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**David Goodhart (2013), *The British Dream*, London: Atlantic Books, 416 pp.**

In his preface to the paperback edition of *The British Dream*, David Goodhart claims that many readers will approach the book with an opinion of it already formed by their preexisting position on immigration. Indeed, this controversial book has become something of a lightning rod for both opponents and supporters of stricter immigration controls for the United Kingdom. Progressives can argue that Goodhart has betrayed the notion of transnational solidarity in favour of exclusivism. Conservatives, meanwhile, are armed with data to suggest that the multicultural project has been a failure. Although it may be something of a pre-emptive deflection of criticism, Goodhart claims that he has been *widely attacked in print and routinely accused of racism* (p. x) since publishing the first edition of *The British Dream*. He fails to cite published examples of this accusation, but Goodhart at least deserves to have this charge dismissed from the outset. *The British Dream* could, in the hands of someone already predisposed to an idea of racial hierarchy, potentially be used to further a racist agenda. That would require, however, a determined distortion of its key arguments. In the most politically neutral terms available, these basically contend that post-war immigration to Great Britain has produced a mixed record of success and failure, with some immigrant groups becoming quickly and demonstrably prosperous, while others remain 'stuck' in a socio-economic underclass. To be clear, 'race' is not the key determining factor in these outcomes. Rather, the forces that do exert such influence are considerably more complex and highly specific to the context in which large-scale immigration occurs.

This should be a fairly self-evident point, but *The British Dream* stands as a testament to the inability of opinion-makers to communicate it clearly, either through genuine ignorance or wilful distortion. Thankfully, Goodhart takes the necessary time and explores the requisite detail to describe this complexity without flinching at uncomfortable statistics and disheartening conclusions. He begins by taking

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a kind of sociological snapshot of Merton, an area of high ethnic diversity in southwest London. His portrait is meant to reflect a microcosm of contemporary Britain following successive waves of post-war immigration: many national, ethnic and religious groups co-exist in close proximity, but at best the area presents a mixed picture of cooperation and rivalry among the various minorities and white Britons. The remainder of Goodhart's book seeks to explain how this situation developed and what it means for the country's political future, particularly concerning the question of how to balance diversity with a sense of solidarity. After supplying a general overview of how Britain's minorities are faring in the crowded and competitive economy of the early 20th century, Goodhart recounts the historical forces that brought these communities to British shores in the first place, starting with the 'The First Great Arrival' between 1948 and 1992. He draws a sharp distinction between that period and the next, initiated under New Labour in 1997. These two eras contain certain overlapping elements – sustained immigration from South Asia, for example – while being significantly different in terms of speed and scale.

The British immigration experience is sufficiently diverse to leave scholars and policymakers with a range of data that is simultaneously voluminous, incomplete, contradictory and expository. Goodhart's major accomplishment with this book is to disaggregate some of that data and examine particular communities in specific contexts of historical immigration, a project that should (and largely does) deflate the idea of immigration as a monolithic (good or bad) phenomenon. Ironically, Goodhart periodically undermines his own achievements by lapsing into language that presents immigration in precisely that way, as an imminent and definable threat on the national scale, if only a mixed bag of favourable and troubling results in individual towns and cities:

*In many places immigration is working as the textbooks say it should: minorities are upwardly mobile and creating interesting new hybrid identities... And we have come a long way in a short time. A country that less than 100 years ago be-*

*lieved it was right to control the destiny of many 'lesser breeds' has now invited them across its threshold and learnt to treat them more or less as equals... There are places in Britain, however, where the immigration story has been far from successful, notably in the northern 'mill towns' and other declining industrial regions... (p. xxvii).*

Goodhardt relies primarily on secondary sources, such as government and NGO reports, to reflect this ambiguous picture, and couples this analysis with some anecdotal field research. The emerging picture reveals the costs and benefits of immigration to be highly uneven depending on the immigrant group concerned. Some populations, such as the East African Asians expelled from Uganda in 1972, have demonstrated a penchant for entrepreneurialism and a noted willingness to engage in the civic institutions of modern Britain. Others, such as Pakistanis from rural Kashmir, remain socially and economically hindered by factors such as gender inequality, poor literacy rates, detachment from the host culture and a 'clannishness' that thwarts social advancement. Eastern Europeans generally fall somewhere in between, with Poles described as hard-working pragmatists, but who 'mainly have a guest worker mentality and many have no particular interest in joining British society' (p. 213).

