different people should be able to live together,

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<sup>9</sup> 'The danger of words' (UNITED for Intercultural Action European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees Postbus 413, NL-1000 AK Amsterdam, Netherlands):

<[www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/info13.htm#21](http://www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/info13.htm#21)>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Danger of Words':

<[www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/info13.htm#18](http://www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/info13.htm#18)>

although they have different cultural backgrounds. Interculturalism is about accepting and respecting differences. People who believe in interculturalism believe they can learn and profit from meeting other cultures.<sup>12</sup> The point to be noted here is that cultures must experience each other. How this can be achieved is more problematic.

The consequences of countries, cities and communities not becoming intercultural can be horrendous. The Northern Ireland Commission on Racism and Interculturalism has reported on some of these.<sup>13</sup> The classic case is that of the former Republic of Yugoslavia where the Serbs, Croats and the Muslim Bosnians co-existed for 500 years. The result was that they lived in hatred side-by-side. The depth of this hatred of one culture for the other was reflected in 1992 when exploitative politicians, like the Serbian president Milosevic, ignited the war between the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Dublin, 13 March 2002. A number of joint North-South initiatives have been announced today in a bid to help combat the growing problem of racism in Ireland. The announcement was made by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), KNOW RACISM and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland as plans for International Day Against Racism 2002 were also unveiled. <[www.equalityni.org/whatsnew/archive/indiv.cfm?StoryID=184](http://www.equalityni.org/whatsnew/archive/indiv.cfm?StoryID=184)> The NCCRI has its own website: <[www.nccri.com/](http://www.nccri.com/)> It has organized a number of seminars 'to provide information on issues such as potential, expectations, content and delivery of Anti-Racism and Intercultural Training for organisations seeking to provide or contract Anti-Racism Training; and to provide and share information about community development approaches to interculturalism and work with minority ethnic groups'.

three communities. The hostilities during the war led to genocide. The systematic mass rape, torture, starvation and killing of men and women shocked the world. It was like a second holocaust in recent times, although on a smaller scale. The United Nations intervened and took control of the region and set up a Court of Justice in The Hague to try some of the Serbian war criminals including former President Milosevic. While this is not in any respect the sort of outcome imagined for Leicester the point here is that multiculturalism in itself does not necessarily result in harmonious relations between cultures.

Another important point, which we would like to introduce in this introduction, is that the general title of this study is 'Integrated Cities'. In discussions about nation states, one often hears the term 'national integration'. On a general level, it concerns the degree to which people are integrated within a nation, though there can be many kinds of integration. Migrants are integrated politically to the extent that they accept the agendas of various political parties of the UK and operate within the rules and regulations of the political system. They are also integrated into the economic and fiscal systems to the extent that they pay their taxes and abide by the rules and regulations of the financial system operating in the country. But whether they have culturally integrated into the mainstream culture of the country is another question.

Policy-makers in the UK during the 1950s and 1960s wanted migrants to assimilate into the mainstream culture. But their policy of 'do in Rome as the Romans do' did not work out in reality, and they had to settle for integration of the political and economic kind. On the

cultural level they settled for multiculturalism. The result was that the UK became a multicultural society but not an intercultural one. People continued to relate more to their country of origins than their country of migration. This has often raised questions about the loyalty and primary allegiance or citizenship of migrants (for example, Lord Tebbit's discredited 'cricket match' test of allegiance, that is, do the immigrants support the West Indies, India or Pakistan rather than England in a test match between the countries?)

Multiculturalism has come under serious criticism. One well-known analyst pointed out why multiculturalism has become 'dysfunctional'. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown lists a number of statements that are self-explanatory in showing how multiculturalism has proved ineffective. These are:<sup>14</sup>

Multiculturalism is only about ethnic minorities... it has kept multiculturalism in a box... of interest to ethnic minorities, meaning those with visibly different skins...

Multiculturalism has created a sense of white exclusion... while multiculturalism may be embraced by a good many Britons, it is also resented by many others, who feel that everybody's culture is celebrated but their own, and that special treatment

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<sup>14</sup> Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *After Multiculturalism* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2001). The author came to the UK from Uganda in 1972. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown MBE argues that we need fundamentally to rethink our approach to national identity, race and public culture in this Foreign Policy Centre pamphlet. The old debate about multiculturalism cannot meet the challenge of reinventing identity and participation in a devolved Britain, a plural Europe and an increasingly independent world. Her argument is that multiculturalism has 'made it too difficult for black and Asian Britons to have rich, multiple identities':  
<[www.guardian.co.uk/britain/article/0,2763,382793,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/britain/article/0,2763,382793,00.html)>

and disproportionate attention is being given to small minorities...

Multiculturalism's model of representation only deals with elites... More successful black and Asian businessmen and cultural figures have been made peers of the realm than ever before. But how far can they be expected to represent their communities in the public sphere?...

Multiculturalism freezes change and can entrench inequalities. Multiculturalism was invented as a progressive project to promote and to equalise opportunities. But today it can too often do the opposite...

Multiculturalism erects barriers when it ought to unite... a distorted form of multiculturalism has increasingly become a banner under which increasingly differentiated groups each pursue their own case for attention and resources while jealously protecting their rights not to be criticised by others...

Multiculturalism is seen as woolly liberalism, not the competitive advantages of diversity... we need to realise that diversity is something that we cannot afford to be without and from which we can collectively benefit...

Our island of multiculturalism has not engaged with globalisation. For far too long multiculturalism has remained dislocated from the UK's foreign policies. The increasingly contested issues of the UK's role in Europe and the world, of this country's international objectives and identity, have bizarrely been almost entirely disconnected from the domestic debate about multiculturalism.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown correctly points out most of the drawbacks of multiculturalism and each one of the points must be given serious attention. If serious consideration is not given, then communities may continue to live in diversity and the difference that separates them can result in isolation, marginalization and alienation. Multiculturalism cannot handle cultural differences.

An academic from Leicester has made the following observation:<sup>15</sup>

Multiculturalism and interculturalism [are] a relatively common experience at the level of individual consumption (food, music, crafts objects etc.), but it is much more difficult to encourage groups of people to participate in multicultural and intercultural projects. It is important here to understand the difference between the two terms 'multiculturalism' and 'interculturalism', which are not clearly defined... Neighbourhood-based cultural and social policies have traditionally been aimed at multiculturalism, which generally means the strengthening of the distinctive cultural identities of different ethnic communities, by enabling them to have their own cultural voices. This is a valuable objective, but multiculturalism does not necessarily encourage communication between cultures. On the contrary, multicultural policies can contribute to entrenching particularisms and vested interests. If the aim is to counteract racism, then perhaps more resources could be directed towards intercultural projects, aimed at building bridges between different communities and at producing innovative cultural hybrids. The concept of 'cultural diversity' is also generally adopted in the policies formulated and implemented in case study neighbourhoods. It could, however, be useful in policy-making. While cultural policies are, in many cases, targeted at different ethnic and age groups, they generally do not consider the possibility of more fine-grained approach, based, for instance, on 'communities of interest' or 'emotional communities', not represented by existing local associations and defined by elective affinities, sexual preferences, common enthusiasm, hobbies, political and civic passions.

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<sup>15</sup> Franco Bianchini and Lia Santacatterina, *Culture and Neighbourhoods, A comparative Report* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 1997), ii. 51. Franco Bianchini is Reader in Cultural Planning and Policy, and Director of the Cultural Planning Research Unit at De Montfort University, Leicester.



It must be said that Leicester City Council has been very active in seeking to make this city culturally integrated. The potential is there because the city is already multicultural. But most policy-makers, it seems, are not aware of the above critiques of multiculturalism, otherwise they would be using the term interculturalism and seeking to obviate the shortcomings of the multicultural agenda.

SICUL's report cannot be the last word on the subject. It is based on a survey to find out whether the city of Leicester by the year 2002 had developed intercultural relations. Across the centuries this city has progressed from monoculturalism to multiculturalism. But has it progressed from multiculturalism to interculturalism? The findings of the survey indicated that it has not. On the contrary, owing to the policies of the City Council, which have been progressive, each culture has expanded for the benefit of its own cultural identity. But none has created real bridges with other cultures. The city is made up of pockets of cultures, where each culture has become a self-contained island. Some cultures in this city are hostile to others because of the historical baggage they carry, though this has not been our principal object of investigation. The point we are making is that one should be aware of the levels of cultural interaction at the grassroots levels. Our aim, quite simply, is to make Leicester the best example of intercultural practice in the world.

## Part One: People and Policies

### *Section 1: Vision for the people*

People and places are important aspects of any city. If places are not inhabited, they tend to become deserted and derelict. People produce cultures. People coming from diverse cultures produce cultural diversity. But in celebrating cultural diversity does it mean that people of different cultures are getting together to celebrate the diversity of one another's culture? It does not.

People of diverse cultures may live in one place, but may not have anything to do with each other's cultures. They may meet each other for economic or other reasons but not cultural reasons. On the contrary, they may even be hostile to each other while having superficial relations. Many such set-ups can exist in multicultural scenarios.

Leicester City Council has put forward several important schemes, aimed at making Leicester the pre-eminent cultural city of the UK. How successful they will be has yet to be seen. Such ambitions are commendable and a great deal of planning has gone into this vision. A brief review of such plans is given below.

The City Council produced a *Community Plan for 2003* that looks at the social, cultural and economic development of the city, and reaffirms diversity as a priority. The plan reflects the seriousness of the city's policy-makers when it comes to the city's future. But when policy-makers make plans, they can either put programmes into action and then wait and see the development that emerges; or they

can first develop a vision and then take steps to make it materialize. The latter is the wiser step. And to this end the Leicester Partnership was established, 'a collaboration of statutory agencies, businesses, voluntary and community groups coming together for the greater good of the people of Leicester'. The Partnership is committed to<sup>16</sup>

- leading the development of a shared over-arching and long-term vision and strategy for the City of Leicester. Being a strong advocate for this vision as a framework within which individuals, organisations and key public and private sector service providers can develop their strategies and re-align their services.
- providing a mechanism for any agency, individual, organisation or group to both influence the vision for Leicester and contribute to bringing it about.
- co-coordinating the planning and implementation of the Community Plan, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Fund, Public Service Agreements and other such government initiatives that may arise that help to deliver its vision for Leicester.

### *The Vision for Leicester*

In order to achieve 'the greater good of the people of Leicester' the vision of the Leicester Partnership is to create<sup>17</sup>

- an inclusive and tolerant city that celebrates and affirms the diversity of all its people;
- a city where every individual and organisation actively cares for the environment;

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<sup>16</sup>

See leaflet entitled *Leicester's City Plan 2003*.

<sup>17</sup>

Ibid.

- a regenerated city with inspiring beautiful and functional offices, shops, homes and public buildings and green spaces;
- a vibrant city with exciting cultural opportunities such as theatres, cinemas, cafes, galleries, sports facilities and public spaces;
- a friendly city where people are safe and feel safe;
- a city with good public transport and few traffic problems;
- a prosperous city which creates public and private wealth for all its people;
- a well-educated city where people participate in lifelong learning and have high expectations;
- a well-governed city that empowers its citizens and provides services that are accessible to all;
- a healthy city where people enjoy good health and have access to quality health services when they need them; and
- a sustainable city that plays its part in creating a clean, safe and prosperous world.

This vision is important, for without it Leicester would be lacking a clear sense of direction. In order to encourage people to appreciate the place in which they live, a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy was devised, focusing on 'improving the quality of life of people living in the poorest neighbourhoods of the city'.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, neighbourhood coordinators were employed to reinforce the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and to 'establish ten neighbourhoods or Area Forums across the city. These Forums will allow two-way communication, enabling local people to influence the design and delivery of a range of

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<sup>18</sup> See leaflet entitled: Leicester's Community Plan 2003: <[www.leicesterpartnership.org.uk/Reports/master.pdf](http://www.leicesterpartnership.org.uk/Reports/master.pdf)>

public services in their area and at the same time providing a mechanism for council departments and other agencies to consult with the communities'.<sup>19</sup>

The result of all this, one would hope, will help facilitate community cohesion.<sup>20</sup> The City Council has worked hard for the past three decades to improve community and race relations. They have to some extent succeeded; but there are still challenges facing it, which it recognises. In September 2002 it commissioned independent research into community cohesion in Leicester. The four issues recommended for attention were:

- vision and leadership;
- young people;
- outer estate areas;
- ethnic minority communities

It was decided that 'the Council, working with the other agencies in the city, will be developing a vision and implementation plan to develop these issues building upon the good practice which already exists. The aim is to take community cohesion forward in Leicester and to build trust and understanding between different communities and people.'<sup>21</sup>

How was all this to be achieved? Leicester had to have a cultural strategy. Indeed, the government had asked each

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ted Cattle's report: *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (London: Home Office, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> *Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester* (Report of the I&DeA)  
<[www.leicester.gov.uk/sys\\_upl/documents/departments/dpt\\_1105.pdf](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/sys_upl/documents/departments/dpt_1105.pdf)>

city in the UK to prepare its own cultural strategy by the end of 2002. Above all, with the above-mentioned vision and plans a cultural strategy was necessary to deliver the required changes.

### *Leicester's Cultural Strategy*

Before we comment on the cultural development of Leicester let us explore what the cultural strategy of Leicester is. A five-year cultural strategy was developed in September 2001 called *Diverse City* and a fifty-strong Cultural Strategy Partnership formed to help implement it. It brought together 'organizations from the public, private, community, voluntary and education sectors, for the common purpose of improving Leicester's cultural life'. The strategy was developed through extensive consultation with residents and cultural providers, and the vision that sprang from this consultation formed the basis of the cultural strategy. Leicester wanted to be perceived as a place where<sup>22</sup>

- cultural diversity is seen as an overwhelming strength and defining characteristic;
- cultural difference is celebrated, traditions are respected and opportunities to develop culture are embraced;
- first-class cultural facilities are accessible to all; and
- access to cultural activity and freedom of cultural expression are seen as basic human rights.

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<sup>22</sup> *Diverse City - Leicester's Cultural Strategy 2001* (Leicester City Council, 2001).

The goals of the Cultural Strategy were to:<sup>23</sup>

- facilitate people's opportunities to have a full and active life in the city. For example, by making available convenient and accessible financial services for all;
- promote trust and understanding between the faith communities and good relations among all communities in Leicester;
- develop services and policies that reflect the changing needs of the population. For example by:
  - providing services which are sensitive to people's religious, cultural, linguistic and access needs;
  - developing policies and services to enable the acceptance and resettlement of asylum seekers in the city;
  - ensuring the provision and the use of quality cultural and leisure services, events and activities which reflect the rich diversity of the city's communities and people;
  - ensuring that a decent home is within the reach of every citizen in Leicester; and
  - working in partnership with agencies in Leicester to improve sporting opportunities for black and other ethnic minority communities and disabled people.

This then gives a general overview of the plans that the local authority had for future cultural developments. These plans were very positive. The issue was delivery; but successful delivery cannot take place if the plans had hidden flaws.

