Immigration, Welfare, and Social Solidarity: Sociological Approaches to the 'Progressive's Dilemma'

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Abstract

This research seeks to contribute to scholarly debate surrounding the 'progressive's dilemma': the contention that there is a negative relationship between immigration and support for social welfare policies. Taking the concept of social solidarity as its theoretical starting point, it will use a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with members of trade unions and community groups in the United Kingdom to interrogate some of the core assumptions underlying this debate. It will ask how the concept of social solidarity is understood, what threats and obstacles to social solidarity exist, and how conceptions of solidarity intersect with attitudes towards immigration, diversity, and support for the welfare state. I argue that immigration is only one factor within a broader context of declining social trust, increasing social isolation, and diminishing support for public services that emerged throughout the discussions. As such, I suggest that the proposition of a straightforward trade-off between diversity and solidarity likely obscures more than it reveals. A study of the latent meanings of the dataset, however, revealed that ethnic and national forms of solidarity were often perceived to be more salient than other forms of social identity. This suggests that it may prove more difficult to persuade voters and taxpayers that immigrants should be considered members of the same community of deserving recipients who are entitled to welfare assistance.

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1. Introduction

The past fifty years have witnessed an unprecedented rise in levels of global migration. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the estimated 281 million people living in countries other than that of their birth represents a threefold rise from the year 1970 (IOM 2022). Confluent crises of international conflict, poverty, and the climate emergency mean that this trend is likely to continue over the coming decades. The consequent growing importance of immigration as a subject of political contestation has, amongst other things, produced difficulties for individuals and groups on the progressive left in Western democracies. Critics of immigration and multiculturalism have suggested that the growing diversity of cultures, values, and lifestyles that emerge as a result of the increased mobility of human populations undermine the social bonds necessary for the kind of expansive, redistributive welfare states traditionally favoured by those on the left.

In a controversial essay titled 'Too Much Diversity?', David Goodhart (2004) discussed the idea of a trade-off between immigration and redistribution as a 'progressive's dilemma', arguing that the reduced ability to 'take for granted the common values or behaviours of our neighbours' due to immigrant-generated diversity has weakened support for a more redistributive politics. Goodhart proposed that this basis of trust and understanding matters a great deal in modern, complex societies where we are engaged in a constant process of negotiation about the welfare state, the funding of public services, and the sharing of public space. Either we can have a homogenous society with a shared set of values and beliefs, or culturally and ethnically diverse, individualistic societies with weak welfare states and a minimal sense of obligation to fellow citizens. The subject has since become the focus of an extensive debate within academic literature, raising questions for researchers about the relative saliencies of ethnic and class

identities, and inspiring a plethora of research investigating if there really does exist a negative relationship between increased immigration and support for social welfare policies.

At the centre of this debate lies the question of social solidarity. Goodhart and others who are sympathetic to the 'progressive's dilemma' thesis argue that immigration erodes the social capital necessary for individuals to be willing to give up a greater proportion of their income and wealth to support less-fortunate members of society. Proponents would therefore seem to suggest that a conception of ethnic or national solidarity, of 'sameness' across various socio-economic groups, allows for a feeling of common identity that acts as a prerequisite for a redistributive system. This research will seek to contribute to scholarly debate on this subject by exploring some of the assumptions about different forms of social solidarity, trust, and reciprocity that presuppose the 'progressive's dilemma'. Using a qualitative approach based on a series of semi-structured interviews, it will ask how the concept of solidarity is understood, what obstacles and threats to solidarity exist, and how conceptions of solidarity intersect with attitudes towards immigration, diversity, and support for the welfare state.

1.1 'Stalemate'? Debates Surrounding the 'Progressive's Dilemma'.

Since his initial contribution, Goodhart has expanded his argument on the negative relationship between immigration and solidarity-based welfare systems, asserting that 'more diverse and individualistic societies simply have a weaker impulse to share' (Goodhart 2013, 266). Regarding the question of immigration and social solidarity more broadly, Robert Putnam has argued that, in the short-term, immigration and immigrant-generated diversity has a devastating impact on social capital, defined as the 'social networks and associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness'. Putnam's research suggests that increased diversity has the surprising

effect of reducing both inter and *intra*-group trust. This decline in social capital *within* groups is termed the 'hunkering down' effect by Putnam, whereby growing alienation and social isolation renders individuals living in more heterogenous communities less inclined to vote, partake in community activities, trust in community cooperation, give to charity, or 'be happy'. According to Putnam, the same individuals were also more likely to be socially withdrawn, spend more time watching television, and have fewer friends (Putnam 2007, 150).

As such, diversity does not only entail worse inter-ethnic relations, but also a more general distrust of one's neighbours, regardless of their race or ethnicity (Putnam 2007, 151). Putnam emphasises, however, that these findings draw from data taken at a single point in time and speculates that in the 'medium to long term' immigration and diversity will likely produce new forms of social solidarity and establish new, wider national identities (Putnam 2007, 162). Putnam's findings have two important consequences for this research. Firstly, the evidence that social capital does appear to be inhibited, in the short term, by greater immigration and ethnic diversity invites the question of why these forms of identities are especially consequential for feelings of solidarity. Secondly, it demonstrates that attitudes towards immigrants and diversity are not *static*: prompting the question of to what degree attitudes can change over time, whether or not solidarity can be eroded and then rebuilt, and how long this might take.

The political philosopher David Miller has also argued that as societies become more culturally or ethnically diverse, levels of social trust decline. Whereas in more traditional forms of society bonds of duties and obligations were localised, conceptions of solidarity are now far more abstract and mediated. As such, immigration may damage the assumptions underpinning redistributive welfare systems that citizens 'will behave fairly under the terms of the scheme, paying taxes honestly and not drawing benefits to which they are not entitled' (Miller 2016,

10). Moreover, immigrants are less likely to be perceived as part of the deserving 'in-group' of the 'collectivised altruism' that is embodied in the modern welfare state: in other words, immigrants in need of social assistance may not be deemed by other members of the society as 'my' poor (Miller 2013, 199). Miller has also suggested that the adoption of multiculturalist policies (whereby immigrants are able to claim a right of accommodation for cultural difference) without accepting 'any corresponding civic duties' is likely to challenge citizens' fundamental sense of everyday fairness (Miller 2006, 323) – again with negative consequences for support for social welfare policies.

While trying to explain the discrepancy in levels of redistribution between the USA and European states, Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2002, 189) point to the racialized nature of reciprocal altruism in the United States, whereby racial minorities are highly overrepresented among the poorest Americans (meaning that any redistributive policies will give money disproportionately to these groups) and suggest that 'racial discord plays a critical role in determining beliefs about the poor'. The authors therefore argue that levels of racial heterogeneity are the single most reliable predictor of support for redistribution, and that racial stereotypes play an important part in generating opposition to welfare. This intersection of class and race recalls the Jamaican-British cultural theorist Stuart Hall's (1978, 395) assertion that 'race is the modality in which class is lived (and) also the medium in which class relations are experienced'.

Various empirical studies have also produced results seemingly in alignment with the 'progressive's dilemma' thesis. Maureen Eger (2010, 208) has used the Swedish example to suggest that the country's growing ethnic heterogeneity has negatively impacted support for the welfare state, and that as immigration and the number of foreign-born citizens have increased,

national and ethnic in/out-group boundaries have become more salient. Eger and Breznau (2017, 440) likewise argue that, while at the national level there is little evidence that immigrant-generated diversity negatively effects welfare attitudes, 'the impact of diversity occurs at smaller, sub-national geographic units'. Indeed, at the regional level, the authors do indeed find a negative relationship between the percentage of foreign-born individuals and public support for redistribution.

Oorschot (2006a, 3) has asked how cultural diversity will affect the generosity of social welfare programs as welfare becomes increasingly associated with 'a subordinate minority' in the European context. His research investigates what degree of solidarity Europeans feel towards migrants, in comparison with the sick, elderly, disabled, and unemployed. Using data drawn from the European Values Survey, he finds that Europeans tend to feel the least solidarity with migrants in comparison to these other groups. Kulin, Hjerm, and Eger (2016, 3) have also pushed back against scholarship 'prematurely' concluding that there is no evidence for the progressive's dilemma. The authors use survey data to consider attitudes towards immigration, redistribution, and immigrant's social rights in concert, in order to establish 'attitudinal clusters' of individuals who hold similar opinions. While the likelihood of belonging to a certain cluster varies between countries, the findings indicate that in 13 of the 24 countries under investigation attitudes consistent with the progressive's dilemma are most prevalent (Kulin, Hjerm, Eger 2016, 9).