While laudatory of more successful minority groups, Goodhardt does not shy away from singling out Kashmiri Pakistanis, Somalis and young Caribbean men for intensive criticism. These three groups exemplify Britain's 'stuck' minorities, whose socioeconomic progress has lost any traction. Reasons for this circumstance vary between the groups but, he argues, are largely attributable to specific cultural factors. The insularity of Kashmiris and the persistence of conservative cultural practices, such as forced marriage, is seen to be at the root of that group's endemic poverty and poor educational attainment. Somalis are also characterized as under-educated as well as heavily welfare dependent, the chaos of their home country resulting in an undisciplined approach to work and a lack of stable family structures. Using data on black minority populations in Britain, Goodhart points out that young males of Car-

ibbean heritage show a statistical propensity for anti-social behaviour, exclusion from school and for crime. (He is careful to note an historical bias against blacks in law enforcement and criminal justice; still, among incarcerated blacks, Caribbeans are overrepresented.)

There is, of course, a multitude of factors that contribute to the situations Goodhart describes, and he makes a serious effort to address them, noting that racism and discrimination have historically played a significant role. His typecasting of these 'stuck' groups has been the source of much of the criticism that *The British Dream* has attracted, but some of the critiques overlook an important point: namely, that by specifying and contextualising specific problems within individual communities, Goodhart has helped to decouple these problems from immigration itself, providing a much better toolkit for analysing and working toward resolutions for problems within particular social and ethnic groups. Immigration provides a backdrop to these issues, but often only as a prelude. If anything, the data surrounding Britain's least successful minorities should demonstrate that a heavily restrictive, one-size-fits-all approach to immigration could only ever be a partially effective method for addressing these problems. In any case, the three 'stuck' groups, as well as the Eastern Europeans that Goodhart worries are arriving in unsustainable numbers, all reflect different periods and policies of immigration law. The Caribbeans he discusses are often two or three generations removed from their immigrant ancestors. Pakistanis have migrated in fairly consistent numbers since the 1970s, arriving initially as guest workers and later *via* the family visa route. Somali immigrants have primarily been asylum seekers and refugees, a condition that explicitly limits their opportunities to work. Eastern Europeans, meanwhile, have arrived *via* an expansion of the European Union and its labour market protocols.

Goodhart is not wrong to worry about the social and economic consequences of fast-paced, large-scale migration, but his case for imposing onerous new restrictions on migrants is insufficiently supported by his discussions of the less successful mi-

nority groups. He has become a vociferous and outspoken campaigner for immigration restrictions as a buffer against declining social trust and the collapse of the welfare state. *The British Dream* articulates these concerns effectively and with justifiable urgency but relies too heavily on extensive and intrusive state intervention for resolution. This is just one of many factors that make Goodhart's book both compelling and deeply frustrating. Compared to many others writing for a popular audience, he has made a better effort to understand the full complexity of the British immigration experience. In the name of progressive nationalism, however, he displays a discomfiting willingness to collude with right-wing populists, tabloid provocateurs and self-serving political operators by conflating immigration with too broad a range of social and economic problems. Furthermore, he has adopted the rather paranoid and diversionary tactic of accusing those who disagree with him of 'shutting down debate' or treating the subject of immigration as taboo. This is a well-worn meme that one frequently finds in the right-wing press, wherein a failure to regard immigration as an immediate and overwhelming threat is equivalent to censorship, or at least a capitulation to the fluctuating whims of political correctness.

*The British Dream's* flaws and contradictions do not mean that it is not worth reading. Goodhart may be correct in suggesting that readers' reactions to the book will be influenced by their foregoing opinions on immigration. Yet there is enough interesting data in this book to enhance the knowledge of both pro- and anti-immigration campaigners, something that should help to promote compromise and policy decisions based on robust evidence. The social and economic ills attributed (rightly or wrongly) to immigration will take far more than new restrictions to overcome, and the discussions they provoke need to stop referring to immigration as a homogenous phenomenon with predictable results. *The British Dream*, for all its problems, at least offers a foundation for dialogue on how this might be achieved.

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