A short re-examination of the plans would be in order. Many other cities have also produced their cultural

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Ibid.

strategies. Before such plans are devised one has first to assess one's own society in terms of the culture of the city, in other words, whether the city was multicultural. Without any research or further debate it could be stated with confidence that the city was indeed multicultural. There was no need for a cultural strategy to make the city multicultural, since it already was. Each culture already possessed its own cultural styles in terms of food, dresses, festivals, languages, customs, arts and architecture etc.

One assumes that a cultural strategy was devised in order to progress from one situation, that is, the stage of multiculturalism, to another, higher level, which we have defined as interculturalism. This was the starting assumption for SICUL's. Whether the term is used or not, any cultural strategy has in effect to transform the city into an intercultural city. The cultural strategy was considered to be a 'shared vision for local authorities and their cultural partners'.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, it was said to have 'implications far beyond the traditional areas of arts, sports and leisure services provision. It will complement the aims of the community strategy and seek to bring about real change in five areas: cultural access, cultural solutions, cultural economy, cultural space and cultural opportunity'.<sup>25</sup> If these five areas are indeed a priority, then progress cannot be made without a cultural strategy that embarks on intercultural relations between the local authority and its cultural partners.

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<sup>24</sup>[www.camden.gov.uk/enjoy/culturalstrategy.htm](http://www.camden.gov.uk/enjoy/culturalstrategy.htm)<sup>25</sup>

Ibid.



There is a reason why Leicester enjoys such good relations. As stated earlier, this is because people at the top, the city's policy- and decision-makers, have good relations with each other. This city has boasted a number of Asian city councillors, particularly since 1979,<sup>26</sup> and has had several Asian Lords Mayor. Community relations with various agencies in the city are also good. For example, the Leicestershire Constabulary, unlike other cities in the UK like Manchester, Oldham and Bradford, organizes an annual cultural evening and invites all of the community leaders. The Council of Faiths manages good relations with other faiths by having members of different religions on its committee. Cultural institutions such as the Haymarket Theatre and the Leicester City Museums have led the way in promoting other cultures in their venues.

With such good relations at the top, leaders of most communities have acquired many benefits for their own community. This is not something corrupt, but good community practice. It is not an 'old boy network', but a 'new boy network'.

Such multiculturalism, however, has developed flaws for which no-one can be blamed. All one could say is that the sooner this is realized and steps are taken to amend it, the better it will be for Leicester. First, on the vertical level,

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<sup>26</sup> Data researched by Peter Cozens, Policy Officer, Leicester City Council: R. J. Bonney, *Understanding and Celebrating Religious Diversity. The Growth of Diversity in Leicester's Places of Religious Worship since 1970* (Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, University of Leicester: Studies in the History of Religious and Cultural Diversity, 1, 2003), 67, chart 2.

since there is no close relation between the top and the bottom levels, some areas of the city suffer at the grassroots level. On the horizontal level, some cultures suffer more than others because of lack of relations with the centre, and a corresponding lack of encouragement and development. This is not an accusation levelled at the City Council or at any particular community; rather, it is the politics of multiculturalism that is now being criticized.

At the grassroots level there is no evidence that there is any mixing among the communities of different cultures. The *Leicester City Plan: 2003* therefore revealed an important flaw: it seems the term multiculturalism has been misunderstood. Policy-makers have either read too much meaning into it or read into it only what they wanted to read and ignored the rest. In any case, it has been assumed that the multicultural approach will transform itself into an intercultural one. The term interculturalism is hardly used in the *Leicester City Plan: 2003*. It would be naïve to think that progression towards interculturalism will develop of itself. Cultural construction and cultural sustainability will need to be carefully thought through and, to a certain extent at least 'facilitated' if not directly 'managed'.

## *Section 2: The Leicester Context*

### *Brief History of Leicester's Communities*

Leicester was a Roman town. Leicester, or *Ratae Corieltavorum*, developed into a flourishing *Civitas*, or regional capital, and marketplace for the surrounding countryside. It had public buildings, baths and luxurious villas with mosaics which today can be seen in the Jewry Wall museum. There is evidence to suggest that people from all over the Roman world passed through and even settled in *Ratae*.

The Romans did not leave many landmarks, other than the Jewry Wall and baths. After the Romans left, Leicester became Anglo-Saxon, and then Danish. Leicester was included in the kingdom of Mercia but it did not produce any historians who left clear records. In fact one study says that 'to form an idea of life in Leicester between about A.D. 400 and A.D. 900 we must fall back on hints and scraps, eked out by a study of place names and of such archaeological material as survives from the homes and graves of a people whose possessions were as simple as they were perishable'.<sup>27</sup>

Roman culture did not survive the later influx, as the Mercian's were pagans. The Anglo-Saxons were mostly Angles who came up the rivers Welland and Soar. Between 865 and 874 'a great Danish army marched and pillaged up and down England until the whole of Mercia accepted a

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<sup>27</sup> Colin Ellis, *History in Leicester: 55BC-AD1900* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1969 [1<sup>st</sup> edn.: 1948]: City of Leicester Publicity Dept), 17.

Danish nominee king... That most of Leicestershire came into the area of close settlement is quite clearly shown by the villages whose names end in the Danish terminations of *by* and *Thorpe* and by names like Skeffington in which the English *sc* (pronounced *sh*) was changed into *sk*.<sup>28</sup>

Eventually Leicester became part of a Norman region where feudal lords dominated. The 'Norman overlords of Leicester (styled Earls after 1118) were successively the de Grantmesnils, the De Beaumonts and the De Montforts, the transfer from one family to another being effected by influence, sharp practice, a claim resting on marriage with the female line, or a combination of all three'.<sup>29</sup>

The most prominent of these feudal lords was Simon De Montfort, the younger who 'married Henry III's sister, was confirmed in his inheritance, and proceeded to bring to the Earldom of Leicester a brief period of national importance. His career as leader of the barons and as virtual dictator after the defeat of the King at Lewes is a matter of national, not of local, history... He did not give Leicester the land which is now the Victoria Park, anymore than he anticipated nineteenth-century ideas of popular self-government, but he did, inside and outside of Leicester, listen to the voice of the English people and the English people venerated his memory as the first great man whom they could call their champion. When De Montfort fell at Evesham his lands and the title were given by Henry III to his own son Edmund Crouchback'.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ibid.

29 Ibid. 39.

30 Ibid.

De Montfort also left his mark on history as a crusader and as an anti-Semitic. He issued a charter allegedly before 1239 that landlords had to sign if they wanted to own land in Leicester. The charter stated: 'no Jew or Jewess in my time, or in the time of any of my heirs to the end of the world, shall inhabit or remain, or obtain a residence in Leicester.'<sup>31</sup> It is commendable that the Leicester City Council distanced itself from such a charter in 2001, over seven hundred years later. There is, however, little substantiating evidence for the presence of a Jewish community in Leicester before the later nineteenth century.

During the Tudor age and the Stuart period, Leicester was beginning to transform from a feudal to market economy. According to Ellis: 'the general impression one forms of Leicester, as it passed down from the Tudor to the Stuart age, is the not unexpected one of a community of hard-headed men, conservatively competent in the management of their own and town's business, jealous of outsiders, inclined to a Puritanism which frowned rather on demonstrative popular gaiety than sold on personal comfort, more accessible to the intellectual aspects of culture than sensitive to aesthetic.'<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Tim Walsh, 'Simply Wrong Simon', *Leicester Mercury*, 13 Jan. 2001. Bonney, 'Understanding and celebrating religious diversity in Britain: a Case Study of Leicester since 1970 making comparison with Flushing, Queens County, New York City', *Encounters. Journal of Intercultural Perspectives*, 9 (2003), notes 11 and 12.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis, *History in Leicester*, 68.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century Leicester was becoming a manufacturing town. As Ellis observed: 'many other old towns were changing, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, into centres of manufacture, but Leicester's manner of doing so was unusual if not unique. In most cases there was some obvious natural advantage that could be turned to account: coal or iron or, in the case of textiles industries, waterpower.'<sup>33</sup> As industrialisation began to change the face of the UK, so also different industries began to emerge in Leicester and the hosiery and shoe and engineering products began to make Leicester into an industrial town.

Migrants of diverse cultures started arriving in Leicester in the early 1800s. The Irish community started arriving in 1815. Jewish communities from Eastern Europe started coming into the city during the 1850s and by the late 1890s they had built their synagogue in the Highfields area. From the 1880s small groups of Italians started coming to Leicester, while after the First World War, several hundred Belgians arrived in the city.<sup>34</sup>

Poles, Ukrainians, and people from the Baltic States started coming after the Second World War, while at the same time the African-Caribbeans also started arriving. Cynthia Brown also notes that: 'in the late 1940s there was also some immigration from the Indian sub-continent,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 91.

<sup>34</sup> Cynthia Brown, 'Immigrant Communities in Leicester', Women's History Notebooks, 3/2 (1996), 9.

mainly from the Punjab and Gujarat, and on a smaller scale, from China and Hong Kong'.<sup>35</sup>

The influx of East African migrants of South Asian ethnicity into the Belgrave area started in the early 1970s. Considering the lack of income of many migrants and their concern to maintain residential proximity with other Asians, Belgrave's cheap and plentiful terraced houses proved an ideal setting. Furthermore, at the same time as the Asian migration to Leicester, white residents of Belgrave, fearful of impending plans for neighbourhood redevelopment and living in ageing and cramped houses, were being attracted out of the neighbourhood by private housing estates and council housing in the suburbs and outskirts of the city. It is impossible, however, to determine to what degree these were the primary factors causing white residents to leave Belgrave rather than other reasons, such as feeling 'pushed out' by the influx of Asian migrants or participating in their own 'panic exodus' or 'white flight'.<sup>36</sup>

Whatever the reasons for the 'white flight' the Belgrave area began to take on a cultural look in the Indian tradition. Joseph Seliga observed:<sup>37</sup>

The effects of the residential segregation of East African Asians in Belgrave can be understood when examining their economic success. Numerous observers have described the visual transformation of Belgrave and Melton Roads. The 'Golden Mile', with its numerous jewellers, ethnic goods and food stores, sari shops and other retail outlets, gives the impression of Asians

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<sup>35</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>

Seliga, 'Belgrave', 232-3.

<sup>37</sup>

Ibid. 234.

having converted a decrepit slum into a thriving community. Others have suggested that the Indians have followed a 'Jewish model', white collar, self-employed, owner-occupied suburban, as opposed to the blue collar, manual labour, council-housed and urban 'Irish model' of Afro-Caribbeans, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis... From their arrival in the late 1960s, Indians of Belgrave employed their strengths, entrepreneurial skills, educational backgrounds, knowledge of English, and limited financial resources, in a quest to achieve economic success.

But the economic success of the Indians was not the only factor in maintaining the cultural integrity of the Belgrave community. On the contrary, 'hand in hand with these economic developments, the Asians in Belgrave strived to maintain familial ties and cultural traditions in the new land'.<sup>38</sup> This was the most important factor of the Belgrave community that was comprised mainly of the Hindu Gujarati community.

According to one observer, the Hindu Gujarati community is 'socially mobile and is expanding into all part of the county as newly married couples seek better accommodation. The community has established a complex system of Temples and Caste associations known as Community Associations that are well resourced and influential. The community comes together every year for the Mela, Navratri and Diwali; these are mass events in Leicester attracting tourists and the media... This community has seen a whole generation of youth go through De Montfort University and has gained considerable political, economic and cultural influence'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 235.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Winstone, 'Multicultural Leicester', Background Briefing Note 2. Leicester City Council. Chief Executive's Office. Nd.



This community has put a cultural imprint on the city in a dynamic manner. It has produced three Asian Mayors, in the late Gordhan Parmar, Culdip Bhatti and the present Mayor, Ramnik Kavia. In addition there have been many Hindu Councillors.

The majority of the Muslim community is also comprised of Asians of Gujarati East African origin. This community also has a number of City Councillors, but has not, as yet, provided a Lord Mayor. Other Muslim ethnic groups adding to this community are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins. The Pakistani community has also produced City Councillors who have contributed to the multicultural composition of the City Council. In general, Paul Winstone observed:<sup>40</sup>

This community has come a long way from its rural roots in the sub-continent but has been substantially disadvantaged over the years. Muslim businesses are flourishing and interest in Islam is at an all time high. There are economic problems, however; unemployment and a cycle of deprivation affect these communities, including poor education, overcrowding, language barriers, ill health and an over concentration in certain industries e.g. Pakistanis in taxi work, Bangladeshis in food and catering.

In addition there are also 'small Kosovan and Bosnian "Ottoman" Muslim communities. The vast majority are Sunni but there are Ismaili and Shia minorities'.<sup>41</sup> There is a mainstream Shi'ite minority and a small number from the Bohra community.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

The African-Caribbean community is relatively small in Leicester and over the years there have been just two African-Caribbean Councillors and the community has not as yet produced a Lord Mayor of Leicester.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Profiles of the Wards Surveyed*

The SICUL report is based on a survey that explored whether people living in four of Leicester's wards could be described as experiencing an intercultural existence. These four wards were: Belgrave, Spinney Hill, North Braunstone and Saffron. They were not selected randomly but with the purpose of covering north, south, east and west areas of Leicester in a broad general way. Furthermore, two of the areas comprised of indigenous working-class population. Belgrave was perceived as mainly Hindu while Spinney Hill was perceived as a community with a predominance of Muslims. Although the majority may be Hindus and Muslims in these areas there were other people too like Sikhs, Christians, African-Caribbean, Somalis, and Eastern Europeans etc. Saffron and North Braunstone were substantially comprised of a working-class white population. A brief profile of each area is given below: all four wards were within the Leicester Local Authority District (LAD) or Unitary Authority (UA).

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<sup>42</sup> Bonney, *Understanding and Celebrating Religious Diversity. The Growth of Diversity in Leicester's Places of Religious Worship since 1970*, 66. The most detailed study of the community is: J. Benyon, B. Dauda, J. Garland, S. Lyle, *African Caribbean People in Leicestershire. Final Report* (Scarman Centre for the Study of Public Order, University of Leicester, 1996).

*Spinney Hill*

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000 (IMD)<sup>43</sup> gave Spinney Hill the rank of 371 out of a total of 8,414 English wards (with rank 1 being the most deprived ward in England). Resident Population in mid-1998, was 11,300, of whom 33 per cent were aged under 16, 59 per cent were aged between 16 and 59, and 8 per cent were aged 60 and over.