Multiple scholars, however, have since pushed back against Putnam and others' pessimistic findings, producing numerous empirical studies that seem to disprove any substantial relationship between immigration and reduced support for social welfare systems – while

others have contested the fundamental assumptions upon which the dilemma rests in the first place.

Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (2003, 102) have long been critical of the suggestion that multiculturalism erodes support for the welfare state and instead argued that immigration, when paired with the adoption of multiculturalist policies, actually carries a *positive* correlation with increased social welfare spending. Sturgis et al. (2011, 58) contend that relative to prior levels of socio-economic deprivation and social connectedness, ethnic diversity has a negligible impact on trust levels, dismissing the relationship as 'weak and contingent'. A comparative study between three measures of immigration and six welfare attitudes between 1996 and 2006 by Brady and Finnigan (2014, 34) also fails to produce significant evidence that immigration undermines public support for social welfare policies, and the authors argue that other factors such as institutions, labour markets, and cultural norms have a much larger determining impact.

Moreover, critics have questioned the 'universalistic nature' of Putnam's work on solidarity and diversity, suggesting that his findings are likely limited to the very specific historical context of American race relations and not applicable to the United Kingdom or other European countries (Sturgis 2011, 59). In a subsequent study of diversity, segregation, and social cohesion in London neighbourhoods, Sturgis et al (2014, 1286) found evidence that neighbourhood ethnic diversity was positively related to perceived social cohesion by members of the community, and that the far more determinant factors for feelings of solidarity were age and levels of social segregation. Hewstone (2015, 420) has also been sceptical of Putnam's results, arguing that that his study failed to account for varying degrees of intergroup contact, as well as intergroup threat perception. Using survey data from OECD member states, Sumino (2014, 436) rejects that there is a consistent negative link between immigration and public support for welfare policies, while

Green and Riddell (2019, 1) have pointed to Canada as an example whereby 'greater diversity has not reduced support for redistributive social policies'. Using a 'cross-national, cross-sectional time-series data-set' across 19 countries from 1981 to 2000, Kesler and Bloemraad (2010, 320) have asked whether diversity undermines the willingness of citizens to 'trust one another, to participate in collective endeavours and to be political engaged'. Their findings show that there is 'nothing inevitable' about declining solidarity or 'collective-mindedness' in the face of growing diversity, but that the respective institutional context with regards to redistribution and accommodation of immigrant minorities is the key factor. Indeed, in more economically equal countries and those with greater recognition of minorities, 'the negative effects of immigration on trust and engagement are mitigated or even reversed' (Kesler and Bloemraad, 321).

Meanwhile, Nasar Meer has argued that Goodhart and others' framing of the immigration-solidarity trade-off relies on a set of quasi-fictional and 'highly contestable empirical assumptions about past solidarity' from before contemporary migration patterns. In other words, while there may have been less ethnic and racial diversity in Britain in the immediate post-war years, there also existed much higher levels of class stratification and gender inequality, further compounded by 'fractured nationalisms and strong localisms' (Meer 2016, 4). In his book on the politics of social cohesion, Nills Holtun (2021, 127) has responded in a similar fashion by arguing that greater specification is needed regarding what *kinds* of diversity, as well as the 'specific dimensions' of social cohesion that this diversity is supposed to undermine. Kymlicka and Banting (2003, 99) finally posit that the 'progressive's dilemma' thesis suggests that before the modern age of mass migration there existed higher levels of solidarity, which are now being eroded.

1.2 Towards 'Inclusive Solidarity'?

Indeed, Kymlicka has subsequently expanded on his empirical research to make a broader argument about the stated trade-off between diversity and solidarity. While, as we have seen, he rejects the empirical claim that higher levels of immigration and diversity will lead to reduced democratic support for welfare policies, he does acknowledge the political problem of anti-immigrant politicians increasingly using pro-welfare arguments to make the case for restricting migration (Kymlicka 2015, 6). Thus, as Bauböck states, the 'progressive's dilemma' is 'undeniably a political reality that political actors have to deal with' (Bauböck and Scholten 2016a, 6). Kymlicka's solution for circumventing what he sees as the undesirable choice between a 'neoliberal multiculturalism' (inclusion without solidarity') and welfare chauvinism ('solidarity without inclusion') is to advocate for a 'multicultural welfare state' that would promote an inclusive solidarity, employing the nation-state as its central administrative unit and drawing on liberal notions of nationhood 'to help secure such an ethic of membership, and its resulting solidarity' (Kymlicka 2015, 4).

Kymlicka's argument rests on his assumption that the welfare state is not sustained by a general humanitarian impulse *or* the agitation of trade unions and left political coalitions, but rather the bonds established and maintained by national solidarity. However, as Kriesi (2015, 2) has noted, such evocations of national solidarity also 'tend to exclude those members of the nation who are perceived as undeserving'. Nor is it clear why the nation-state is the most suitable political unit to deal with these problems, and Bauböck (2016b, 6) has argued that it makes more sense to think not of a dilemma but of a 'trilemma' between openness for immigration, multicultural inclusion, and social redistribution, and that both supranational and substate units of administration may be better equipped to deal with issues of social welfare, cultural diversity,

and immigrant admission. Engbersen has also raised the problem of how 'multicultural welfare states', in Kymlicka's formulation, are meant to deal with increasingly temporary and fluid migration patterns and the threat they pose to such 'assimilationist civic integration policies' (Engbersen 2016, 2).

1.3 Research Questions

The results of this overwhelming volume of studies have therefore been, at best, inconclusive. One indicative meta-analysis by Stolle and Harell (2015, 320), including 90 articles dedicated to Putnam's findings, found that 26 articles supported the findings while 25 seemed to refute them, as well as 39 studies producing mixed or neutral results. As the authors argue, one major issue with the empirical studies detailed above has been the absence of attention paid to specific social context and social interaction (Stolle and Harell, 323). Previous studies have for the most part tended to ignore the *type* of intergroup contact at the local level, focusing instead on objective measures of neighbourhood or regional diversity.

Indeed, many of the models employed previously rely on objective levels of immigration and diversity, as opposed to subjective perceptions. This is despite research conducted by Hjerm (2007, 1253) and others who, drawing on data from the European Social Survey, have argued that 'neither actual nor perceived size' matter for anti-immigrant attitudes. Semyonov et al (2004, 682) have similarly found that the actual size of the foreign population is not likely to increase exclusionary attitudes, although do argue that *perceived* size is likely to be associated with perceived threat and 'the higher the perceived size, the more pronounced are both the threat and anti-foreigner attitudes'.

Another major issue with the literature, noted by Kymlicka (2015, 2), is the fact that who exactly constitutes an 'immigrant' or 'foreigner' is itself socially constructed and highly contingent. Should these terms refer to anyone who is foreign-born, anyone who hasn't been naturalised, or anyone who is a first-or-second generation immigrant? As Kymlicka argues, should a London-born child of Irish immigrants be considered part of the 'we' that is being challenged by immigration, or among the immigrant group who might hypothetically reduce the solidarity necessary for an expansive welfare state?

Building on these critiques of previous studies, this research will seek to answer three interrelated questions regarding some of the key assumptions that underpin the 'progressive's dilemma' debate. Firstly, what actually constitutes social solidarity: who is it between and forms of solidarity are most important? Secondly, what potential obstacles or threats exist to social solidarity, and what does this tell us about the strength and saliency of various forms of social identity? Lastly, how do notions of solidarity intersect with attitudes to increased immigration, redistribution, and the welfare state?

To help answer these questions, this thesis will begin with an examination of theoretical literature on the subject of social solidarity, before providing an outline of the qualitative methodology used to engage with the research questions. It will then provide a sketch of relevant historical and social developments regarding welfare and redistribution in the United Kingdom, in order to situate the subsequent analysis and discussion within a broader context of social and institutional norms. The analysis and discussion will then be followed by some final remarks and a conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Social Solidarity

This thesis will take the concept of social solidarity as its theoretical basis and ask how notions of solidarity intersect with attitudes towards immigration and support for the welfare state. It will begin with, as its starting point, Steinar Stjernø's definition of solidarity as 'the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need through taxation and redistribution organised by the state' (Stjernø 2009, 2). While such a definition is valuable for the purposes of this research, Wilde (2007, 172) has criticised Stjernø for implying that a weakening of state power, of 'collective social provision', must necessarily mean a diminution of solidarity. In other words, the shift away from a Keynesian welfare model does not automatically entail reduced preparedness to share. Moreover, Wilde has argued that the insistence on 'one particular form of delivery' – taxation and redistribution organised by the state – is problematic and obscures the possibilities of social protection creating a 'dependency culture rather than a solidaristic one' (Wilde 2007, 172). Building on these criticisms, Wilde instead defines solidarity more broadly as 'the feeling of reciprocal sympathy and responsibility among members of a group which promotes mutual support' (Wilde 2007, 171). This definition maintains the important link between feeling and action, but without stipulating the necessary presence of state involvement.