In the nineteenth century Spinney Hill was an area of farmland with old clay pits. Mere Road was rural with a wooded bridge. During that time it developed into mainly an artisan housing area and Mere Road and other streets were built in the 1890s and early 1900s for the creation of

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<sup>43</sup> The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000 were produced by the DETR (known in 2000 as the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions) to identify deprivation at ward level. This replaces, and improves significantly on, the Index of Local Deprivation, 1998. The IMD uses a broader range of datasets and more up to date figures to produce a series of deprivation indices at both ward and local authority district levels. It provides a guide to the extent of various types of deprivation within areas but does not tell us to what extent individual households are subject to multiple deprivation. The deprivation score is based on six domains of deprivation, each with different weighting, which are combined to produce an overall score. The weightings are as follows: Income (25%), Employment (25%), Health Deprivation and Disability (15%), Education Skills and Training (15%), Housing (10%) and Access to Services (10%). The single deprivation score is then ranked nationally out of 8414 wards (1 being the most deprived ward and 8414 the least deprived).

a middle class residential district. According to one report:<sup>44</sup>

The four streets bounding Spinney Hill Park offered the most attractive residential sites in the neighbourhood and were developed with substantial sized houses for middle class professional and business people. The Mere Road houses are architecturally the most interesting. They were located on a ridge with fine views across the city. The remainder of the district was developed with small terraced houses for artisans. Largely as a result of entrepreneurial activities of Arthur Wakerley, the North Evington area became a thriving manufacturing centre.

In the last century 'Leicester was expanding rapidly outwards as a result of prosperity based on thriving hosiery, boot and shoe and light engineering industries. The main roads of the area followed the line of existing streets as in the case of Mere Road, St Saviours Road and East Park Road. Between these roads and Park Vale Road, set back behind an existing spinney, the Corporation of Leicester created a public park with a fountain and bandstand and this was opened in 1889'.<sup>45</sup> Spinney Hill was a beautiful area but it 'never became a fashionable middle class district like the suburb of Stoneygate to the south'. Whatever glamour it had, it has lost, for today it is a working class area comprising mainly of Asian and other migrants to the city.

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<[www.leicester.gov.uk/departments/page.asp?pgid=3825](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/departments/page.asp?pgid=3825)>

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Ibid.

### *Saffron*

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000 (IMD) give Saffron the rank of 383 out of a total of 8,414 English wards. In mid 1998, 11,100 people lived in Saffron, of whom 30 per cent were aged under 16, 52 per cent were aged between 16 and 59, and 18 per cent were aged 60 and over.

In 1923, the City Council bought 79 acres of land from two landowners, Col. WE Craddock and Mrs. Eyres Monsell. Another 169 acres were purchased from the latter in 1924. Saffron was first known as Park Estate when 'Boothouses' were built there. This style of housing was considered to be 'practically indestructible' in the 1920s. But in the 1980s serious structural flaws were detected and in 1989 some 500 of these Boothouses had to be demolished with new houses built in their place. This estate was established to clear people from the slum areas of the city. The estate was slow to develop for until 1929 there was no gas or electricity, and the place took the name of 'Candletown'.<sup>46</sup>

In 1929, two Working Men's Clubs were opened on Saffron and Duncan Road. Later the Southfields Drive Library opened. The Linwood Boys' school and Mary Linwood Girls' School opened.

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<sup>46</sup> Cynthia Brown (ed.), *The Story of the Saff: A history of the Saffron Estate* (Leicester: Leicester City Council, Living History Unit, 1998), 16.

*Leicester Mercury* reporter Cairan Fagan passed a significant remark about the people living in Saffron. He reported:<sup>47</sup>

The 2000-plus home estate is one of the most deprived communities in the city, but its people are proud to call it home, in one breath they will tell you all its problems but add they wouldn't live anywhere else. People on the estate admit that they live with crime but resent any suggestion that their community has a bigger problem than any others.

Fagan also observed in the same article:<sup>48</sup>

The area's unemployment rate is currently around 7.6 per cent compared with the city's average rate of 6.7 per cent but action to help people into work is underway under a £2 million regeneration scheme. Alongside the Government's Single Regeneration Budget, there is also a £2 million Surestart programme, which is offering support to families with young children.

### *North Braunstone*

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000 (IMD) gave North Braunstone the rank of 57 out of a total of 8,414 English wards. In mid-1998, 9,100 people lived in North Braunstone, of whom 32 per cent were aged under 16, 49 per cent were aged between 16 and 59, and 19 per cent were aged 60 and over.

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<sup>47</sup> Cairan Fagan, 'We are all proud to call Saffron our home', *Leicester Mercury*, 27 Feb. 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Braunstone was part of the ancient Leicester Forest and was described as 'pretty and picturesque' 80 years ago.

The Winstanley family owned most of the lands. Clement Winstanley built a stately home in Georgian style on the rising land overlooking the forest in 1776. In 1925, the Leicester Corporation compulsorily purchased the Winstanley Estate. The Winstanley home became a school and 150 acres were set aside for huge parklands. According to a report: 'the Winstanleys owned the Braunstone Estate for many generations and left a Victorian legacy still seen in Braunstone today'.<sup>49</sup>

During the 1930s working class slums were cleared from the City centre and new homes were built in Braunstone to house the inhabitants. According to a report 'many of the residents of Braunstone have long standing family ties to the estate and through the generations have remained deeply loyal to the area'.<sup>50</sup>

According to one resident:<sup>51</sup>

This estate has a really strong identity, it is difficult to explain but people say that they come from Braunstone instead of Leicester. People off the estate seem to think there's nothing but crime and poverty but so does everyone else.

Over the years the area deteriorated and recent figures show that unemployment stands at 12 per cent in North Braunstone, against the city average of eight per cent.

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<sup>49</sup> 'Elegant Stately Home that became fondly-recalled school', *Leicester Mercury*, 10 April 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Nic Ridley, 'Family Ties that go back generations', *Leicester Mercury*, 1 March 2003.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore 'average incomes per household are also lower than the national average, while teenage pregnancy rates are higher'.<sup>52</sup> Although a predominantly white working class community, the regeneration of the former Boothouses on the South of Braunstone has led to an influx of different ethnic origins in recent years. The area now is home to a small number of Kosovans and Philipinos.

Braunstone's response to the neglect of the estate was unique in Leicester. It recognized that it could depend on very few people and agencies to support it. Its residents fought a campaign to have the crumbling Boothouses on the estate demolished and new houses built. That successful campaign encouraged residents to adopt a holistic approach to the regeneration of their area. The community then challenged the hegemony of the City Council in its control of regeneration funding. Bernard Greaves and Bill Law established the Braunstone Partnership. They very quickly gained the support of Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM). That support for regeneration of Braunstone by Braunstone residents has continued ever since.

In consequence, Braunstone secured £1.44 million of government funding, backed up by an equal amount of private and public funding to begin tackling the problems of the estate. In spending that money, Braunstone proved it could deliver a very good regeneration programme, which would start to change the estate around. That

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Ibid.



programme has proved to be one of the most successful in Leicester.

The existence of the Braunstone Partnership enabled residents of Braunstone to take advantage of a New Government programme aimed at letting residents, in conjunction with other partners, fix their estate. As a result of that Partnership being in place, £49.5 million would later be secured from central government to begin the process of sorting Braunstone out.

Leicester City Council's attempts to regain its hegemony over regeneration funding led to the arrest of one of the community leaders and his supporters. This ensured that workers on the New Deal Task Force became employees of the council, rather than a community organisation. Shortly after that, a council officer was appointed to lead that Task Force. This led to confusion in the Braunstone Partnership and the community. That legacy resulted in a very bad start for the New Deal for Communities programme and increased residents mistrust of the local authority. Three years later the community leader and his supporters were found innocent of all charges, but the damage had been done by then.

The Braunstone Partnership later became the Braunstone Community Association, with an elected Board of Directors, of whom 12, the majority, were local residents. In its first few years, this successor body did not do very well. There was a failure to deliver, to spend, to involve residents, and look after the best interests of Braunstone. Conversations of staff and directors were taped, the *Leicester Mercury* took offence at what it called control

freakery, and Partner organisations that were essential to the regeneration of Braunstone and ensuring mainstreaming were kept at arms length. Eventually, GOEM removed the power of the BCA to spend.

One neighbourhood coordinator employed to help the people said: 'I want to encourage people to get involved in their communities and take up what's on offer. Ultimately, forums will be set up where people can have their say on how council services are delivered and where improvements can be made'.<sup>53</sup>

If these improvements are not made soon the government will take the money back and think of other ways of improving the area. But it has not been easy to secure agreement on the way forward within the Braunstone Community Association. According to one resident: 'I think the whole scheme has created far more divisions than it has solved. Most people have pulled away from it and don't want to be involved in all the infighting... the Government's advisor told us we are in a mess and this is our last chance. She said in no uncertain terms that we need to change'.<sup>54</sup>

After a few years of failure, a new Board of Directors of the BCA was elected who changed the management of the programme and started the long job of putting the BCA in order. In this they have support from a team of advisors from the Neighbourhood Regeneration Unit, Government Office for the East Midlands. An Independent Chair,

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Mel Atkinson, 'It's Make or Break time', *Leicester Mercury*, 26 Feb. 2003.

Richard Atkinson OBE, Archdeacon of Leicester, has been appointed, with the full approval of local residents. With a new Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, a revival plan, and good relations with the media, the BCA is now well on the way to becoming a competent regeneration agency which will ensure the needs of residents are met. It still has a way to go, but is now past the worst, and will soon be in a position to deliver real regeneration for Braunstone.

### *Belgrave*

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000 (IMD) give Belgrave the rank of 517 out of a total of 8,414 English wards. In mid-1998, 11,900 people lived in Belgrave, of whom 28 per cent were aged under 16, 57 per cent were aged between 16 and 59, and 15 per cent were aged 60 and over.

Belgrave village once had country residences and Belgrave Road had townhouses. Belgrave Gate had the poor living around it. One of the landmarks of the place was Belgrave Hall, which was built by Edmund Cradock and passed into the hands of the Vann family in 1767. It was William Vann who built Belgrave House in 1776 that was located opposite Belgrave Hall and is now part of the museum. During the mid-nineteen century industrialisation started in the area as land was cheap. The first non-English migrants to come were the Irish who stayed near Belgrave Gate. Coventry ribbon makers who came to seek a better

life followed them. Many new factories opened such as Corah's which attracted more migrants who stayed near Belgrave Gate, and this part of the city became the poverty ridden area with what one visitor in 1847 called as an area comprising of 'numerous small dark and dirty street with their miserable hovels and pestiferous atmosphere'.<sup>55</sup>

As stated earlier the East African Asians settled in Leicester. According to Marett:<sup>56</sup>

In the end, less than 30,000 Ugandan Asians arrived in 1972, of whom one in five came to Leicester. Despite all attempts to steer them away, subsequent outcomes have proved that the Asians were correct in their beliefs that Leicester was the place where they could survive and begin to reinvent their skills.

These Asians developed their culture very soon for they stopped thinking of Africa and concentrated on their country of origin, which was India. They imported Indian culture and that has become the hallmark of Leicester City.

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<sup>55</sup>Cited in the *Leicester Mercury*, 13 August 1997.<sup>56</sup>Marett, *Immigrants*, 167.

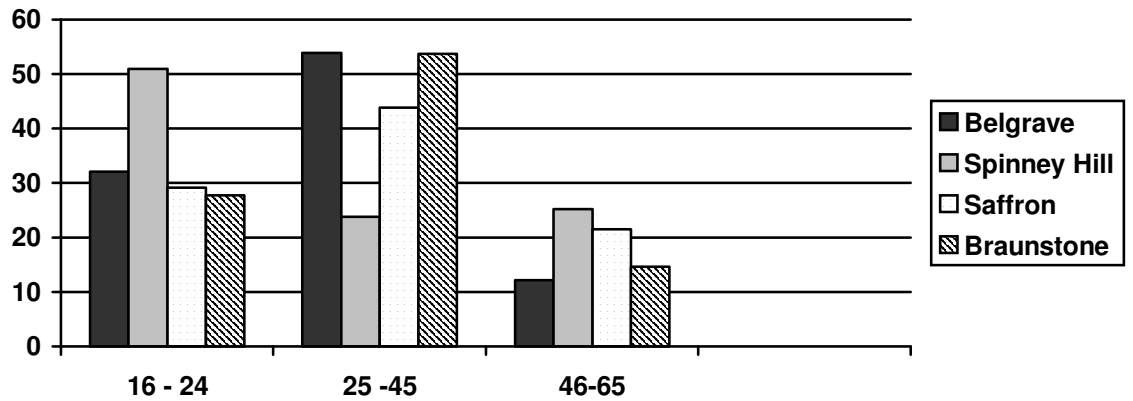
## The SICUL Survey

### *Description of the Sample*

The survey was randomly conducted in a cross-section of the people living in the four wards described above. From each ward some 500 persons were interviewed. Thus, the research was based on a total of 2,000 interviews from the four wards. The full statistical report was deposited with the City Council's Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal Directorate with full details of the methodology adopted.

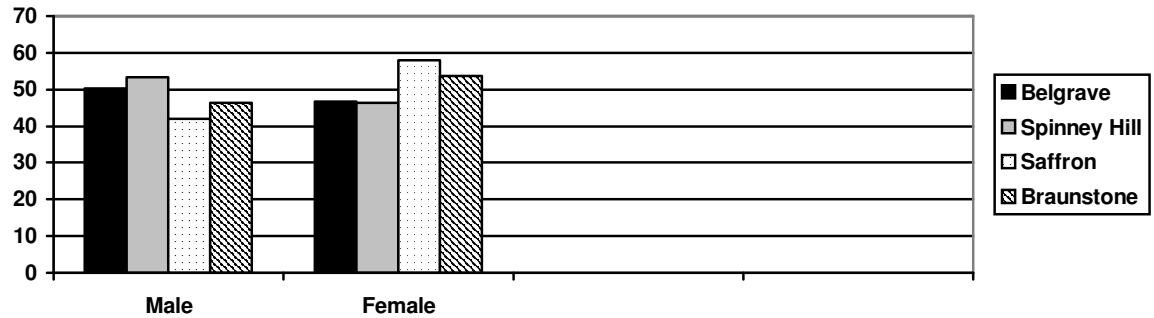
### *General Age Groups*

32.1 per cent of those interviewed in Belgrave were aged between 16 to 24 years old; 53.9 per cent between 25 to 45 years old and 12.2 per cent between 46 and 65. In Spinney Hill 51 per cent were aged between 25 to 45 and 23.8 per cent from 45 to 65. In Saffron 29.1 per cent were between the ages of 16 to 24; 43.8 per cent were 25 to 45 years old and 21.5 per cent were 46 and above. In North Braunstone, 27.7 per cent were between 16 to 25; 53.7 per cent were between 25 and 45, and 14.7 per cent were aged 45 and over.



### *Gender*

The survey also sought to approach a fair distribution of the sexes in terms of gender. Of those surveyed in Belgrave, 50.3 per cent were men and 49.7 per cent women. In Spinney Hill 53.4 per cent were men and 45.8 per cent women. In Saffron 42 per cent were men and 57.6 per cent women while in North Braunstone 46.3 per cent were men and 53.5 per cent women.



*Religion*

There are people of many faiths living in the City of Leicester. There are Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and even some Zoroastrians. Those encountered in our survey were mainly Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, while a number professed to being non-religious.

In the Belgrave ward the majority were Hindus (51.1 per cent) while the others were Muslims (13.6 per cent), Christians (9.2 per cent), Sikhs (7.4 per cent) and some 12.4 per cent claimed to be non-religious.

In Spinney Hill ward the majority were Muslims (35.9 per cent), while the rest were Hindus (22.7 per cent), Sikhs (13.2 per cent), Christians (8.4 per cent) and some 4.8 per cent claimed to be non-religious.

In the Saffron ward, the majority, 62.7 per cent, claimed to be non-religious while some 33.2 per cent identified

themselves as Christians. In North Braunstone ward the majority, 77.6 per cent claimed to be non-religious while 16.4 per cent identified themselves as Christians.

Although one cannot make a generalisation on the religiosity of the people, but looking around in terms of the numbers of temples, mosques and Gurdwaras the Asian sample seem to be 'more religious' than the white working class areas of Saffron and North Braunstone. These observations merely reflect the evidence of people living within their contexts. It is not an assessment whether to be religious or non-religious is good or bad.

#### *Ethnicity*

In terms of ethnicity, 60.7 per cent were Gujaratis of Indian origin in Belgrave. In Spinney Hill, 44.9 per cent, were Muslim Gujaratis of Indian origins. In Saffron, 91.6 per cent and in North Braunstone, 86.9 per cent were white British.



## Part Two: Shared Places

### *Section 3: Culture and Places*

People from diverse cultures can share places. Social cohesion will be facilitated if intercultural communications are established. The record of Leicester of sharing places with diverse cultures is very good and such areas have not experienced cultural conflicts.

Most of the people have lived for over 10 years in the four wards being surveyed. In Spinney Hill 72.5 per cent have lived for more than 10 years. In Saffron almost 78.1 per cent have lived for more 10 years and in North Braunstone it was 67.4 per cent. In the Belgrave area some 62.1 per cent have lived in the area for more than 10 years.

The survey also showed that people said they have a strong attachment to the areas where they live. In the Belgrave area some 52.8 per cent, in Spinney Hill some 58 per cent, in Saffron some 68.7 per cent and in North Braunstone some 65.7 have a strong attachment to the areas in which they live. This was not to suggest that all of them are happy living in the area. In Belgrave some eight per cent do not have a strong attachment. In Spinney Hill, 8.9 per cent, in Saffron 8.4 per cent and in North Braunstone some 20 per cent did not want to stay in the area. The rest of the people interviewed in each ward have not expressed any opinion or were indifferent and said 'don't know'. The strong attachment to the areas is mainly due to family and friends staying in the area. These reasons for the attachment are not unique for people are

reluctant to change residences in areas where they do not know other people. When people look to moving into a new area they also look at the people living in the area. In the case of migrants the reason often found is not only friends and family but also they want people to live with others from their own communities and countries. Staying among their 'own people' offers them security.

Some people do not have an attachment to the area and gave various reasons for this. In Spinney Hill some do not like the place at all and do not feel safe there. In Saffron some resent that there is nothing for their children to do in the area. Others do not like the area or the school. The authors were invited to visit Saffron on a Sunday afternoon and found young kids roaming the streets or in the park. Some were going to town with friends. They said they were 'bored and that was the only entertainment that they could think of'. In North Braunstone some people interviewed do not like it for personal reasons because they have no family there. In Belgrave some fear that drugs will threaten their children. Others think there is too much rubbish on the streets and also fear that their children are bullied in schools.

As stated earlier most of the residents of the wards have a strong attachment to the areas they live in. It was not surprising then to find the majority do not want to move. In Spinney Hill some 67 per cent do not want to move; from Saffron, 75.8 per cent; in North Braunstone, 63.9 per cent and in Belgrave, some 68.1 per cent do not want to move. But there was a significant minority who do want to move which was 21.9 per cent from Spinney Hill; 23.2 per cent from Saffron; 33.5 per cent from North Braunstone;

and 29.7 per cent from Belgrave. The reasons for moving given by the minority were that they wanted a 'better home', a 'bigger home', a 'better area', and an individual from Saffron said he preferred a 'mixed area rather than Asians'.

Given the fact that all these areas suffered from limited access to cultural facilities, some more than others, the question was asked as to how residents like to spend their time. In Spinney Hill the response was that 31.9 per cent went to pubs; 11.1 per cent to clubs; 28.6 per cent to religious places; 14.2 per cent to sports or leisure centres; 43.6 per cent in shops; 2.9 per cent libraries; 33.4 per cent at work. In Saffron , some 38.7 per cent went to pubs; 10 per cent to clubs; 13 per cent to religious places; 15.6 per cent sports and leisure activities; 2.6 per cent in youth clubs; 47.7 per cent in shops; 8.6 per cent libraries; and 41.1 per cent in work. In Braunstone some 33.1 per cent went to pubs; 15.4 per cent to clubs; 13 per cent religious places; 19.6 per cent in sports and leisure; 3 per cent in youth clubs; 73.5 per cent in shops; 6.8 in libraries; and 24 per cent to work. In Belgrave some 42.3 per cent went to pubs; 2.9 per cent clubs; 38 per cent religious places; 28.5 per cent in sports and leisure; 2.7 per cent youth clubs; 68.1 per cent shops; 13.6 per cent libraries; 29 per cent at work.

The above answers make it clear how most people spend their time. Apart from work, most people enjoy shopping which is not to say that they bought things every time they went shopping. Going to other places like pubs, and indulging in sports is a way of passing time pleasantly. Going to religious places is a reflection of people looking

for some outlet for their spiritual needs. The per centage of people who went to religious places in Spinney Hill and Belgrave is more than those living in Saffron or North Braunstone.

Whatever the circumstances, the people in all these wards make the most of their time. This was reflected when asked whether their cultural needs were fulfilled in their area. Some 74.4 per cent from Spinney Hill; 91.8 per cent from Saffron; 83 per cent from Braunstone and 93.2 per cent from Belgrave answered in the affirmative. But their understanding of their cultural needs was limited by an understanding of how they spent their time.

Those who thought some of their needs were not being fulfilled made requests that were more of a practical than cultural nature. In Spinney Hill some said that they could do with more places where children and the elderly could go. In Saffron it was the same. In North Braunstone the request was for more sporting facilities, and things to do for the children. In Belgrave there was a request for a leisure and theatre places. That is not surprising for this area of the city has more cultural activities than any of the other three wards.

About half of the interviewees place their hopes in the City Council to attend to their cultural needs. This was 51.3 per cent from Spinney Hill; 52.3 per cent from Saffron; 42.9 per cent from North Braunstone and 59.9 per cent from Belgrave. Equally, one should not ignore that some people believe that the responsibility should also lie with the people within the community. This was 27.7 per cent from Spinney Hill; 37.1 from Saffron; 19.4 from North

Braunstone and 26 per cent from Belgrave. The percentage of the population believing that it is the responsibility of individuals to develop their area culturally reflected the need for involvement and participation. The City Council should therefore take people into its confidence when considering any schemes, for without the support of the people, the schemes will inevitably fail.

#### *Section 4: Cultural Identifications*

Identities are important indicators of cultural integration. Identities can take the form of religious allegiance, cultural traditions, youth cults, social classes, nationalities, professions, and perhaps many others. When the respondents were asked how they identify themselves, their replies reflected a range of identities.

From Spinney Hill, the majority, 29.7 per cent, identify themselves by their religion. Others identify themselves by class (19.5 per cent), by nationality, (18.2 per cent), by profession (11.1 per cent), and through their leisure activities (9.1 per cent). Although Spinney Hill is a mixed area, the largest minority is Muslim and some mosques have large congregations so its no surprise that religion came out top.

From Saffron only 5 per cent identify themselves through their religion. The majority identify themselves through their nationality (34.3 per cent), leisure activity (17.8 per cent), profession (12.6 per cent) and class (10 per cent). Strong identification with nationality is prominent, as most of the people are from a white working class background. Leisure activities are their secondary identifications.

In North Braunstone the majority again identify with nationality, 34.3 per cent. Others identify themselves through their class (19.4 per cent), religion (18.2 per cent) and leisure activities (17.8 per cent). This again is not surprising for there is no serious alternative to the British national identity among the working-class white people of this area.

In Belgrave, which is predominantly a Hindu community, the majority identify with their religion (22.9 per cent), 19.5 per cent with their leisure activities, 19 per cent with their class and 15.6 per cent with their nationality.

The qualitative responses given to the question as to how their cultural identities are expressed in daily lives is also interesting. In Spinney Hill it is 'through work'; 'through food'; through 'religion and prayers' and through 'shared values'. The area is known for its variety of food and many temples and mosques in the area.

In Saffron the reply is vague when people answered 'don't know' and their concern with other cultures is indifferent. In North Braunstone the response again was that of 'don't know'. This is not surprising for there are hardly any ways that people can express their cultural identity by participation in cultural activities. A researcher who was gathering data along with the Project Officer visited some of the homes in the area. There were many houses boarded up. The people visited said that they do not go into certain areas in case they are attacked. The general picture of the area is gloomy and this study takes a very strong view that Leicester cannot become an intercultural city unless such areas as Saffron and North Braunstone

are integrated into the cultural development of the city and not left isolated. In Belgrave the people are clear and did not reply 'don't know' because they express themselves through the work they prefer to do, through their religion through which they are integrated into their communities, and through their extended families in which they move. So they do not feel isolated for they have developed into a community with a strong cultural identity.

Many of the respondents, as stated earlier, have made the most of what is available in their areas. It is not surprising that they enjoy some aspects of their cultures, which take place in their areas. In Spinney Hill they enjoy cooking, celebrations of various sorts, various festivities on special occasions, invitations to parties and mixing with people. In Saffron they enjoy going out to parties, socialising, reading and occasional festivities. In North Braunstone they also enjoy celebrations, if any are on offer, and spending time with their families and food. In Belgrave people enjoy celebrations, food, meeting others and socialising.

The fact that the city is multicultural is generally accepted. In the opinion of the people surveyed they did not have elitist views of being superior to other people. So when the question was asked how do they perceive their own cultures, their replies are very practical. In Spinney Hill 79.6 per cent consider their cultures as equal to others. In Saffron 78.2 per cent consider their culture as equal to others and 19 per cent as better than others. In Braunstone 80.8 per cent consider their culture as equal to others and 12.8 per cent consider that it was better than

others. In Belgrave 72.5 per cent consider their cultures equal to the others. In Leicester, Indian culture, as stated earlier, has more cultural manifestations than any other culture. It is not surprising that 23.4 per cent consider their culture is better than others. But in Saffron and North Braunstone some consider their culture better than others because 'this is our country', 'more civilised', 'more advanced', 'because I am British', and 'working class people are real people'. Not surprisingly, there are two perspectives emerging from these responses: one from the migrant community, and the other from the indigenous population. Each community regards its own shared beliefs, values, and history in a way which will maximize its pride and honour.



## Part Three: Shared Spaces

### *Section 5 Cultural Spaces*

What does it mean to share spaces? Researchers have proved that even difficult and heterogeneous neighbourhoods can become havens where there is:<sup>57</sup>

- a space for discovering the Other, allowing an intercultural initiative comprising the breaking down of barriers, exchange and interaction between cultural forms of expression, values, lifestyles and symbolic representations that are certainly different but also complementary;
- a space for new solidarities, where one can discover experiences of living together which express a profound transformation of our values, our representations, our behaviour and thus our ways of saying, doing, of sharing knowledge and know-how;
- an extremely dynamic space of artistic and cultural creativity with forms of cultural expression which makes us desire, which connect past and future, and enable many to find a place, and dignity, in a new social bond...
- a space for experimentation concerning new cultural places where new institutional forms, based on proximity and projects can be tried out...

If this is possible in difficult neighbourhoods, then there is plenty of hope for the ambitious plans for the City of Leicester.

Cultural phobia (fear of other cultures) is a widespread phenomenon and has preceded Islamophobia (fear of

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<sup>57</sup> Franco Bianchini and Lia Santacatterina, *Culture and Neighbourhoods, A comparative report*. Volume 2 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 1997).

Islam). It currently characterises western society, but most people do not acknowledge it openly. Places, peoples and cultures feel suffocated due to cultural phobias. Cultural spaces are needed. 'Spaces' as defined for the purpose of this survey are not actual or physical places but a way of looking at places. It constitutes a kind of gaze, which needs to be directed for the vision of this city in terms of sharing intercultural spacing. To explain this further, people can visit a palace and feel uncomfortable in it while considering their own house as a castle. On the other hand, people can view their own places as hell and other places as havens. Spaces therefore can transcend places.

Furthermore, people can regard places as multicultural but yet suffer from cultural phobia. There may be others who regard a place as multicultural free of cultural phobia and enriching it. When the city is preparing to promote itself for tourist attraction, it has to do so from a multicultural point of view. The most important need for creating such attractions is to direct the gaze of the onlooker, that is, the tourist. One study states:<sup>58</sup>

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, specially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasure, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered... the tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience... the gaze is constructed through signs and tourism involves the collection of signs. When tourists see two people kissing in Paris, what they capture in the gaze is 'timeless romantic Paris'. When a small

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<sup>58</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 3.

village in England is seen, what they gaze upon is 'real olde England'.

This survey found that while everybody was happy with their own cultures, they do not allow for intercultural spaces. In other words, there is no desire among the people to engage interculturally with the culture of the Other. When the question was asked whether, if given the chance, they would be interested in informing others of any aspects of their cultures the results were not enthusiastic. In Spinney Hill 60.3 per cent said 'don't know' and 16 per cent have no opinion. Only 16 per cent expressed a desire to inform others of their own culture. In Saffron 46.8 per cent are not interested and 30.5 per cent do not have any opinion about it and 15.9 per cent said that they do not know. In North Braunstone, 43.4 per cent are not interested, 25 per cent do not know and 18.4 per cent have no opinion. Only 13.2 per cent said that they are interested. In Belgrave 53.4 per cent are not interested and 21.3 per cent have no opinion while 13.5 per cent said that they are interested in informing others about their culture. Some respondents however think 'they wouldn't know what to say' or 'they would not be interested.'

Many reasons are given for not wanting to know about the culture of the Other. Some consider they are limited in the English language, implying that they will not understand other cultures. Some others consider it is 'up to them', that is, the Other, to take the initiative in informing them. Some have 'no time' or are 'not interested'. One even said 'we do not know enough about our culture'.

*Section 6: Cultural Awareness*

Cultural awareness (that is, whether one is aware there are other cultures that are equally as important as one's own) is an important aspect of interculturality provided it accepts intercultural spacing. One has to expand one's identity in terms of coexisting with other cultures. One does not have to have knowledge of other cultures but just the awareness that there are other cultures besides one's own. Knowledge about the culture of the Other is not the same as cultural awareness. Such knowledge can be acquired if one has a professional need. One of the popular courses run by the Workers Education Association in Leicester has been 'Multicultural Mosaic'. The people attending these courses are all adults from different professions who have gone there to acquire specialist cultural knowledge. Cultural awareness can be reinforced from such specific training but it is not an essential prerequisite for becoming culturally aware in more general terms.