Will Kymlicka (2015, 8) has noted how existing literature on the concept of solidarity is surprisingly limited, and that 'the extent to which the welfare state or multiculturalism presuppose solidarity, create solidarity, or erode solidarity' has largely been ignored. The term

has arguably been confined to 'the realm of rhetoric', with much greater attention focused on other models of political organisation such as democracy, nationalism, and multiculturalism (Wilde 2007, 171). Alexander (2014, 303) concurs, and suggests that solidarity has been absent 'from influential theories of modern society' despite its centrality to social order and social conflict. Reynolds (2014, 1) has likewise argued that solidarity has long had 'a curious absent presence in social theory and analysis', in part due to its constant reformulation as a concept with regards to the 'contemporary context of social diversity, political and religious difference, and the development of more subjective and diffuse cultures'. Discussions of solidarity also often conflate different understandings of the term as a position, a strategy, and a goal. Nor is it always apparent which social systems 'solidarity' is intended to promote, how it will be 'achieved', or to what extent solidarity should be considered a social priority (Reynolds 2014, 5).

Émile Durkheim first explored the idea of social solidarity with regards to the division of labour in economic and social life during the late nineteenth-century. For Durkheim, solidarity was constituted by the shared norms and values held between individuals and groups in society. Durkheim distinguished between two different models of solidarity: firstly, the 'mechanical' solidarity that emerged from the traditional organisation of homogenous feudal societies, whereby individuals were linked together by the similarity of their daily lives, their rituals and traditions, and their physical proximity. These prevailing social norms – 'the totality of belief and sentiment' – were diffused through all reaches of social life (Durkheim 1893, 79). Such 'mechanical' solidarity was later replaced by the 'organic' solidarity produced by the growing division of labour in modern, industrialised societies which, Durkheim argued, had become the 'fundamental basis for the social order' (Durkheim 1893, 41). The social transformations of the industrial revolution meant that citizens were no longer tied together by tradition and 'inherited

norms' but rather the interdependence created by the society-wide division of labour. Within this context, Durkheim was concerned that the growing differentiation in culture, ideology, and social norms would weaken the social fabric and damage the importance of the 'collective consciousness', as individuals grew both more atomised while also, paradoxically, becoming more dependent on one another (Stjernø 2009, 34).

These concerns about the growing atomisation of society and its impact have since been widely elaborated upon. Giddens (1991, 3) has argued that under the conditions of industrial modernity, the notions of risk and trust have grown especially important. Trust, in particular, takes on a great significance in 'a world of disembedding mechanisms and abstract systems…(and) is directly linked to achieving an early sense of ontological security'. Likewise, Nooteboom (2007, 30) has argued that the development of industrialised societies necessitated a move away from 'highly personalised trust relationships in small and tight localised communities', towards highly differentiated societies whereby social trust is much less rooted in personal relationships but rather in institutional intermediaries, such as the law and 'complex patterns of mutual dependence'.

Bilgic and his fellow authors have further connected the concept of social trust to issues of national security. They argue that particular constructions of trust relationships can work to generate *distrust* towards out-groups, therefore indicating the role of trust and distrust in the construction of 'us and them' dichotomies. Social trust in this context is defined as the 'levels of confidence people have in the moral orientation or trustworthiness of their fellow citizens' (Bilgic et al. 2019, 1286). A distinction is also made between the 'generalized trust' felt towards a wide, imagined moral community and the 'particularized' trust shared between a specific, limited group (Bilgic et al. 2019, 1288). Regarding this second example of 'particularized' trust,

they indicate how certain forms of social trust can be constitutive of particularized distrust towards out-groups. Using the Norwegian government as an example, the authors also show how in official documents it is implied that ethnic homogeneity (and the high degree of social trust that comes with it) has been essential for the continuation of 'Nordic' welfare states. Immigration is therefore implicitly presented as a threat to the social trust necessary to underpin well-functioning, universalist welfare state.

Indeed, one of Durkheim's most important stipulations with regards to social solidarity was that there existed an inverted relationship between how close the social bonds in society were, and how open and receptive that society would be to newcomers: 'the weaker solidarity is…the slacker the thread that links society together, the easier it must be for foreign elements to be incorporated into societies' (Stjernø 2009, 35). This last observation invites the question of what exactly is the *basis* for the types of solidarity outlined by Durkheim? His discussion of 'mechanical' and 'organic' solidarity takes place within the context of the modern nation-state, but with very few direct references to this specific social structure. Therefore, the analysis perhaps belongs to the 'nation-blind' theories of social organisation, critiqued as a form of methodological nationalism by Wimmer and Schiller for being more preoccupied with the 'growing differentiation, rationalisation, and modernisation of social structures' than with the role played by ethnic or racial sentiments: therefore foregoing 'the national framing' of modernity (Wimmer and Schiller 2002, 304).

As such, it is important to clarify what *kind* of solidarity will be relevant and important to investigate. In his comprehensive study of the term, Stjernø (2009, 85) traces the history of European conceptions of solidarity in classical social theory, Marxism, and Christian ethics. From these three traditions, Stjernø delineates between two broad conceptions of solidarity – a

Durkheimian understanding of the various norms and social ties which contribute towards social integration, and a second, more Marxist, interpretation of solidarity as the relationship *between* a specific social group (Stjernø, 85). Stjernø also lays out a helpful criterion for measuring different appeals to solidarity: firstly, what is the basis of the solidarity, i.e. on what principles or attributes is the solidarity organised? Second, what is the function of the solidarity, what is it trying to achieve, and how? Thirdly, how inclusive, or exclusive, is the specific solidary? Lastly, what degree of freedom or autonomy is granted to the individual in relation to the collective? The primary usefulness of this classification is the observation that 'solidarity' is both the product of the relationship between the individual 'I' and the group 'we', *in addition to* the 'we' and 'they' established by the boundaries of the solidary (Stjernø, 17), helping to provide insight into the exclusionary potential of some forms of social solidarity.

2.2 Solidarity and Diversity

The question of exclusive solidarity raises the question of the relative saliencies of ethnic, national and class identities for different types of social action. Are individuals more willing to share resources if the recipients are perceived to belong to the same national or ethnic group? If the United Kingdom was *more* ethnically homogenous, would there necessarily be a greater willingness to contribute towards the welfare state? In an empirical study of two ethnically heterogenous neighbourhoods in Germany, Sutterlüty and Neckel (2006, 789) emphasise the particular saliency of negative classifications based on ethnicity, as opposed to other social markers. In line with Bourdieu, the authors argue that classification struggles constitute a form of 'symbolic power' contestation, whereby different forms of classification serve to provide legitimacy and grant recognition to social groups who have amassed power and resources. A distinction is drawn between 'gradual' and 'categorical' classifications, in which the former is

concerned with quantitative differences, usually related to income, education, and profession, while the latter refers to 'qualitative judgements of otherness' that are mutually exclusive, ascribed, and perceived as unchanging – such as race, religion, and ethnicity (Sutterlüty and Neckel 2006, 805).

Applying these theories to their case study, the authors find overwhelming evidence that negative classifications based on ethnicity predominate. While Sutterlüty and Neckel note that there also exist examples of negative classifications based purely on 'vertical' inequalities – such as the stigmatization of office workers by former miners – the 'horizontal' classification of ethnic difference still emerged as the most salient. Turkish business-owners who were perceived by the autochthonous community as hard-working, frugal, and self-sacrificing were still viewed negatively, despite possessing these traditionally lauded qualities – and were instead decried as 'backward, yet dangerous competitors' (Sutterlüty and Neckel 2006, 806). The mutual classification by Turks and Germans of the other as 'unclean' – in either a literal or spiritual sense – recalls Norbert Elias's study of 'established' and outsider, and the moral condemnation directed towards any group seen as a threat to the respective group's 'we-ideal', although in Elias's study there was, crucially, no ethnic differences between established and outsiders (Elias 2008, xxxiv). Seeking to explain what causes this particular animosity towards successful Turkish businesspeople, the authors suggest that ethnicity conceived 'as an extended form of kinship' plays a crucial role in the negative classification of upwardly mobile Turkish migrants (Sutterlüty and Neckel 2006, 809). As such, solidarity in the form of material resources must firstly be maintained within the boundaries of one's own ethnic group.