Generally, people who live in neighbourhoods know who their neighbours are. This is a good sign, for the majority in all the four wards said they know about their neighbours. In Spinney Hill 49.9 per cent said that they know and 35.6 said that they 'don't know'. In Saffron 54.2 per cent said that they did know while 38.4 had no opinion. In North Braunstone 75.4 per cent said that they did know while only 13.8 per cent had no opinion. In Belgrave 73.5 per cent said that they know while 16 per cent had no opinion

When asked about the origin of their neighbours, their answers are interesting. In Spinney Hill they consider that they are of 'mixed races' or 'Pakistani' or 'Somali'. In Saffron they perceive others as 'mainly mixed' or 'Asian' or 'African-Caribbean'. In North Braunstone they perceive them as 'Kosovan', 'Asylum seekers' and 'refugees' or 'Asians' and in Belgrave they perceive some as 'mixed' or 'Hindus' or 'Gujaratis'.

While they do not know about the culture of the Other each guessed the origins of the Other. Their attitude towards the origins of their neighbours is not exciting but indifferent or 'OK' or 'good'. It is definitely not an attitude of hostility which may be considered as a sign of tolerance and a strong characteristic of Leicester.

Since there has been no concerted effort for the development of intercultural relations, people do not share any aspect of any other culture. In Spinney Hill, 42.9 per cent said 'don't know'; 26.6 per cent said 'no'; 17.5 per cent had 'no opinion' and only 13.1 per cent that they do share some aspect of cultures. In Saffron 67.7 said 'no' to sharing cultures while only 18.1 per cent said that they did and 13.1 per cent had no opinion. In North Braunstone 74.1 per cent said no while only 11 per cent said 'yes' and another 11 per cent did not know what to do. In Belgrave 52.2 had 'no opinion' about it and 25.7 per cent said 'yes' while 19.2 per cent said 'no' (this information is presented in table 2 in the preface).

## Part Four: Shared Vision

### *Section 7: Knowledge of Cultures*

Cultural awareness is all very well, but knowledge of other cultures is another thing. A city is a more active place than the countryside. All sorts of events take place and all sorts of people live in it. Knowledge of other cultures can facilitate engaging with other cultures. Knowing implies a degree of sharing and the cultural institutions in the city should facilitate this process.

### *Cultural Institutions*

Cultural institutions are considered by Marc Pachter and Charles Landry to be 'mediating mechanisms' and 'agencies of ethos'.<sup>59</sup> Expanding on this further, the authors commented:<sup>60</sup>

even though cultural institutions do not need to be physical spaces, a festival tradition, the BBC, PBS, or long standing radio show, can be a cultural space. Museums, galleries and performing arts centres hold a special place in the arena of cultural institutions.

Cultural institutions, then, can play important roles in the development of the cultures of the cities.

We selected three such cultural institutions: the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester City Museums and MATV. All

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<sup>59</sup> Marc Pachter and Charles Landry, *Culture at the Crossroads* (Bournes Green: Comedia, 2001), 78

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

these institutions are considered to be well-known in the city. The question was: were the people of the four wards multicultural enough to attend or see their productions?

### *The New Walk Museum*

In 1999 the Museum celebrated its 150th anniversary. Since then it has grown considerably larger both in terms of expansion and acquisitions. Various historical buildings came under the jurisdiction of the Museums Service, such as the Magazine, which was part of the defensive system of medieval Leicester. It became the Royal Leicestershire Regimental Museum in the 1960s. Another acquisition was the Wyggeston's House Museum of Costume, displaying historical costumes. The Guildhall, an early medieval building, has also passed into the hands of the Museums Service. It lends itself to entertainment through plays, lectures and receptions. Thus the Leicester City Museum Services has become the largest cultural institution in the City. It manages:<sup>61</sup>

- Six museums open to the public that are also historic, listed buildings: New Walk Museum, Newark Houses Museum (a charitable trust), the Guildhall, Jewry Wall Museum, Belgrave Hall and Abbey Pumping Station.
- One historic building used by the Learning Exchange: Wyggeston's House.
- Two sites (scheduled ancient monuments) open to the public: Jewry Wall and baths, and Raw Dykes.
- Two Gardens at Newark Houses Museum and Belgrave Hall.

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<sup>61</sup> Heritage Services, *Best Value Review: Interim Report* (Leicester: Leicester City Council, May 2002), 62.

- Four non-operational historic, listed or scheduled, buildings: the Castle, the Magazine Gateway, Belgrave House, and Cross Corners House.

Apart from this, it delivers many other services such as the Museum Education Service, and has fine art collections, an Egyptology collection, Decorative Art and world culture collections, archaeology, local and regional history, knitwear, footwear, costumes and textiles, regional numismatics collection, engineering and road transport collections, and others.

Sarah Levitt, Head of Museums and Heritage, is a cultural expert with many creative ideas and has enthusiastically supported many new projects. At the Museums Conference of 2002, she commented:<sup>62</sup>

A recent reorganisation of the whole council to deliver a greater neighbourhood focus proposed downsizing our department. We made a case for its importance, backed up by the cultural strategy, and we are now no longer Arts and Leisure, but Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal, operating side by side with the new network of neighbourhood managers at the forefront of the council's new vision.

Furthermore she added:

We are a city of cultural diversity... other cities, like Manchester, have similar sizes of different communities, but it is the proportion that makes us really special. We are a smallish and compact city and the non-white population is probably already greater than the white. Soon Asians will be the majority ethnic group. This gives fantastic opportunities, we are already recognised as one of the world's premier centres for Asian

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<sup>62</sup> Speech recorded on disk and supplied by the Museums Service. Cf. Head of Museums wins top award:  
<[www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk/news/sarah.htm](http://www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk/news/sarah.htm)>



culture. Moreover our range of cultures is breathtaking. One school has 37 languages spoken. The focus in Leicester has moved from welcoming newcomers to recognising that diversity is Leicester itself and people of all races and cultures are equally Leicester people.

For SICUL's survey a number of exhibitions held at Leicester City Museum Services were selectively listed and people asked if they had attended any of them. The exhibitions listed were: Leicester Society of Artists Annual exhibition; Paper Pt; Wild Space; The Homes of Football; Icons of Identity; A Farewell to Filbert Street; Wild Water; Limits of My Language; Leicester Urban Foxes; BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year; Black History Season Exhibition; Holocaust History Poster exhibition; Mad in China; Meeting God – Elements of Personal Devotion in India; Meeting God in Leicester; A Taste of Leicester and 'I am'.

Most of the people interviewed in Spinney Hill did not go to exhibitions at the Museum. Less than two per cent attended on a regular basis, but 5.6 per cent did attend 'Meeting God – Elements of Personal Devotion in India' and 4.5 per cent attended 'Meeting God in Leicester'.

From Saffron the attendance was below one and a half per cent, but 13.3 per cent did attend 'Farewell to Filbert Street' and 13.9 per cent attended 'A Taste of Leicester'. In North Braunstone, attendance was less than one per cent. In Belgrave one and a half per cent attended the Museums.

When asked why the people from the four wards did not attend exhibitions at the Museum, they replied that they lacked interest, or did not have the time. They were told that some of the programmes are multicultural, were they

still not interested in it? The response still was that they are not interested, had no time, and some said that they did not know about it.

#### *Midlands Asian TV*

MATV is the only terrestrial Asian TV station in the UK. The initiative for opening it was taken by an enterprising Asian businessman Mr. Vinod Papat in 1998. It was reported to be the 'first British Asian free-to-air channel operating totally independently and broadcasting around the clock'.<sup>63</sup> In the beginning there were problems of reception, since only some parts of the city could receive the signal. But transmission over cable has overcome that problem and complements the existing free-to-air terrestrial service increasing its reach to Loughborough, Hinckley, Burton-upon-Trent and Vale of Belvoir.

According to Papat, 'Bollywood movies were being shown at 3am on mainstream channels... who in their right mind would want to watch a 2-3 hour long movie at that time in the morning?'<sup>64</sup> Another initiative taken by MATV was to put on a programme 'Leicestershire in Focus' which has become its flagship programme and has attracted wider audiences. Many other programmes including religious programmes belonging to some of the faiths located in Leicester are shown on MATV. Daljeet, Neer, Binati Gature, Rajendra Brahmabhatt, Josh and Maya and Nilesh Shukla have all become MATV personalities.

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<sup>63</sup> Stuart Aitken, 'Representing Leicester's Ethnic Minority', 8 July 2003. <[www.mad.co.uk](http://www.mad.co.uk)>

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Some 70 per cent of MATV's programmes came from India and, according to Papat, this has 'created a platform for young people from ethnic minorities to show their talent'. MATV made an alliance with India's Sabe TV, which has not only strengthened its presence in the city, but also plans to extend its presence in the country. The new alliance has a three-point vision, which is:<sup>65</sup>

First, to expand the distribution of the SABE-MATV programming through the East Midlands, and then eventually nationally via other distribution platforms. Second, to enhance MATV's local creative and production capability by utilizing SABE's TV production expertise. Third, make MATV a major industry standard media-training provider. MATV can and will become a major Centre of Excellence for media training in the region.

SICUL's survey results show that in Spinney Hill 38.7 per cent watch MATV. In Saffron some 13.5 per cent watch it. In North Braunstone only 1.6 per cent watch it while in Belgrave 56.5 per cent watch it. The high percentage in Belgrave and Spinney Hill is not surprising because they are mainly Asian areas.

When asked what type of programmes they generally prefer there were varied answers. In Spinney Hill some 22.5 per cent enjoy watching films while 15.4 listen to the news. In Saffron 10.6 per cent watch films and 8.8 watch music programs. In North Braunstone, the percentage was hardly significant while in Belgrave 41.7 per cent watch films; 35.4 per cent music programs and 30.2 watch the news.

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<sup>65</sup> Memo received from MATV entitled 'Television revolution...', 9 July 2003.

*The Haymarket Theatre*

The Haymarket Theatre is located on Belgrave Gate. It was opened in November 1973. The cost of building was £1 million, which was funded by the City Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain. The site of the theatre has an interesting history for it was the market in the medieval period where the people of Leicester gathered to sell and barter goods. While this was going on, some theatrical acts would put on a show. Many such performers would visit this area. Furthermore wandering minstrels and strolling players would climb on their carts and put on entertaining performances for the people.

The theatre has two auditoriums, the large one seats 752 people and the Studio seats 120. Over the years it has put on a variety of shows — musicals, new plays, children's theatre, international theatre and dances, community and educational events and Asian theatre. The Haymarket is reputed to be 'the only UK theatre' that is 'led by both Western and Eastern cultures. This year the Asian Theatre initiative (Natak) has been integrated into the main programme of artists' artwork under the direction of the Chief Executive and Artistic Directors.'<sup>66</sup>

The Haymarket incurred debts and had to close down temporarily in July 2003. There has been controversy about why it closed and some people have even claimed that it incurred debts because it showed performances of a

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<sup>66</sup> Note on Haymarket blurb sent to the authors by Malika Andress, 9 July 2003.

multicultural nature. This may reveal a degree of racial prejudice and certainly reflects a lack of interest in cultural integration on the part of some people. Ruth Doyle, the Communications Director of the theatre comments on some of the main causes:<sup>67</sup>

The financial crisis is not just caused by programming, but it's the single factor that all the letters comment on. The truth is far more complex: a mixture of factors including rising production costs, rising payroll costs, rising maintenance costs, strike action by BECTU, loss of County grant [and] state funding... and low box office for some shows, including *West Side Story*, for which advanced sales were badly affected by the strike.

She further commented:<sup>68</sup>

It's worth knowing that in March this year, there were a number of letters to the [*Leicester*] *Mercury* from readers saying that they were 'boycotting' the Haymarket because they felt our programme was too 'ethnically biased' and there were 'too many unknown plays and Asian productions'.

This shows that a cultural institution is making important strides into intercultural bridging but some segments of the population are against it. Here again cultural bridging is required.

Whatever the reason for shutting down, the people of Leicester, had they had intercultural identities, would have lent their full support to ensure this institution stayed functioning rather than letting it close down. Attempts are being made to rescue the Haymarket Theatre. It is hoped that it will reopen in a couple of years' time on a grand

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<sup>67</sup> Ruth Doyle's personal communication with the authors, 3 June 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

scale in the area being developed as the Cultural Quarter of the city. Rafael Vinoly, a New York architect, is designing the new theatre. The new theatre will comprise two theatres with rehearsal, training and production facilities. But the cost of the project is extremely high, and its precise size and location have been thrown into doubt as of September 2003 because of heritage considerations regarding an adjoining building which was scheduled for demolition.<sup>69</sup>

For the purposes of SICUL's survey a random selection of its programmes was listed in the questionnaire. Those listed were: Catwalk; Hot Stuff; Martha; Oedipus the King; On Your Toes; Open Door Festival 2002; Peter Pan; Plague of Innocence; Portrait in Song – Edith Piaf; Shoot 2 Win; The Selfish Giant; The Witches; West Side Story; Bali – the Sacrifice; Inside Out; Journey to the West; Nritya Sanjit Sandhya; Othello; Rhythm; Singh Tangoes; Unsuitable Girls.

These were all excellent programmes but from Spinney Hill less than one per cent of the respondents went to the theatre on a regular basis. For the play Bali – the Sacrifice some 5.8 per cent attended and four per cent attended Nritya Sanjit Sandhya while four per cent attended Catwalk. From Saffron the general attendance is below two per cent. But 8.8 per cent attended The Witches; 8.2 attended Peter Pan and 5.4 attended West Side Story. From North Braunstone the majority of people surveyed had not been to the Haymarket theatre. Of those that had,

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<sup>69</sup> Tim Walsh, 'Heritage counter-attack', *Leicester Mercury*, 1 Oct. 2003, p. 8.

10.8 per cent saw Hot Stuff and 4.8 per cent saw West Side Story. From Belgrave 9.7 per cent attended Unsuitable for Girls; 7.3 per cent attended 'Singh Tangos'; 5.7 per cent 'Bali the Sacrifice'; 5.7 per cent attended Nritya Sanjit Sandhya; 4.7 per cent attended West Side Story; 4.7 per cent attended 'Open Door Festival'.

Those who did not go the Haymarket Theatre were asked why. From Spinney Hill some said that they do not like the theatre, others are not interested or have no time. From Saffron, North Braunstone and Belgrave there are similar replies. But one person in Braunstone commented: 'theatre puts shows on for middle-class people'. This is an interesting comment and, although it is not true, such perceptions of theatre spaces have to be changed.

As some of the shows were multicultural another question was asked of people: why they had not seen some of the productions? The replies were the usual ones, that they were busy or working or not interested.

It must be said that these three cultural institutions have put on intercultural programmes and productions. It is the respondents of the four wards who lacked interest for various reasons. But the fault does not lie entirely with any of the parties. What it does reflect is a lack of cultural integration in the City of Leicester. Cultural Strategy policies have to bring people and cultural institutions together.

### *Section 8 Intercultural Communication*

It is important to know how to communicate for this is not an easy task. According to one study, 'awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge are not sufficient for successful cross-cultural intervention'.<sup>70</sup>

Some of the Christian religious festivals like Christmas and Easter are celebrated every year in Leicester. Others are cultural festivals like Hogmanay, Harvest Festival and the Carnival. Let us give a brief note on what these festivals are all about. The festivals we highlighted are:

- *Idd*: This is a Muslim festival celebrated twice a year. One is known as *Idd al-Fitr* and the other *Idd al-Adha*. All over the world in the Muslim countries or communities they are celebrated on a grand scale
- *Vaisakhi*: This is held on or near 13 April of every year and marks the founding of the *Khalsa* by the 10<sup>th</sup> Guru in 1699
- *Diwali*: A Hindu festival, that is celebrated all over India during the months of October/November. It is associated with goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune who visits every house that is lit by the lamps
- *Hanukah*: Eight-day festival marked by the lighting of ritual candles which celebrates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC
- Caribbean Carnival: This is a multicultural festival celebrating the emancipation from slavery from the British West Indies. It has Caribbean roots and celebrated in Trinidad style for everyone to join in.

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<sup>70</sup> K. Kavanagh and Patricia Kennedy, *Promoting Cultural Diversity* (New Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992), 41.



- Harvest Festival: An English celebration of the harvesting of crops in early Autumn
- Hogmanay: Pagan celebration of New Year's Eve, originating in Scotland but now celebrated throughout the UK, and having a counterpart throughout the Western world in the general celebration of the passage of the calendar year.

In Spinney Hill, 43.6 per cent of those interviewed have knowledge of *Diwali*; 39.3 per cent have knowledge of *Idd*; 24.4 per cent know of the Carnival and 19 per cent have knowledge of *Vaisaki*. Only 13.1 per cent have knowledge of the Harvest Festival; 10.1 per cent know of *Hanukah* and 7.9 per cent have knowledge of Hogmanay.

In Saffron, 86.7 per cent know of the Carnival; 79.5 per cent have knowledge of *Diwali*; 78.9 per cent have knowledge of the Harvest Festival; 61.4 per cent have knowledge of Hogmanay and 31.1 per cent have knowledge of *Idd*. Only 9 per cent have knowledge of *Hanukah* and 2.4 per cent have knowledge of *Vaisaki*.

In North Braunstone, 81.2 per cent have knowledge of the Carnival; 70.1 per cent have knowledge of the Harvest Festival; 47.7 per cent have knowledge of *Diwali* and 30.9 per cent have knowledge of Hogmanay. Only 5.8 per cent have knowledge of *Idd*; five per cent have knowledge of *Hanukah* and 1.6 per cent have knowledge of *Vaisaki*.

In Belgrave 79.2 per cent had knowledge of *Diwali*; 45.3 per cent have knowledge of *Idd*; 39.5 per cent have knowledge of the Carnival; 35.4 per cent have knowledge of *Vaisaki*; and 30.6 per cent have knowledge of the Harvest Festival. Only 4.9 per cent have knowledge of Hogmanay and 8.5 per cent have knowledge of *Hanukah*.

The desire to know about other cultures is a positive step towards interculturalism. In Spinney Hill 19.2 per cent said no, while 15 per cent expressed a desire to know about other cultures. In Saffron, 61.7 per cent are not interested while 13.8 expressed a desire to know about other cultures. In North Braunstone, 65.7 per cent said they are not interested, while 13.8 per cent expressed a desire to know. In Belgrave, 30.6 per cent want to know about other cultures while 12.8 per cent said they did not.

When asked why they are not interested in knowing about other cultures, the replies were that they are 'happy with their own culture' or they are 'not interested'. One even said that he 'found it hard to follow my own culture'. Furthermore, the respondents did not see any benefits in knowing about other cultures. In Spinney Hill 19.2 per cent said no, while 15.7 per cent said they did see benefits. In Saffron 60.2 per cent did not see any benefit while 24.9 per cent did see some benefit; in North Braunstone 52.3 per cent did not see any benefit, while 20 per cent did see some benefit, and in Belgrave 14 per cent said no, while 23.5 per cent did see a benefit.

Those who did see some benefits from knowing about the cultures of the Other consider they should 'get to know more' or develop 'a better understanding' of other cultures. Some think it would be good to 'understand and teach my children' or 'get knowledge'. Another response was that 'the UK is very multicultural and maybe if we knew more about each other there would not be so much conflict and racism'. This last response is a profound comment. Just as multiculturalism has failed, so also have anti-racism policies. During the 1980s anti-racism was

very popular but just by telling others about racism or that they should not be racist has not made much difference in British society. But intercultural participation is another thing. It creates personal experiences through participation in various activities. There is no substitute for this.

Also some people have an asset in knowing an additional language. In Spinney Hill 36.6 per cent speak another language; in Saffron only 7.8 per cent know another language. In North Braunstone only 10.6 per cent know another language but in Belgrave 73.5 per cent know another language. A range of additional languages was listed. In Spinney Hill they know English, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, French, and Cutchi. In Saffron, the languages known are all European like French, German, Italian and Spanish. In North Braunstone for some reason it is mainly French and in Belgrave it is Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and English.

The desire to learn languages is also expressed. Although the percentages are low, except in Belgrave, it is still a significant factor. In Spinney Hill 12.7 per cent said yes; from Saffron 13.7 per cent said yes; from North Braunstone 27.1 per cent said yes. But from Belgrave 42.9 per cent said yes. Desire is also expressed about studying an assortment of other cultures like Jamaican, Germans, Chinese, Americans, Punjabis and Spanish etc. But in terms of choosing to know about the religions of the Other, the desire was not forthcoming.

In Spinney Hill, there is no other religion that the people surveyed want to know about except their own. In Saffron

if a choice had to be made than it would be Buddhism or Catholicism. From North Braunstone the choice is for Christianity and from Belgrave they simply do not want to know about other faiths. But if a choice had to be made then it would be Christianity, Islam and Sikhism.

Demographic statistics suggest that Leicester is going to be the first city where the Asian migrants will become the majority. If this city is truly progressing towards the acceptance of cultural diversity then whichever culture and migrant community became dominant should not become a major problem. The problem is when policies are bereft of justice for all, and lack a cultural strategy that aims at creating a culturally integrated city.

The divide is clearly reflected in the Saffron and North Braunstone wards versus the Spinney Hill and Belgrave wards. The former do not want to accept the Asian majority. The results of the survey present interesting findings. In Spinney Hill 26.2 per cent accept it while 17.3 per cent do not. In Saffron 41.4 per cent do not accept it and only 17.5 per cent accept it. In North Braunstone 78.4 per cent do not accept this and only 2.2 per cent said yes to it. In Belgrave 42.1 per cent accept and 37.2 per cent said they did not.

The future of Leicester does not seem positive to the two predominantly white wards. In Spinney Hill 39.4 per cent think it has a positive future while 6.3 per cent did not. In Saffron 34.3 per cent see the future negatively while 19.1 per cent see it in a positive light. In North Braunstone 44.7 per cent see it in a negative light and only 8.6 per cent see

it in a positive light. In Belgrave 68 per cent see it positively while 4.7 per cent view it negatively.

It would be interesting to find out more as to why the Asian-dominated wards are positive while the working class white dominated wards are negative. But one thing should be made clear. It does not make the wards racist. What it reflects in terms of cultural strategy and intercultural spacing is that segments of the population are not ready to accept an Asian majority. It also reflects again the reality that Leicester is not an integrated city.

But the city's multicultural and not intercultural character becomes clear when each culture is smug in its own boundaries. Most of the respondents do not express an interest to know about other cultures. In Saffron 77.9 per cent are not interested in receiving information while in North Braunstone 85.6 per cent are not interested in receiving information.

## Part Five: Shared Society

### *Section 9: Shared Values*

The city can only become integrated if it shares its cultural diversity. One cannot share in religious diversity because religious functions have an essential element of sacredness. But cultural diversity does not have such sacredness. It is open to all who want to enjoy any part of its activities. This makes it easier for people drawn from culturally diverse communities to participate in, and share, common values and move towards socio-cultural integration.

In Spinney Hill 38.6 per cent said that they should integrate into the indigenous British culture. In Saffron, 64.1 per cent said yes. In North Braunstone 53.8 per cent agreed and in Belgrave 52.9 per cent also consented. But integration into the indigenous culture may be seen as a one-way process. It is not, for it is a two-way process. Integration of migrants into the mainstream culture does not and should not mean that they have to give up their cultures and religions. On the contrary, they should keep their religions and cultures but widen their intercultural experiences with the indigenous community. Equally the indigenous community has to accept diversity. One way to do this is by sharing common values.

The Parekh Report put it very well:<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Bikhu Parekh, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain chaired by Professor Bikhu Parekh* (London: Profile Books, 2000), 60.

Like any other society, the UK needs common values to hold it together and give it a sense of cohesion. At the same time it must acknowledge that its citizens belong to a variety of moral traditions and subscribe to and live by a range of values. Therefore common values cannot simply be the values of one community, even if it is the numerical 'majority', but must emerge from democratic dialogue and be based on reasons that individuals belonging to different moral and cultural traditions can agree on. They should not be so defined that they rule out legitimate moral differences or impose a particular rule of life on all. Nor should they be seen as fixed and settled forever, as new insights and experiences are likely to call for their reconsideration.

This should make the point clear that sharing common values in a multicultural society is different from still living in a monocultural society.

In a general sense the migrant communities in Leicester are integrated politically to the extent that they support various political parties and are elected to the City Council as Councillors. Economically they are also integrated as they engage in business or work and pay taxes. What separates them is their religion and culture, from which they derive their identities, but which also draw boundaries around them. Integration on the socio-national levels with British culture can be done through the sharing of common values. If there are conflicting values this will be an obstacle for intercultural relations. This will not necessarily happen, but crossing the boundaries of one's own culture into the culture of the Other is a prerequisite. But how many people share common values? Six choices for value integration were randomly suggested in the survey:

*Loyalty to the Queen.* From Spinney Hill 19.9 per cent agree; from Saffron 17.8 per cent agree. From North Braunstone 44 per cent agree, while in Belgrave, 15.4 agree.

*Loyalty to the State.* From Spinney Hill 7.6 per cent agree; 18.6 per cent agree from Saffron. From North Braunstone 44 per cent agree, while from Belgrave 21.8 per cent agree.

*Loyalty to a political party.* From Spinney Hill 2.6 per cent agree, while from Saffron 6.2 agree. From North Braunstone 16.2 agree while 10.1 per cent chose this option from Belgrave.

*Tolerance of other people.* From Spinney Hill 20.8 per cent agree, while 47.1 per cent agree from Saffron. From North Braunstone 50.6 agree and from Belgrave 34.9 per cent agree.

*Belief in justice.* From Spinney Hill 15 per cent agree, while 47.5 per cent agree with it from Saffron. From North Braunstone 51.6 per cent agree, while 29.1 per cent agree from Belgrave.

*Helping others in need.* From Spinney Hill 15.7 per cent agree, while 52.5 per cent agree from Saffron. From North Braunstone 52.6 per cent agree and from Belgrave 35.4 agree with it.

It is also necessary to find out if people can relate to particular icons. When asked, none of them mentioned any figures from the local region, but instead gave nationally important figures. From Spinney Hill the names of Princess Diana; Winston Churchill; David Beckham and Queen



Victoria are mentioned. In Saffron it is Winston Churchill. Princes Diana, the Queen, Charles Darwin and even Alfred the Great is mentioned. The latter choice is because 'he managed to unite the people in the UK'. From North Braunstone the icons are Winston Churchill, Princess Diana and Enoch Powell. It is interesting Powell's name is mentioned from North Braunstone. From Belgrave the icons are Shakespeare, Robin Hood, Richard Branson, David Beckham, Bally Sagoo and Gandhi. It is not surprising that the last icon is mentioned. Gandhi is not only a hero for the Hindus but is considered to be so in India and is globally also known as a man of peace and non-violence.

There are many responses as to why such national or international figures are considered to be icons. Their remarks are that the individual was a 'great leader' or that they have done 'a lot of good for our country'; some, like Diana, projected images of 'positive female roles'; 'did charity work'; 'helped the poor'; 'cared about people' and 'had a gentle soul'. Some like Churchill because he had 'won the war' and others like Enoch Powell 'because he knew the UK would be overcrowded with foreigners' or that he 'saw where the country was going and did not want immigrants in the UK'. Shakespeare was considered an icon because 'he wrote inspiring plays and in the society today we are still learning from his plays'.

#### *Section 10: Bridging Diversity*

As stated earlier, it is possible that two cultures may exist side by side with each other and yet be hostile with each

other. Although this is not the case in Leicester between the indigenous majority and the migrant minority one cannot be sure of the relations between the minority communities themselves. Between majority and minority communities, for the most part, there is indifference. On the one hand, there can be hostility between the Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Muslims, Jews and Muslims etc. The causes for their hostilities are not derived from Leicester but represent historical baggage, which has, in some cases, been imported from their countries of origin.

Intercultural bridging is a subtle process of 'hitching' two different cultures for developing a positive relation of one culture with the culture of the Other to produce social cohesion. This is not a process that takes place naturally. Intercultural bridging needs to be carefully planned.

When asked which one of their values should be given the highest priority, the answers are interesting. In Spinney Hill 39.7 per cent said that they will give the first priority to 'tolerance of other people' and 12.9 per cent stated religion should be given first priority. In Saffron 95 per cent considered that 'tolerance of other people' is important. In North Braunstone 94 per cent held similar views and in Belgrave 77.6 per cent consider tolerance of other people while 9.9 per cent consider justice should be given the highest priority.

The point is that one cannot remain complacent about diversity. Although the people from Saffron have said tolerance of other people should be given priority, yet gravestones in the Muslim cemetery in Saffron were desecrated twice in 2003, once in April and again in July.

Such hostilities are created by external factors such as the War in Iraq. The *Leicester Mercury* reported that some 30 gravestones were desecrated and that 'Muslim leaders feared the attacks were racially motivated'.<sup>72</sup> The Bishop of Leicester made a strong statement in support of the Muslim community in which he said:<sup>73</sup>

I want the Muslim community to know that Christian people are standing alongside them in their indignation and hurt. We will do anything to resist these kind of attacks which are really attacks on all of us who respect the values of civilization.

The response from the *Leicester Mercury* was equally in its editorial:<sup>74</sup>

Leicester is rightly reputed nationwide for how well it has build good relations between its diverse communities. We have not experienced the violence and disharmony that has blighted some other cities... If the idiots who carried out this vandalism believe that they will shake this sense of unity they are mistaken. If anything, their actions will only serve to strengthen even further the bonds between all those who stand for the values of civilization.