In a similar vein, Hoffman et al (2019, 656) use an Austrian case study in order to distinguish between differing conceptions of solidarity as propagated by various social and political actors.

They make use of Stjernø's distinction between a Durkheimian notion of solidarity as a set of norms and values shared across society, and a Marxist conception of solidarity as something shared *between* specific social groups. Employing the latter definition, the authors explore how the Austrian Freedom Party (FPO), the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB), and Austrian civil society organisations all appeal to contrasting notions of solidarity to advocate for their policy positions regarding migrant access to the labour market and the needs-based minimum benefit system. The FPO, for example, makes use of the idea of a German ethnic community as foundational to their specific notion of solidarity, and use this to try and exclude migrants and asylum seekers from jobs and welfare (Hoffman et al. 2019, 656).

2.3 Welfare as a location of 'boundary-drawing'

This explicit connection drawn between ethnic community and the welfare state highlights an alternative way to conceptualise notions of 'exclusivist solidarity', with regards to the substantial literature on boundary-formation. Boundary theorists argue that processes of classification – 'who is like me and who is different' – form the basis of social hierarchy by providing justification for the unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources (Edgell et al 2020, 309). Lamont and Molnár (2002, 168) describe symbolic boundaries as 'conceptual distinctions', drawn by individuals and groups in order to categorise and establish new social realities and generate feelings of similarity within the group boundary. As such, they become essential instruments with which to acquire and maintain status and monopolize resources. These symbolic boundaries are distinct from social boundaries, which constitute the unequal access and distribution of resources resulting from 'objectified forms of social difference'. Symbolic boundaries therefore play an important role in the construction and maintenance of material social boundaries – such as Bourdieu's classic example of the French education system,

whereby cultural markers of class distinction worked towards the institutional bias directed against schoolchildren from working-class backgrounds, thus perpetuating the monopolization of power and resources by the French upper-classes (Lamont and Molńar 2002, 186).

With regards to the 'making and unmaking' of ethnic boundaries, Wimmer (2008, 977) has developed an intricate model to try and explain the varying saliencies of ethnic boundaries, as well as their degree of closure, stability, and historical importance. He argues that ethnic boundaries are the outcomes of classificatory struggles and negotiations between actors in the social field: a social boundary will emerge when the cognitive processes of classification align with real acts of connecting and distancing. Different actors will therefore pursue different strategies based on their relative position within the power hierarchy, as well as the level of ethnic 'distinction' that will most strongly support their claims to legitimacy, moral worth, and political power (Wimmer 2008, 1007). Hence, a great deal of agency is afforded to individual actors and groups in deciding where and how boundaries will be drawn. That said, Wimmer also allows for the fact that social actors are not at total liberty to freely choose which strategies of boundary-making they will pursue. Indeed, he argues significant constraints are imposed by the institutional environment, distribution of power, and political networks that influence who boundaries include and excludes (Wimmer 2008, 990).

Jenkins (2014, 810), though largely supportive of Wimmer, has been critical of the 'relative neglect' of ethnic solidarity in his analysis. He argues that Wimmer's emphasis on the formation and negotiation of boundaries, as well as the feelings of difference that accompany these processes, omits discussion of perceptions of similarity *within* the ethnic group. The focus on boundaries therefore risks overlooking the emotional or affective component of internal identification. As Lamont (2014, 816) also argues, Wimmer's position is more in tune with a

structuralist or *Realpolitik* perspective: emphasising the institutional factors that contribute to boundary-formation and how these function in monopolizing resources. Lamont, alternatively, has been more preoccupied with the symbolic aspects of these processes and the importance of *recognition* and *legitimacy*, as much as the distribution of material resources. As such, the formation of symbolic boundaries 'are not necessarily oriented towards ultimate instrumental goals such as gaining resources or exercising power'. We can therefore perhaps think of the welfare state as a location where symbolic boundaries manifest both as social boundaries with a functional purpose to protect redistributed resources for the 'in-group', *as well as* to protect recognition and legitimacy of their dominant status in the national community.

Edgell and her fellow authors have further complicated the picture by drawing attention to various studies which demonstrate a discrepancy between symbolic and social boundaries, challenging the idea that the former necessarily consolidates into the latter. To take one example, there is ample evidence of individual prejudicial attitudes not translating into discriminatory *behaviour*. The authors argue, therefore, that is more fruitful to analyse 'packages' of symbolic boundaries – related to attitudes towards material inequality, political opportunity, and tolerance of difference – and then correlate these 'packages' into attitudes towards social boundaries (Edgell et al. 2020, 310). It is suggested that these 'coherent packages' are more closely related to the drawing of social boundaries than the 'overall strength of symbolic boundaries alone'. The relevant observation here is the suggestion that how individuals evaluate the prospect of material inequality is not driven by a generalised tolerance or intolerance, but rather the ideological packaging of 'meaningful identities, policy preferences, and views of out-groups' (Edgell et al. 2020, 326).

Taken together, this collection of theoretical tools allows for a refinement of the research questions outlined above. In regards to the first question of what social solidarity is and who it is between, should we follow Sutterlüty and Neckel's example and view ethnic solidarity, understood as 'an extended form of kinship', as an overriding and ultimately more salient form of social identity than class membership (Sutterlüty and Neckel 2006, 809)? Likewise, should we understand immigration as the most serious threat to the 'generalized trust' felt towards a wide, imagined moral community described by Bilgic (Bilgic et al. 2019, 1286)? Lastly, if we interpret this form of ethnic/national boundary-drawing to be the most salient, is it therefore reasonable to expect higher levels of immigration and immigrant-generated diversity to diminish support for social welfare policies perceived to be assisting those who do not belong to the same 'in-group'? The following chapter will deal with the methodology selected to begin answering these questions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection – semi-structured interviews

The empirical findings of this thesis are drawn from a series of long-form, semi-structured interviews, conducted with members of trade unions and community groups from a specific region in the United Kingdom. The questions were aimed at identifying underlying social processes and structures in order to try and provide generalizable theoretical insights. Kulin and others have have argued that many of the previous studies on the subject of the 'progressive's dilemma' have sought to investigate if there is a negative relationship between immigrant-generated diversity and support for social welfare policies by taking a cross-country, quantitative approach and plotting objective levels of immigration against survey response data (Kulin et al. 2016, 3). As we have seen, the results of these previous studies have been mixed and inconclusive, as well as hampered by a lack of clarity regarding who counts as a 'foreigner' and what specific welfare measures are being tested for. Indeed, this research will take as its starting-point Kymlicka's note that 'it would help if we could move beyond bare regression models to uncover some of the actual mechanisms that underpin (or erode) inclusive solidarity' (Kymlicka 2015, 9)

What has often been missing from previous large-scale quantitative studies is a more ground-level strategy to try and explain *how* individuals perceive the relationship between solidarity, welfare, and immigration – as well as the crucial impact that different immigrant 'incorporation regimes' have on the willingness to contribute to progressive taxation systems. Working at the micro-level, this research will therefore ask in what ways individuals understand questions of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity, and to what extent these ideas underpin support for the welfare state. Moreover, how do these attitudes intersect, if at all, with attitudes to immigration? Is

ethnic solidarity the most important variable in explaining attitudes to social welfare policies as opposed to other salient factors or, in other words, would there necessarily be greater willingness to contribute to the welfare state if Britain was more ethnically homogenous?

The interviews themselves follow the format detailed by Bryman and Bell, whereby the researcher possesses 'a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered (an interview guide), but the interviewee still has a great deal of leeway in deciding how to reply' (Bryman and Bell 2019, 241). This approach provided me as the interviewer with agency to follow whatever path the respondent wanted to go down. Each interview began by asking the respondent to explain their involvement with their trade union or community group, before exploring how they understood the term 'solidarity' – what it meant to them, who it was between, and what obstacles existed to solidarity and solidarity-based movements in the UK. This latter question in particular was revealing in terms how respondents understood the saliencies of different forms of solidarity, and to what extent increasing immigration and immigrant-generated diversity posed a threat to it. Additional questions included giving respondents the example of Sweden as a model of a universal welfare system, before asking about their thoughts on it, as well as whether a similar system could be adopted in the UK. Questions concerning who should be eligible for welfare benefits and who should have access to the NHS helped illuminate whether the respondents understood the 'deserving' community of recipients for social support in ethnic and national terms, or only in relation to material need. During the interviews it was crucial to conceal any mention of immigration as a central focus of the research, and instead frame the questioning around themes of solidarity, trust, and attitudes to welfare. Whether or not immigration was raised as a relevant topic in connection with these issues was therefore entirely up to the interviewee, and the inclusion or omission of the subject alone was often instructive.

3.2 Sample selection

The respondents were all members of either a trade union or involved at the ground level with one or multiple community groups or organisations. The rationale for speaking to people involved in trade unions or community groups was that it was likely these individuals had some notion of the concept of solidarity and had thought about how it applied to their lives and their work. In some instances, respondents whose interviews did not end up being used for the project were unsure about the term and responded to the first question about solidarity by asking me, as the interviewer, to define the word for them – a request that subsequently unbalanced the rest of the discussion. One potential limitation of this strategy was that individuals involved with trade unions were perhaps more likely to have a politicised, class-based understanding of the term 'solidarity'. This, however, eventually proved to be an asset for the research, as it made it possible to understand how these more traditional conceptions of solidarity intersected with ethnic and national forms of solidarity, and in turn how these attitudes related to subjects of immigration, diversity, and redistribution.

All participants were drawn from the same urban region of the United Kingdom, which will be withheld to preserve anonymity. The region contains a multitude of working-class and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, where a variety of community groups and tenants unions operate. Individuals involved in organising for community groups or tenants unions in this locality were likely to have direct experience of how different forms of ethnic and class solidarities intersect and interact, as did trade union members with experience organising in the workplace. Initial contact was usually made through official channels, as well as acquaintances, who in turn put me in contact with more individuals willing to participate. A table listing the respondents and their gender, age, employment status, and union or community group

involvement can be found below (Figure 1). Due to recent political action and strike activity, many unions were unresponsive or unwilling to participate in the research out of concerns of hidden or nefarious agendas, however the interviews that were conducted were extensive and rich in detail.

Respondent A	Woman, 60, unemployed, community and tenants union member.
Respondent B	Woman, 24, employed, trade union member.
Respondent C	Man, 23, employed, community and tenants union member.
Respondent D	Woman, 50-60, employed, community worker.
Respondent E	Man, 24, employed, trade union member.

Figure 1. Relevant participant information

3.3 Data analysis

The research utilised a combination of thematic and hermeneutic analysis to interrogate the resulting datasets. Uwe Flick describes thematic analysis as a strategy for combining multiple approaches, as well as a method for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' which in turn helps organise and describe data in rich detail (Flick 2014, 421). The process involves initially identifying what counts as a theme: for Braun and Clark (quoted in Flick), a theme is something relevant for the research which can be seen 'on some level of patterned response or meaning within the dataset' (Flick 2014, 421). In the case of this research, a relevant theme would be any response that had a direct or tangential connection to solidarity, redistribution, or immigration. As such, the research aimed to undertake a detailed analysis of a particular aspect, as opposed to a description of the entire dataset. Indeed, Braun and Clark also distinguish between 'inductive theoretical thematic analysis', which develops codes and themes from the data, and 'theoretical thematic analysis, which is driven by the researcher's

theoretical and analytical interests – and which this research chose as its primary approach (Flick 2014, 421).

In accordance with the guidelines described by Flick, once the interviews had been transcribed from audio and I had familiarized myself with the dataset, I generated initial codes based on the responses and sorted these codes into broad themes, collating relevant data under these headings (Flick 2014, 422). These themes were then broken down into subthemes, with less relevant themes excluded. It was these remaining, and renamed, themes which formed the starting point for the analysis, beginning with an exploration of the most relevant and straightforward manifest themes.

In addition to this strategy of thematic analysis, where themes were established using clear rules and then linked to relevant historical and theoretical frameworks, the research also occasionally sought to use hermeneutic analysis to explore some of the ambiguous and contradictory sections of the dataset. Andreas Wernet describes hermeneutic analysis as dealing with the question of the 'true meaning' of texts, whereby the idea of the one, adequate understanding of a response is eschewed 'in favour of an interpretation that emphasises the role of tradition, prejudice, and different subjective horizons' (Wernet 2013, 234). Flick similarly outlines the difference between 'semantic' themes, meaning the 'explicit or surface level meaning of the data', and 'latent' themes which aim at identifying or examining the 'underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations' that lie behind what is explicitly mentioned in the text (Flick 2014, 421). As Wernet argues, the objective of such an approach is to both reveal latent meaning but also 'to reconstruct the relations between the manifest intentions and the latent meaning of utterances' (Wernet 2013, 236). Such an approach was of particular utility for this research when considering the implied saliencies of different forms of ethnic and class-based solidarity,

and how a literal and sequential analysis of text, deprived of context, helped reveal assumptions implied by the speaker that may not have emerged from a more straightforward content analysis.

3.4 Limitations

A few limitations to the research should be noted, mostly pertaining to the sample size. As discussed above, recent strike action in the United Kingdom has put trade unions on guard – I was asked repeatedly for assurance that I was not an undercover journalist, for example – and thus often made securing interviews with union members difficult. As such, the sample size is slightly smaller than intended. Nonetheless, I believe the depth of the interviews were sufficient to begin exploring some of the underlying assumptions relevant to the 'progressive's dilemma' debate, but a more comprehensive study would naturally need to go further. A related issue was the relative youth of some of the participants, perhaps skewering the results considering the small sample size. At the same time, the purpose of qualitative research in this instance was not to produce generalizable results, but rather a thematic exploration of the concept of solidarity as well as the intersections of attitudes towards immigration, redistribution, and the welfare state.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The most pressing ethical concern of the research was to ensure that confidentiality was protected at all times. Participants who took part in the research signed informed consent forms and all data was handled in accordance with GDPR. As discussed above, the names, locations, and specific jobs of respondents have also been anonymised. While I discuss in vague terms

the type of union or community group organisation in which participants are involved, I refrain from providing specific details that could be used to identify individuals.

4. Social and Institutional Context

How individuals understand the issues of solidarity and redistribution that lie at the heart of the 'progressive's dilemma' is framed by the specific social and institutional context of each country into which immigrants arrive. In his seminal book on 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism', Gøsta Esping-Andersen notes how the particular organisational features of a welfare state 'help determine the articulation of social solidarity, divisions of class, and status differentiation' (Esping-Andersen 1990, 55). Indeed, as Kwon and Curran (2016, 375) have argued, previous comparative studies have often overlooked the important role played by institutions as 'key intervening factors' in the putative trade-off between diversity and solidarity. Immigration does not occur in a vacuum, and any study examining the relationship between immigration and support for redistribution must first consider the 'highly varied immigrant incorporation regimes' into which immigrants arrive. The failure to do just this has likely contributed to the ambiguous and contradictory results of past studies (Kwon and Curran 2016, 378). As such, this short chapter will provide relevant context by exploring the social norms and attitudes regarding taxation, redistribution, and welfare in the United Kingdom. Moreover, it will explore the design of the institutions created to carry out these functions and their historical development, helping to set the frame for the subsequent empirical analysis.

4.1 Types of Welfare State

As a concept, the 'welfare state' has proved difficult to define, especially as the term does not denote a specific type of system (Fraser 1984, xxi). Moreover, as Esping-Andersen has noted, the welfare state is not just a mechanism that intervenes and seeks to correct inequality but is also 'its own system of stratification...(and thus) an active force in the ordering of social relations' (Esping-Andersen 1990, 23). The British Poor Laws, for example, were not intended

merely as a form of relief for the needy but also a means to stigmatise recipients. Nevertheless, Fraser has defined the welfare state as being constituted by three central features: firstly, the designation and protection of certain groups due to their membership, such as children or the unemployed, whose 'rights are guaranteed and whose welfare is protected by the community'. Secondly, the assured delivery of specific services (such as healthcare and care for the elderly) so that no citizen will be denied access and, lastly, the use of transfer payments which serve to maintain incomes during times of need, such as parenthood or sickness (Fraser 1984, xxi).

Already clear from this fairly standard definition of the welfare state is the multiplicity of normative or subjective judgements about who should be eligible for support and which groups are legitimate recipients. What is also clear is the variety of services a modern welfare state is expected to provide, and to a variety of different social groups. Indeed, Kwon and Curran suggest that another reason for the ambiguous outcomes of previous studies looking at the 'progressive's dilemma' is that certain forms of welfare, such as unemployment or housing benefit, tend to be more strongly associated with immigration and therefore may receive less public support as the volume of new arrivals increases (Kwon and Curran 2016, 378).