The concern is that there may be many who supported these acts but no-one can know their numbers. But it should not be underestimated that such incidents reflect the tension and hostility that may be lurking beneath the surface of what everybody considers a very harmonious city.

When the respondents were asked whether Leicester is a multicultural city, the response was positive. In Spinney

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<sup>72</sup> Cairan Fagan and Jennifer Sym, 'Desecrated', *Leicester Mercury*, 26 July 2003, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Editorial, *Leicester Mercury*, 26 July 2003, p. 12.

Hill 59.1 per cent answered that it was, and 84.8 per cent from Saffron consider likewise. In North Braunstone 80.4 per cent feel it is a multicultural city while 95.2 per cent in Belgrave consider it one. The fact of recognizing the social reality of the city is encouraging. In Spinney Hill some 55.4 per cent enjoy Leicester as a multicultural city, and 49.1 per cent in Saffron are of the same opinion and in Belgrave 85.5 per cent like the idea. It is only in North Braunstone that only 25 per cent like the city as multicultural while a higher number, 35.8 per cent, do not.

So far the survey has shown Leicester is a multicultural city but not an intercultural one. To make it an intercultural city, intercultural bridging is needed. This is not reflected in any of the earlier studies that have been examined and mentioned in this report. There is a lot of wishful thinking but nothing more. This may be a consequence of innocence or naïvety on the part of this city's policy- and decision-makers in making the assumption that multiculturalism will lead to interculturalism. It does not and will not happen until intercultural bridging is, in effect, socially engineered. Intercultural bridges do not build themselves. Bridges have to be constructed with full understanding, planning and effectiveness.

The kind of naïvety mentioned above is consistent with what has been stated in the earlier part of this report, that there are good relations among the top levels of community leaders and decision-makers. We have given examples of how the Bishop of Leicester and the *Leicester Mercury* came out strongly in support of the Muslim community when their graveyard was desecrated. But we

will go a step further and state that in Leicester there are even good relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities. But this relationship is economic in its nature. There are Muslim factory-owners in the city whose labour force comprises workers from the Hindu community. The workforces in many other places belong to different religions. They clearly did not get their jobs because they belong to another religion, but because of their qualifications. It shows that whether or not the owner has negative views about other cultures and religions, from an economic point of view the profit motive is more important.

The Asian community has contributed enormously to the city's economic growth. The Gujarati community has a long business tradition. Paul Winstone has observed: 'the 1990s saw an explosion of Asian Entrepreneurship with small shopkeeper associations evolving into Leicestershire Asian Business Association (LABA) with over 1,500 small and medium enterprises'.<sup>75</sup> The organization has increased in strength since he wrote these remarks. Despite this, it does not follow that the relationship between cultures and faiths is necessarily harmonious.

The city's future designers such as the Leicester Regeneration Company and promoters like LeicesterShire Promotions place the economic aspects as a priority in encouraging multicultural plans for the city. The profit motive is again the incentive here and that has to be recognized. The assumption is that the more prosperous

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<sup>75</sup> Paul Winstone, 'Multicultural Leicester'. Background Briefing Note 1. Chief Executive's Office. Leicester City Council, nd.

the city the better other types of relations will be. This is a false assumption. Economic relations between communities are just one aspect of the relationship. The other types of relations are equally important, if not more so, and these are of the cultural, political and (above all) religious kind. These factors, it seem, have not quite been understood, or they are being ignored. The economic factor is important but it is not instrumental in intercultural bridging if the political, religious and cultural relations are not harmonious.

One of the factors which complicate this kind of understanding, is that policy-makers may not be aware that many apparently cultural functions have religious underpinnings in some of the principal faiths in Leicester such as Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. The main celebrations of these communities such as *Diwali*, *Idd* and *Vaisakhi* have religious underpinnings. They are not 'cultural minus religion'. Participation of faith members in each other's functions is problematic, except in the case of those experienced in inter-faith dialogue, because of this sacred component within the celebration. The most popular annual celebration in the UK is Christmas, which is the celebration of the Incarnate Christ. On the surface millions of people from other faiths exchange presents and Christmas cards and attend each other's parties and eat each other's food but this does not imply in any way they accept the claim of Christianity that Jesus was born as son of God. Similar principles apply with regard to the claims of other faiths which underpin their principal celebrations. It is easier from cross-cultural participation to take place at non-religious events. It was encouraging to see, at the

Belgrave *mela* in September 2003, the participation of African Caribbean dancers in a dance celebration which might otherwise have been reserved for dancers from the Hindu community.

There are factors that can ignite hostility of one group against the culture of the 'other'. History is one such factor that keeps two cultures apart and may hinder bringing them together. For example, the Hindu community and the Muslim community have an historical enmity. The Muslims and the Sikhs also have a difficult history, and the Muslims and the Christians have had a difficult history since the time of the Crusades. More recently the War on Terrorism and the policy of 'regime change' has created distrust between Muslims and the indigenous people, compounding the problem even further. Suleiman Nagdi, a Trustee of the Muslim Burial Council, made a statement relating to the desecration of graves mentioned earlier.<sup>76</sup>

in the Muslim community most people will be very angry, feeling nothing is sacred anymore. We think it may have to do with international events, whenever there is tension worldwide involving Muslims there is a backlash, either things of this nature or verbal or physical abuse. Quite possibly it may have something to do with Iraq but it is pure speculation. Irrespective of faith, respect for the deceased is something that we share in humanity.

In fact in Spinney Hill, which has a large Muslim community, our surveyors were looked at with great suspicion and the question was raised over and over again as to why we were undertaking the survey.

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<sup>76</sup> Cairan Fagan and Jennifer Sym, 'Desecrated', *Leicester Mercury*, 26 July 2003, p. 1.

Traditions and superstitions surrounding food are another factor in diversity that can create hostility. The Jews and the Muslims for example eat beef, but cattle are sacred to the Hindus. One of the common tricks of starting mass scale rioting in India is to throw a slaughtered cow on the doorsteps of a Hindu temple, thereby igniting violence in which thousands of people may lose their lives. The animal rights lobby is trying to oppose the way the Jews and the Muslims slaughter their animals, with religious rites, as cruel. This could lead to problems between communities especially if the government brings in restrictive new legislation. Each culture has its own history that can be shared if there is a willingness to handle the 'difference' factor. Difference can become a facilitating factor if there is a willingness compromise, but without this it can generate hostility.

People from North Braunstone cannot be blamed for not liking it if their cultural world, compared with the cultural world of Belgrave, is considered by others to be sterile. Yet the North Braunstone people live in silent dignity while policy- and decision- makers have failed to attract visitors into the area. While touring the area we saw a number of little school children returning home with their mums. One could not help thinking of how these children perceive their world, a world of streets mostly without shops but with plenty of boarded-up houses: for others, this is not a pleasing sight. If such children were to visit the Asian parts of the city particularly Belgrave, they would find it positively thriving. Business people will not invest in North Braunstone for they will not see a profitable return, as they would in Belgrave. North Braunstone and Saffron



need to be integrated into the cultural life of the city, but this cannot be done unless their perspectives and attitudes towards diversity are changed. If this is not done then they will remain alienated and possibly the areas will become the breeding ground for racist parties to play upon people's emotions and fears.

There is considerable scope to change the perspectives of people to accept difference of diversity. These are two inter-related concepts, which needed considerable attention to be paid to them. If difference and diversity are not acceptable to people, then interculturalism will not emerge. The city will just remain multicultural. The positive response comes from the people of the four wards. In Spinney Hill 46.6 per cent agree that multiculturalism will enrich Leicester's cultural life. In Saffron 47.1 per cent are of the same view. In North Braunstone 23.4 per cent agree but 29.2 per cent did not. In contrast, in Belgrave 83.6 per cent agree that multiculturalism enriches the city's cultural life.

The fact that most people believe that multiculturalism enriches Leicester's cultural life offers hope. If their perspectives are changed to interculturalism, this will lead to an even greater enrichment of the city's cultural life. People can live in alienated pockets of multiculturalism; or, on the other hand, opt for cultural construction and become intercultural in their attitude. Needless to say, a culturally integrated city will be an ideal city not only for the UK, but also a beacon city in the Western world as a whole. How, and indeed whether, this can be achieved was not, however, the main focus of this survey.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions can be reached from our survey results.

Leicester City is a multicultural city. There is no debate about this and this is not an issue.

Leicester City also celebrates its cultural diversity. However, each culture celebrates its own differences and holds its own festivities. Although there may be some presence of other cultures there is no sharing and participation in the real sense of these terms. If any sharing does take place it is insignificant. On the one hand, this is a positive sign, since the various cultures have the freedom to celebrate their own diversity. On the other, cultures have little or no communication with each other.

Among Leicester City's many cultures it was found that some cultures are more active and developed than others. Indian culture is particularly active and finds its expression through both religious and cultural activities.

The survey also reveals that different cultures attached different meanings to what culture meant to them. Some related it to their religions while others to the customs and traditions of their countries of origins.

Some parts of the city have been ignored in terms of cultural development. These areas are Saffron and North Braunstone. Urban Renewal schemes, as the highest

priority, must bring about an improvement in the quality of life in these areas.

It also emerged that community life is much more cohesive among some communities than others. The Asian communities in general are more integrated through various linkages such as caste, *zaat* (kinship), subgroups within an overarching religion, community fellowship arising from a shared experience in the same town or villages in the original country of origin, and so on. This is not the case with the North Braunstone or Saffron areas, which do not have extended family networks to the same extent as the Asian community.

The class-divide among the indigenous people as well as the Asians is wide. This divide needs to be narrowed otherwise it will create problems of cohesion within the communities.

The divide among the Asian communities results more from sectarian and caste lines established by religious or philosophical outlook rather than strict class stratifications.

The cultural divide between Saffron and North Braunstone on the one hand and Belgrave and Spinney Hill is also wide. Saffron and North Braunstone are mainly White Working Class while Belgrave and Spinney Hill are Asian areas. The need for cultural bridging is essential.

While people in each of the communities studied are tolerant of other cultures and religions, they do not necessarily want to mix with them. Encouragement towards such cultural mixing is desirable.

While there are many middle and higher-level attempts and efforts to improve Community Cohesion in Leicester, these have little impact at grassroots level.

### Prospects for Change

Leicester is not a culturally integrated city. Can it become culturally integrated? Our contention is that it can do so. As societies change, so do cities and the needs and demands of the people change with time. So, just as Leicester has not remained as it was at the end of the nineteenth century, so it will change through a process of gradual social evolution. The contention of the authors of this Report is that gradual social evolution will not, of itself, produce changes which facilitate social and cultural integration. For this to happen there has to be a strategy in place, amounting to more than a cultural vision: in effect, what is needed are specific, coordinated cultural strategies to prevent any widening of the existing greater divide between peoples and cultures. How positive are the prospects for change?

The city has ambitious plans and wants to become the cultural city of Europe. We support this idea but consider it insufficient. In our view, Leicester has the potential to become the first culturally-integrated city in the Western world. It is the track record of the city that offers hope and scope for this. Let us expand on this.

*City Council and Councillors*

As has been seen, a number of City Councillors as well as Lord Mayors who have come from different communities. When an Asian became the first Lord Mayor in Bradford, racists threw eggs at him at many functions. This has not been the record in Leicester. The City Council is not an obstacle to integration. Paul Winstone has been a very articulate spokesman of the City Council, particularly in the area of policy-making in race relations. He has written:<sup>77</sup>

Doctrines of racial superiority took centuries to evolve in the UK, and they cannot be eradicated in three decades. Nor can we build an island of multiculturalism in a sea of racism... in three decades Leicester has begun to transform itself. The process is far from ended, but we have begun to construct a city where all citizens can be secure both in their British identity and also in their identity with the country of origin.

What is needed is the construction of a third identity, that of an intercultural Leicester in which all its residents take civic pride in their city, its people, its cultures, and its institutions.

*Leicestershire Constabulary*

The police in many cities of the UK do not have a good reputation with the minority communities. The police force in Leicester has enjoyed, in large, a track record of

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Winstone, 'Managing a Multi-ethnic and multicultural city in Europe: Leicester', *International Social Science Journal (ISSJ)* Special Issue for HABITAT II (No. 147), March 1996.

harmonious relations with all communities for many years. The police have a number of recruits from the various communities to make the force effective to all cultures and communities. In order to encourage interaction between the police and the communities, the Chief Constable of Leicestershire hosts an annual dinner for community leaders and groups at the Police Headquarters, which is a popular event.

#### *Leicester Mercury*

The media have often been accused of tarnishing the image of migrants and creating stereotypes in many British cities. In Leicester the *Leicester Mercury* with its editor Mr Nick Carter and his team have been above such criticism. It is a popular paper with all the communities because it is fair and seems to give equal coverage to the activities of the communities. Mr Carter has also established a powerful body of representatives from various communities, which meet at regular intervals and to discuss various issues.

One very significant editorial of the Leicester Mercury with an appropriate caption of 'One City, but many People' stated:<sup>78</sup>

As citizens go, Leicester is probably the most complex city in the UK. The remarkable diversity of its communities makes it a very special place and offers huge potential for the future, but it also presents a significant challenge to those charged with steering us into that future... while there is no conclusive evidence that certain communities have consistently 'done

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Editorial, *Leicester Mercury*, 22 May 2003, p. 12.

better' than others over time, there can be no doubting this is the perception that is governing how many people feel. It is certainly acknowledged by the new leadership [of the City Council] that criticizes Labour for 'compartmentalising' ethnic minority groups and pledges to rule on behalf of the whole city. Of course, that is exactly what they should be saying. This column has said before that now is the time for clear vision and strong leadership that will bring our city together. The real test will be the policies they introduce to demonstrate to each and every one of the many diverse communities of Leicester that they are working for them.

The real test of the policy- and decision-makers of this city is also to bring the cultures closer to each other.

#### *Christians in Leicester*

The Anglican Bishops of Leicester have not only represented the Church of England in Leicester but they are the symbolic representation of Christianity. The tradition set by the present Bishop, and also by his predecessor, was one of trust and respect of other faiths. Bishop Tim Stevens enjoys high credibility not only as representative of his faith but among the non-Christians as well. This is because he has a positive view about all communities in Leicester. On many occasions he has spoken out in favour of these communities when they have been under attack. In a recent article in the *Leicester Mercury* he wrote:<sup>79</sup>

Christians can learn tolerance from Leicester... the City and County of Leicester has a reputation for handling difference and diversity with sensitivity, maturity and plain good sense. I hope

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<sup>79</sup> Bishop Tim Stevens, 'Christians can learn tolerance from Leicester', *Leicester Mercury*, 26 June 2003, p. 13.

that Christian churches here and throughout the Church of England will learn some of those qualities.