The structure of these institutions, of different welfare states, can themselves help shed light on national attitudes to social welfare policy. Seeking to explain the very different traditions of taxation and spending in Sweden, Britain, and the USA, Sven Steinmo has proposed a 'historical institutionalist' approach, whereby the manner in which interest groups, politicians, and bureaucrats develop their policy preferences is deeply connected to the decision-making institutions of the polity (Steinmo 1993, 7). Institutions, in other words, 'provide the context in which individuals interpret self-interest and thereby define their policy preferences' (Steinmo 1993, 7). While Steinmo's account is focused on fiscal policy, the same principle can be applied

to the case of the welfare state. Eger has similarly argued that the preferences, values, and norms embedded in different institutional arrangements help explain variations in attitudes to welfare (Eger 2010, 206).

The difference between universal and 'means-tested' social protection is one key example of how different forms of welfare states might be more conducive to solidarity than others. While 'means-tested' systems are conditional on recipients falling beneath a certain threshold in terms of income or living conditions, universal welfare states tend to provide assistance to all, 'irrespective of class or market position' and are therefore often intended to cultivate a 'cross-class solidarity, a solidarity of the nation' (Esping-Andersen 1990, 25). Proponents of universal systems argue that the provision of support to all members of the community helps to remove stigma surrounding state support and instil a sense of collective social membership, for 'once all are recognised as potentially needy, dependence is no longer the curse of one particular group and is not stigmatized; assistance is transformed from a gift into a right' (Baldwin 1990, 31). Indeed, for Baldwin, the 'fully generalized, comprehensive welfare state most closely embodies institutionalized solidarity' (Baldwin 1990, 29).

Regarding the relationship between welfare and immigration, some have also argued that the adoption of universalism might help mitigate the questions of deservingness and reciprocity which often see immigrants excluded from the perceived community of legitimate recipients. Nills Holtun, for example, suggests that the absence of a means-tested system would entail fewer questions of whether those in need of assistance 'are themselves responsible for their need' while more universal and redistributive systems would help lower levels of inequality and 'limit the inclination to see the needy as out-groups with which one cannot identify' (Holtun 2021, 146). Alternatively, however, Eger and others have pointed to Sweden as an example

whereby a *more* redistributive system might promote greater animosity towards new arrivals who are perceived to be benefitting from a generous system of social provision without having previously contributed (Eger 2010, 206).

When discussing different forms of welfare states, Esping-Andersen has preferred to use the term 'welfare state regimes' to denote the relationship between state and economy, as well as the 'complex of legal and organisational features' that constitute these systems (Esping-Andersen 1990, 2). He then goes on to establish a typology of three different 'welfare state regimes' within which the British example can be situated: 'liberal' welfare states, based on means-tested forms of assistance and modest universal transfers or social insurance plans, in the style of the USA, Canada, and Australia (Esping-Andersen 1990, 26); continental 'corporatist' regimes, which have tended to preserve status differentials and have been shaped by the church and a commitment to traditional family values, although in which the state is the main provider of welfare and private insurance plays a marginal role (Esping-Andersen 1990, 27); and 'social democratic' regimes, committed to the principles of universalism and the 'de-commodification' of social rights under one universal instance system (Esping-Andersen 1990, 28). The closest example here would be the Scandinavian system, although as the author notes these still maintain strong liberal elements.

4.2 The British welfare state: retreat from universalism

How, then, does the UK fit into the framework established by Esping-Andersen? The British model, with a universal health service but limited and mostly means-tested benefits (scaled back considerably since Esping-Andersen's book) falls somewhere between the liberal and the 'social-democratic' model, with 'one group at the bottom primarily reliant on stigmatizing

relief; one group in the middle primarily clients of social insurance; and, finally, one privileged group capable of deriving its main welfare from the market' (Esping-Andersen 1990, 65).

The modern British welfare state begun with the 'Beveridge Report', a 1942 government document produced by social economist William Beveridge which produced a number of recommendations designed to eliminate the five 'giant evils' of squalor, want, disease, ignorance, and idleness (Deeming and Johnson 2017, 396). Beveridge's report proposed a universal system of social insurance which would include all citizens, classified by group with regards to their cause of economic insecurity and the protections designed to counter them. The establishment of both the National Health Service and universal family allowances formed a central aspect of the proposals, as well as a flat-rate and universal pension scheme. For social insurance, financing would be provided by individuals and their employees whereas the state would cover most of the cost of the NHS and family allowances (Baldwin 1990, 117). In Fraser's book on the history of the British welfare state, he argues that universalism was the 'essential theme' of the 1940s and the post-war years, and that this sentiment was embodied in the proposals, especially in relation to the principle of flat-rate contributions (Fraser 1984, 217). As such, the Beveridge Report constituted 'the nearest thing to a blueprint for a Welfare State which Britain had' (Fraser 1984, xxi) and was adopted in full by the incoming post-war Labour governments of 1945-1951, while the parameters of the new welfare state were largely accepted and maintained by subsequent Conservative governments until the 1970s and 1980s (Deeming and Johnson 2017, 396).

The Conservative governments of 1979-1997, led my Margaret Thatcher and John Major, oversaw an erosion of the post-war welfare state and the principle of universalism. The 1950s had already seen a part abandonment of the original flat-rate principle whereby provisions for

the elderly shifted from the state to employers for richer citizens and, as such, the approach to insurance that characterised earlier measures required a 'painful re-orientation towards earnings-related arrangements' (Baldwin 1990, 291). The combination of inflation, unemployment, and slow economic growth which emerged in the 1970s in response to the global oil crisis, however, constituted the major turning point away from the previous Keynesian economic model that had emerged following the war (Fraser 1984, 250). Conservative governments implemented a move towards a 'welfare-to-work regime', reducing unemployment benefits and introducing a more flexible labour market (Deeming and Johnson 2017, 396). This shift from subsistence unemployment benefit to a conditional jobseekers allowance continued under the New Labour period of 1997-2010, along with increasingly draconian media and political language surrounding the unemployed (Deeming and Johnson 2017, 398). The following Conservative-led coalition government of 2010-2015 then implemented unprecedented levels of cuts to social services and welfare benefits as part of an expansive austerity programme (Wintour 2013).

This retrenchment of the welfare state in Britain and shift from a social-democratic to liberal model of social protection has dovetailed with a change in British attitudes to issues of welfare and redistribution. Data from the British Social Attitudes Survey from 1983-2012 indicates a substantial increase in people, across the vast majority of social groups, who think that benefits are too high and discourage work, as well as those who think there are 'sufficient jobs nearby' and that less generous benefits would teach people to 'stand on their own two feet'(Deeming and Johnson 2017, 401). As of 2023, there has been a slight decline in some of these attitudes (NCSR , 2024) and there remains strong support for the NHS and other public services, yet the substantial majority view remains that benefits should be reduced (Goodhart 2013, 267). The British welfare state has therefore changed a great deal from the initial conception of a universal

insurance-based system financed by flat-rate contributions and unconditional state support in multiple areas. Social security is now non-contributory, 'has relatively few conditions and short qualifying periods' and thus requires, according to Goodhart, a degree of trust in one's fellow citizens that they will play by the same rules (Goodhart 2013, 267). In other words, the solidarity underpinning the welfare state requires a sense that all participants belong to the same moral community. This brief survey of the social norms and institutional context into which immigrants arrive will therefore help set the stage for the following discussion of different conceptions of solidarity and redistribution in the UK.

5. Analysis and discussion

This chapter discusses the results of the interviews and explores manifest and latent themes that emerged following an analysis of the dataset. The discussion is structured around three broad themes (social solidarity; obstacles to solidarity; how immigration and diversity intersect with solidarity and support for the welfare state), in alignment with the questions of the research. The analysis will begin with manifest themes – the 'explicit or surface meaning of the data' – which are evident in the interviews, and then connect these to relevant theories (Flick 2014, 421). Manifest themes were generally drawn from responses at the beginning of the interview, immediately after the respondent had been asked to talk about their involvement in their trade union or community group. These often straightforward and unambiguous answers to direct questions about how they understood the term solidarity tended to demonstrate the way in which respondents would ideally present themselves, with most explaining their conception of the term in strictly class and issue-based language. More ambiguous or contradictory answers, though often more revealing, tended to emerge later during the interviews and in response to less direct questioning.

5.1 Social Solidarity

In response to straightforward questions about how respondents understood the idea of solidarity, two overlapping themes emerged as the most prominent: solidarity as a relationship *between* people, and solidarity as a *means* to achieve a common goal through people coming together. At a later point in the conversations, virtually all respondents acknowledged that solidarity is necessarily exclusive to some degree and requires a process of boundary drawing to operate effectively – though this was not understood to be a normative problem. Even more revealing, however, was the explicit or implicit assumption that solidarity between ethnic

groups, and ethnic minority immigrants in particular, was likely to be a more salient and overriding form of social solidarity than class ties, despite the professed primacy of class and issue-based solidarity stated earlier in the interviews.

5.1.1 Solidarity as a relationship between individuals

Firstly, and at the most basic level, respondents all understood solidarity to be constituted by the relationships between individuals and held together by a set of common values and experiences. This was expressed in terms of the bonds between work colleagues – 'on the shop floor between your workmates, you know, these are the people that you're with day in, day out', according to Respondent C – and through community groups, sports teams, and social activities, spaces around which 'the whole entire community can revolve'. Emphasis was placed on the fact that these social bonds did not have to be 'expressly like, union or…political' but rather constituted by mutual understanding and shared values. Indeed, Respondent D advocated for more social organisations, such as choir groups, to strenghten social bonds. Such conceptions align with the original Durkheimian notion of social solidarity, as expressed through a shared set of experiences, norms, and values or, in Wilde's phrasing, 'the feeling of reciprocal sympathy and responsibility among members of a group which promotes mutual support' (Wilde 2007, 171). With regards to Stjernø's classification system for different types of solidarity, this aligns with the idea that solidarity is comprised of the various social norms that contribute to social integration, and remains much more preoccupied with the relationship between the individual, the 'I', and the 'we' – as opposed to defining that 'we' against an out-group (Stjernø 2009, 85). Indeed, while there may be exclusionary implications to such an understanding, these remained implicit at the outset of the discussions.

5.1.2 Solidarity as a means to achieve a common goal

The notion of solidarity being constituted by the relationship between individuals was often complimented by a more functional understanding of solidarity as a means to achieve a common goal. Especially prevalent was reference to the idea of "strength in numbers", whereby solidarity worked to help redress power imbalances and provide protection to members of the solidary. Solidarity was therefore presented as a means to an end, constituted by organisation and action. This was often expressed in terms of union organisation, Respondent A recalling an advert for Unison, a major trade union in the UK in which:

> "*there was one little tiny person saying, 'I don't like this' (and) the big boss character was going, 'I don't care'. And then about a thousand others came and then said, 'no, we don't like this'. It's strength in numbers, basically*".

The idea of 'taking the power back' was also a common theme, from "people with more money, more position, more influence than your average person has got". As such, solidarity was understood in functional terms to help defend against exploitation and provide a sense of security, as "when there's no one there to back you up…it's such an isolated and, like, lonely feeling". The responses also demonstrated a more Marxist understanding of the concept, whereby solidarity represents a 'means to a social revolution', or at least to social change, and towards redress of power imbalances (Wilde 2002, 173). This notion of working-class solidarity was understood as being rooted in humanitarian principles of compassion, as stated by Respondent B:

> "*it's just about care for humanity and people, and people over profit, and I'm giving all of these slogans but - I believe in that. I believe that there is a massive amount of strength in numbers*".

The acknowledgment here that the respondent is "giving all these slogans" is indicative of how many of the early answers during the interviews seemed to be influenced by received notions of solidarity derived from organisations that respondents may have been involved with. Indeed, this more expressly political and class-based understanding of solidarity emerged in response to interviewees being asked to talk about their involvement with trade unions or political groups. Taken together, these answers to the question of the nature of solidarity relate to Stjernø's (2009, 17) second principle of solidarity, i.e, what its function is and what is it trying to achieve.

5.1.3 Solidarity as necessarily exclusionary

Of the two notions of solidarity outlined above – as the relationship *between* individuals based on shared experiences and values, and as the *means* to achieve a specific objective – both implicitly suggest a process of boundary-drawing. Solidarity is therefore understood as necessarily exclusionary in many instances, and recalls Wilde's (2007, 173) comment on the 'long evident' paradox of the term – that it is both connoted with ideas of 'unity and universality' while at the same time often exhibiting itself 'most forcefully in antagonism to other groups'.

When this was put to respondents, most agreed that some form of exclusion was an inevitable and benign part of solidarity and solidarity-based movements, as evidenced by Respondent A: "if everybody was together then there'd be no need….no them and us". This process of boundary-drawing was mostly understood, initially, in class terms only. Solidarity was conceived of as existing between, the 'working class'; the 'ninety-nine percent'; and those who 'do not own the means of production'. Indeed, exclusion in many instances was understood as a positive thing for solidarity-based movements, and the work of trade unions especially: "You

know, of course it's exclusionary, because they (trade union members) are the only people who can understand the intricacies of that work and the dangers."

The exclusionary implications of the concept have long been recognised in classical social theory. Weber argued that solidarity is necessarily exclusivist and restrictive, as the feeling of being part of 'we' must presuppose a 'they' (Stjernø 2009, 38), while Durkheim also suggested that there was an inverse relationship between how close the bonds of society (or solidarity) were, and how open that group was to strangers. Taken together with the answers of respondents then, we can see that solidarity requires some form of boundary-drawing and exclusion. This poses a number of questions about *who* precisely will be excluded, and on what grounds. Moreover, what are the strongest and most salient types of boundaries: is it correct, as Durkheim proposed, that there is a direct relationship between the degree of exclusion and the strength of the solidary?

5.1.4 Ethnic versus class solidarity

Despite the professed primacy of class and issue-based solidarity in the early sections of the interviews, the theme of ethnic solidarity and exclusion emerged at later points in almost all of the conversations. Many of the respondents also suggested that the boundaries between ethnic and immigrant groups tend to be more salient than cross-ethnic class solidarities – a view seemingly at odds with previous responses. To take one extended answer from Respondent A, in reply to a question about which groups may be more likely to show solidarity or commit to forms of collective action:

> *"Well, people…it seems to form enclaves, like in London. You had the silk workers from the Jacquard times in the East End. They thinned out as they progressed and prospered. They moved out. Then, Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe took over the same area and*

fostered a community. But again, they prospered and spread out. And Brick Lane now is exclusively Indian. Well, it seems that way. So I think there's just waves and I hate to be socialist about it but it just seems that the addition of money breaks up communities. It can, it can bring them together, but it also…people just drift off and get houses somewhere else. It seems to be like, when you're establishing yourself, it seems important to group together by similarities like racial groups, religious groups. But when you do a little better, slowly but surely, it kind of evaporates. People move out to different parts of the city."

This response reveals many key themes, and as is rich in latent meaning. To begin with, the respondent begins her answer by saying that people 'seem' to form enclaves. This indicates that what follows is an observation, not a direct experience. It also suggests a repeated pattern; a recurring, perhaps even inevitable, process. The use of the word 'enclave' is also revealing, implying distinction and separateness from one's surroundings. Emphasis is placed on the role of nationality and ethnicity in forming these 'enclaves', and the immediate assumption is that they are comprised of ethnic or national groups: French silk workers, Jewish refugees, and 'Indians'. The idea of Jewish refugees 'taking over' also suggests a disruptive movement, in which the respondent is situated as an outsider. Thus, individuals 'form enclaves', distinct from their surroundings, and primarily along ethnic grounds.

The use of the term 'exclusively' to describe the demographics of London's Brick Lane is also interesting and can be interpreted in multiple ways. In one sense, the word refers to the (false) suggestion that the area is solely comprised of Indian residents. It also posseses a double meaning, however, and hints at the *exclusivity* of a community with clear, ethnically-demarcated boundaries. Brick Lane is therefore both made up 'exclusively' of Indians and 'excluding' of those who are not part of this community. The respondent's self-positioning as an outsider is furthered by the subsequent line: "well, it feels that way". This utternace, immediatley following the hyperbolic and demonstrably false assertion that the area is 'exlusively Indian', suggests that the speaker is aware that the previous statement might be seen

as controversial or incorrect. The important point, however, is the impression of exclusivity; of a community to which the respondent is not part of and does not have access to.