In addition to the Bishop, there are many well-known clergymen like Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave, Canon Dr Andrew Wingate, Revd Alan Race, Revd David Clark and Revd Professor Richard Bonney, to mention just a few who have prominently been associated with building bridges with non-Christian communities at times of their needs and otherwise. Their work draws upon the tradition of Christian activism against racism at the time of the arrival of Ugandan Asians in the 1970s.

#### *Leicester Shire Promotions*

Leicester Shire Promotions have taken on the task of selling the city and the county for the purposes of tourism, inward investment and attracting people for business. The vision of the tourism operators is for 'people to think of Leicester as the perfect place to unwind. A campaign to sell Leicester as a city break destination will be launched... It will target visitors from France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium'.<sup>80</sup> This vision has yet to mature but the newly renamed Leicester Shire Promotions has taken on an extended role of 'selling the whole of the county to tourists and business'.<sup>81</sup>

This is a strong challenge for Leicester Shire Promotions, which SICUL fully supports. But a unique aspect of this

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<sup>80</sup> Darren Beck, 'Leicester to turn on Euro charm', *Leicester Mercury*, 2 July 2003, p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> Andy Gilgrist, 'Promotions Unit takes on extended role', *Leicester Mercury*, 2 July 2003, p. 24.



challenge, as pointed out by Mr Kishor Tailor, Chief Executive of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, is to bridge the gap between the rural and urban communities. He believes that the Asian and African-Caribbean communities are more likely to visit friends and family or go shopping than go out of town. But this is not enough, he said: 'we've got to promote what's available. That includes encouraging ethnic minority groups to visit.'<sup>82</sup>

We consider this an important suggestion. A report published by Rural Tourism entitled *Opportunities for growth from the Country Land and Business Association* considered that Asians and African Caribbeans were 'not making the most of the fields and woodlands on their doorsteps'.<sup>83</sup> While this is true, it is not enough for the minorities to visit the county. The countryside people have to be willing to welcome them. This again needs intercultural bridging and is not a phenomenon which will happen naturally.

#### *Leicester Regeneration Company*

In 1999 Lord Rogers' report entitled 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' was taken up by the government to create a new kind of British city. In the following year the government produced its Urban White Paper, which advocated the formation of Urban Regeneration Companies. Leicester responded to this and in 2001 the

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<sup>82</sup> Tom Pegden, 'The Countryside is for everyone', *Leicester Mercury*, 31 May 2003, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Leicester Regeneration Company, LRC, was formed. The LRC developed a master plan, which considered that there was 'a danger of overlooking many of the city's undoubted assets'. These include:<sup>84</sup>

- A fine heritage of Victorian buildings, and although those very same Victorians destroyed much of medieval Leicester, some medieval jewels do remain
- Two highly regarded universities
- Excellent transport links via roads rail and air
- A compact city core
- The Grand Union Canal and River Soar passing through the city
- A culturally diverse society
- Sporting achievement

The LRC identified five major projects that were:

The development of the Office Core: 'there is a market potential for almost 9,000 new office jobs up to 2016'.<sup>85</sup>

Science and technology, 'combined with the National Space Centre, creates the potential for a science and technology park of up to 45,000 square metres'.

Retail Circuit, 'developing a wider retail circuit will spread footfall and create new opportunities to strengthen and diversify Leicester's retail offer'.

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<sup>84</sup> See the Master plan brochure of the Leicester Regeneration Company.

<sup>85</sup> The plans for this were published with commentary by Mel Atkinson, 'Right Impression', *Leicester Mercury*, 30 Sept. 2003, supplement.

A New Community, 'there is a need for more diverse residential development in the inner part of the city' and Waterside, 'the potential of the Waterfront is largely unexploited'.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore the plan has also taken on board the 'new community will link with the City Council's proposed Cultural Quarter, where a new performing arts venue is planned to replace the Haymarket Theatre'.<sup>87</sup>

This is a wonderful plan which must be brought to fruition. The cultural quarter could be instrumental in intermixing cultural diversity. But cultural bridges do not connect automatically. Concerted efforts are needed to build such bridges.

#### *The Task Force*

A Task Force has been set up to move the Community Cohesion agenda forward. Ciaran Fagan reported:<sup>88</sup>

The task force, which will lead the drive to bring Leicester's diverse communities closer together, has begun its work. The group, whose members are drawn from the worlds of politics, health and education, was created...in response to a major report into the city's future. The Community Cohesion report, which was published in March, said people from the city's different cultural and religious groups generally, respected each other. However, it said that some communities' paths rarely crossed and that some estates on the city's outskirts felt cut

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ciaran Fagan, 'Let's all work together', *Leicester Mercury*, 25 July 2003.

off. It said that tackling those problems were among the city's greatest challenges.

Mr Steve White added:<sup>89</sup>

I am pleased we are moving forward in this way. However, I am very keen we engage with the wider community.

This group reflects the concern of this report. Because the city is not intercultural, cultural communities may not be interacting with each other on a socio-cultural level. The concerns are genuine but how they will or can be tackled is another question.

All the individuals, groups, institutions, and government agencies were positive towards the cultivation of multiculturalism. This perspective needs to be changed into interculturalism, into making Leicester a culturally integrated city. In addition, the challenge should be to make Leicester the best integrated city in Europe from all points of view. This is not an easy task. But it is not an impossible one.

There has always been competition among British cities to excel one another. One historian, Tristram Hunt, has considered that it is good for cities to have cultural rivalries with each other. He found that such competition had existed in ancient times among the Greeks. He found that:<sup>90</sup>

Athens was the first to possess a consciously urban culture of aesthetic creativity, mercantile wealth and a belief in public service. In the city's legendary agora, citizens celebrated their

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Tristram Hunt, 'It's good for cities to be at war', *The Sunday Times*, 1 June 2003. See also News Review Section, p. 8.

civic identity by meeting to gossip, trade and debate the great political issues of the day... Athens rose to prominence against a backdrop of intense urban rivalry with Sparta, Thebes, Argos and the hundreds of other city states... the great edifices of classical civilization, whose styles Liverpool and Newcastle would later revive, were the product of a patriotic desire to eclipse their rivals.

Later, the Victorians had the same civic pride and poured their wealth into creating the industrial city. But as Hunt observes:<sup>91</sup>

The industrial city was not just a site of smog, factories and disease, but a sophisticated arena modelled on the city states of the past. The classicism of Newcastle's Gray Street and Birmingham's Town Hall are a testimony to how these cities regarded themselves as art of the proud urban tradition. They were also products of bitter rivalry. The 19<sup>th</sup> century became the age of great cities with the wealth and prestige of each municipality reflected in the classical Gothic and Renaissance architecture which even now overshadow our urban landscape... Unfortunately, the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not so kind to the British city. Confidence melted away as power was stripped from town halls and suburbs depopulated the city centres.

Recently new criteria have emerged for judging the excellence of cities. Research conducted by Demos, an independent think-tank, placed Leicester second after Manchester as the most cultural city in terms of 'counting creativity'. According to Maxine Frith:<sup>92</sup>

A 'creativity index', using patent applications, ethnic minorities and gay services, put Manchester at the top of the UK's 40 biggest cities while Leicester is ranked equal second with London.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Maxine Frith, 'Judged creatively, the best place to be is Manchester', *The Independent*, 26 May 2003, p. 5.

Frith wrote that Manchester was the 'birthplace of industrial revolution' but mills have given way to bars and music venues while Leicester was the 'home of Walker's crisps'. It was now 'famed for its multiculturalism and large Asian population, which had contributed to its rebirth as a centre for international cuisine'. For Frith, London 'contains countless art galleries, theatres, cinemas and museums of international repute, including the Tate Modern and British Museum'.<sup>93</sup>

The strength of Leicester's Cultural Strategy lies in its emphasis on cultural diversity, in which 'cultural differences are celebrated, cultural tradition is respected and opportunities to promote and develop cultural fusion are embraced'. So long as Leicester's Cultural Strategy develops an intercultural identity, it will excel all other cities both in reputation and in actual harmony. One way to achieve this is to encourage people to identify more closely with the City of Leicester. People will describe themselves as a 'Leicester person', irrespective of their class, culture or creed. But this will only be done if efforts are made to promote interculturalism.

In the United States when it was found that multiculturalism was a failure because the 'multicultural approach to diversity was one founded on a binary opposition to whiteness', it came to be recognized that 'that this approach might be hindering efforts to bring this racially diverse campus together'. So it was decided to open an 'Intercultural campus'. Interculturalism was defined as 'learning and sharing across difference where

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<sup>93</sup>

Ibid.

no one culture dominates'.<sup>94</sup> This definition should be taken seriously rather than the one of celebrating diversity without sharing across differences.

## Recommendations

Before we begin to give some recommendations, perhaps some revision of Leicester's motto (*Semper Eadem*, Always the Same) may be in order. The city is no the same city that was divided over its welcome to Asians from East Africa in the early 1970s. Its people and structures have changed, and they will continue to do so, in advance of much of British society. The new motto recommended by this report is:

*Think Multiculturally, Act Interculturally*

This motto seeks the operationalization of intercultural community action. As was stated earlier in the Report, the City of Leicester has progressed from monoculturalism to multiculturalism. But it should not stop at multiculturalism. It should try to reach the third stage, that is, the intercultural stage where one culture actively seeks to make contact with another culture. Multiculturalism, in other words, is not an end in itself but a stepping-stone towards interculturalism. Policy- and decision-makers have read too much meaning into multiculturalism. The city's mindset has to be changed from not treating multicultural as the end in itself, but as a means to a better end.

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<sup>94</sup> Greg Tanaka, 'Creating an Intercultural Campus: A new Approach to Diversity':  
<[www.diversityweb.org/Digest/W01/interculturalism.htm1](http://www.diversityweb.org/Digest/W01/interculturalism.htm1).

What this survey recommends on a general level is that connections should be made at the grassroots levels, that is, people to people, community-to-community levels and individual-to-individual levels. It is helpful that some community leaders already share this objective. But it should be remembered that leaders often do not represent the whole community. Each community has many different leaders. The focus therefore has to be on community-to-community levels.

The aim of community-to-community cohesion through interculturalism has to proceed through many different paths: through education, cultural and community activities, and through all relevant local institutions. This requires intercultural and inter-community bridging.

#### *The Cultural approaches*

Monocultural occasions celebrating one's own culture. Such functions have to make the effort to become intercultural. This does not imply extending invitations to members of other cultural communities. It means involving people of other cultures into one's own programmes and vice versa. Some monocultural festivities which are public occasions, such as Christmas, Idd (Muslim), Diwali (Hindu) or Vaisaki (Sikh), are celebrated with public participation from outside the particular community. This is a very good start to put multicultural communities on an intercultural track.

When monocultural events are held on a grand scale, for example at the African-Caribbean Carnival, or the Belgrave Mela, it should not be left to groups representing



other cultures to participate if they so wish. They should be formally and informally invited to participate and given roles in the organization of the events/festivals.

**It should be noted that such intercultural connections should not be expected to happen automatically. It requires planning and effort to keep the vision of a culturally-integrated society. Policy- and decision-makers should facilitate this by opening a small cultural diversity unit, which would work to facilitate such connections.**

There are very few examples of public policy taking an active role in managing intercultural connections. This dimension of thinking must become part of cultural awareness.

By and large, in such intercultural policies, central government cannot remain aloof as if it has no interest in it. Integrated cities are part of British society. Hypothetically speaking, if all British cities were culturally integrated it would make it easier for the national integration of British society.

The cultural vision of the city has to have an approach that needs to be made explicit. The approach of policy- and decision-makers should be egalitarian, treating all cultures as equal. One culture should not feel disadvantaged by another through an overbearing predominance. The disadvantaged should be helped into the cultural arena.

*Educational approaches*

Institutions are an important aspect of any city and have important roles to play. According to Naseem Khan:<sup>95</sup>

Public spaces in city, cultural institutions, public squares, the streets themselves, have powerful iconic value as well as important citizenship implications in increasingly pluralist societies. The degree to which diversity is reflected in these spaces is an important indicator of inclusion.

This aspect has to be taken on board for the development of interculturalism in the city. The philosophy and ideology of interculturalism should be taught from primary to secondary schools. The motto of 'think multiculturally, act interculturally' should be taught from this level upwards in all educational establishments.

Schools visiting other schools to make introductions and connections with different cultures. Children have to be taken on board as one of the steps of establishing an intercultural mindset.

Children from Urban schools should also make visits to rural schools, and vice-versa, for there is a wide gap between the city and county spaces. Intercultural spacing is essential.

*Community approaches*

An integrated identity is essential for the development of an integrated city. Every individual should be proud to

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<sup>95</sup> 'The Shared Space: Cultural Diversity and the Public Domain', Report of a seminar under the aegis of the Arts Council of England and the Council of Europe. March 2002, p. 19.

have a 'Leicester' or 'Leicestershire' identity. Identity is an important consideration in the development of a city. Chris Murray explains this well when he writes:<sup>96</sup>

Identity is what distinguishes place from place or city from city. It is what provides people with a broader, richly-layered sense of that place and what connects them to it, giving them a stake and a sense of ownership. This in turn creates better places. There is evidence... that people are less disaffected and more engaged with the place they live in if the individuality is developed and communicated and if they feel involved.

The objective of this study was not to find out how to build intercultural bridges. It was, as stated in the beginning, to find out whether Leicester was an intercultural city. Having found out that it is not intercultural, there are many questions that arise. The most important one is: how do we make this city intercultural? Such a question cannot be answered by this survey for it will need further research to be carried out among the myriad and diverse cultures that exist in this city to learn how this can be done. What kind of intercultural connections are possible? Does it mean that we lose our cultural identities, which have been developed within the multicultural context?

Those engaged in this pursuit have to understand the culture and the history of the different communities with which they are dealing. History often carries a baggage from the past, which affects present relations. So before an attempt is made to develop a strategy for

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<sup>96</sup> Chris Murray, *Making sense of place: Leicester* (International Cultural Planning and Policy Unit, De Montfort University, 2001), p. 10.

implementing intercultural change, a great deal of preparatory work and detailed research is necessary.

Inter-community relations cannot be made harmonious just because of personal connections at the management level. Structural changes have to be made in the society in which such relations are being developed. National or local government must take action to effect such structural changes which cannot be left to chance. Intercultural bridging is necessary to bring communities together, the key objective of Community Cohesion.

*Two very small steps*

SICUL has taken steps to bridge the gap between North Braunstone and Belgrave by introducing Belgrave residents to Braunstone and vice versa. This has been successful at the level where personal introductions can be made and trust can be built.

It is also planned to open an office in both Belgrave and North Braunstone and create an Intercultural Intermediate Labour Market project where residents of both estates can be enabled and encouraged to work with, and learn from, each other, and to spread the messages learned across the city and country. We feel confident, that with the correct level and degree of support, this method can be made to work and become a model of good practice. This model focuses on Cultural and Tourist Guides from two diverse communities.