The next passage suggests that, as these communities became more prosperous, ethnic solidarity began to break-down. It is only as groups are "establishing themselves" that they need to form communities based on ethnic similarity. This suggests that ethnic solidarity holds a contingent, transient importance at one particular moment in time, and reminds us that solidarity is not a static concept. Just as time may help groups 'produce new forms of social solidarity and establish new, wider identities' (Putnam 2007, 162), it may also lead to the erosion of certain communities. Ethnic solidarity is therefore understood as a form of "self-preservation", whereby working-class ethnic communities form groups based on racial, religious, cultrual similarities, which are then disrupted as the same groups become more affluent. The same respondent goes on to argue that is 'natural' for individuals to:

> "*gravitate towards the people who have the same memories and experiences as you, and cuisines even… You congregate with people that come from there, and find comfort in that…that group you find comfort and solidarity in, and that you've all got shared interests and pasts"*

This assertion seems to emphasise the primacy of cultural and ethnic ties over class ones – at least among newly-arrived communities. This form of community, 'that group you find comfort and solidarity in', is considered to be one's ethnic group, and not the bonds of shared material conditions that were emphasised earlier in the interview by the same respondent. This would seem to confirm Sutterlüty and Neckel's thesis drawn from research in working-class German neighbourhoods, whereby 'horizontal' negative classifications based on ethnic differences emerged as more salient than 'vertical' classifications based on class and economic circumstances (Sutterlüty and Neckel 2006, 809). Indeed, this conception of ethnic and cultural solidarity expressed by the respondent is very different from the understanding put forward

when asked directly about their understanding of the term. Individuals are understood to be primarily drawn to others who share cultural similarities, especially in the context of uncertain surroundings. The drawing of symbolic boundaries to categorise and establish new social realities serves a protective function, and one with clear exclusionary implications. This would also seem to strengthen Jenkins' critique of Wimmer that his model of boundary drawing demonstrates a 'relative neglect' of the emotional and affective component of internal identification that accompanies ethnic solidarity (Jenkins 2014, 810).

5.2 Obstacles to Solidarity

The following section explores how respondents thought about potential obstacles or threats to social solidarity. Initial answers tended to emphasise the dismantling of industry and erosion of trade union influence during Margaret Thatcher's time as British Prime Minister, as well as the decline in community cohesion that those developments produced. Both, however, were ultimately seen as contributing factors to a broader sense of contemporary social isolation and atomisation that emerged as one of the most common themes in many of the discussions, whereby a decline in sociability was perceived to be weakening the social bonds between *all* members of society.

5.2.1 Thatcherism and the 1980s: decline of manufacturing and weakening of unions

Virtually all respondents immediately focused on the de-industrialization of Britain and the weakening of the union movement in the 1980s as having a serious and long-standing detrimental impact on social solidarity and collective action. Regarding the collapse of manufacturing and industry, one union member, Respondent B, suggested that it was "much

easier to unionize and find solidarity when you are in large spaces as a collective under the same forces", while Respondent A, a community union member, noted "there's a lot of people that don't work together anymore…so you're not in a workplace where a traditional union could put the case, and you could join". Moreover, the Thatcher period was reguarly associated with a growing individualism that served to instil a culture of greed and selfishness: "That seemed to be the overriding message (when) all the social housing stock was sold off, because then people owned their own little bit. So they got a lot more acquisitive".

The decline of union strength and membership is further described as leaving individuals much more vulnerable to social and economic change, as well as breeding an apathy that has been detrimental to solidarity and support for welfare systems. Respondent A noted "it was such a particularly traumatic event that people have, I mean, they were apathetic to start with, but after that, then you thought, what's the point? What's the point". Likewise, Respondent B, a younger participant, also mentioned an "apolitical hopelessness about us all, in this generation. And I think one of the things that really you can notice is the fall of the strength of unions." Indeed, perhaps again betraying the positionality of the respondents, the threat of militant trade unionism was regularly presented as necessary for the establishment and protection of a strong welfare state, and without which public services would continue to be eroded. The weakening of trade unions was thus cited as the primary reason for the decline of welfare-based solidarity in the UK, as "you need the threat of socialism, essentially, to get these governments to make concessions and…stymie off any, like, popular discontent".

5.2.2 Decline in 'organic community'

In connection with the decline of manufacturing and union strength, respondents cited a decline in long-standing communities with well-developed social ties as a major obstacle to solidarity. One recurring theme in particular was the erosion of 'organic' and traditional communities. When asked what kind of interactions were necessary to build these ties, Respondent A replied "that you see each other. You pass the time of day. You mingle. You know somebody… You know that missus Doo-Da's got five children because they went to school with some of yours". This response once more indicated the importance that many respondents placed on the length of time necessary to build social capital and establish a sense of community, echoed by Respondent C: "you can't force that sort of thing on people. It has to flourish naturally…it takes time for that sort of community to re-establish itself."

Indeed, for many of the respondents, the sadness felt at the loss of traditional bonds of community cohesion was paired with frustration at the perceived causes of these changes, and the inadequacy of the solutions to try and rectify them. This tended to manifest in anger at the lack of community spaces for individuals to come together, as noted by this older respondent involved, in a tenants' union:

> *"the building work of the sixties and seventies flatten(ed) everything, moving established historical communities away from each other (and) destroyed that kind of community feeling that no artificial grafting-on of community centers and council initiatives to get people together can replace: the sort of organic community, that grows up in a particular geographic area between people".*

Respondent E, a former postal worker and member of a postal union cited the 'changing role of the postal worker' as indicative of this loss of community feeling, espeically in urban areas.

According to this respondent, the privatisation of the Royal Mail postal service in the UK and subsequent strain on resources and staff meant that where once:

> "*the postie knew everyone on their round by name, brought lonely people cards on their birthday, brought shopping to the elderly, chatted to people who otherwise saw no-one all day, now there is no time to do these things*".

What emerged from these responses, then, was an evident dissatisfaction at the decline of traditional and 'organic' communities, although not expressed in way that directly related to immigration or growing levels of diversity. The frustration was rooted instead in the nature of urban development and the lack of spaces for communities to come together and build social connections, as well as the loss of services – such as the old postal system – that enabled a degree of community coherence and "easy familiarity" that had since been lost. This was perhaps articulated most clearly by Respondent C, who stated:

> "*The trade union halls, the community centers, the youth clubs, like, all these places where, people can congregate and socialize and build trust in an area, they're all gone. So where are people supposed to build trust? You know? And increasingly, people turn to online communities*."

5.2.3 Social isolation

Both issues listed above – the decline of industry and union strength, and the decline of 'organic' communities – were viewed as contributing to a broader sense of social isolation that helped erode social solidarity. Indeed, a sense of atomisation and disconnect from others in society emerged as perhaps the most consistent theme in the interviews, expressed by both young and old participants. Many also placed great emphasis on technological change as an important factor contributing to social isolation and difficulty building social movements: "everyone's looking at their own feeds. Everyone is, you know, siloed off". Another similarly noted how "there's a lot more technology about, but not as much communication". Respondent A used an

analogy from a sci-fi novel to describe their disquiet at the impact modern technology was having on levels of sociability, in which:

> "*people live in parks underground and everything's paid for, everything's brought to them. They have no reason to go out… and the world's getting more and more like that…You don't need to go out and actually do anything. You can just be quite happy sitting at home watching your TV, being a lab rat for the adverts and playing your games. You don't have to engage with the outside world at all*."

This depiction aligns closely with Putnam's description of the 'hunkering down' effect that growing diversity supposedly has on local community trust and sociability, whereby individuals are more likely to "be socially withdrawn, spend more time watching television, and have fewer friends" (Putnam 2007, 150) – though, in this case, without any mention of ethnic diversity as a contributing factor. The subject of growing atomisation in the wake of technological change has long been a focus of classical social theory, including Durkheim's concern about the weakening of the 'collective consciousness' as individuals become more atomised in the modern world (Durkheim 1893, 41). Indeed, the sentiments drawn from interview respondents would seem to add credence to Sturgis et al.'s (2011, 58) argument in response to Putnam that social connectedness, as well as levels of socio-economic deprivation, are far more important factors for determining level of trust and solidarity in communities than growing ethnic diversity.

5.3 Immigration, Solidarity, and the Welfare State

The final section of the analysis deals with the question of how immigration and ethnic diversity intersects with conceptions of social solidarity. Specifically, to what extent is immigration and immigrant-generated diversity perceived as an obstacle to the forms of solidarity outlined above, and what can this tell us about the impact of immigration on support for the welfare

state, understood as an institution underpinned by notions of solidarity (Kymlicka 2015, 3). The central connecting theme that emerged from the following discussion was the notion of trust. The primacy of trust as a necessary precondition for solidarity was emphasised in two ways: firstly, trust within and between different communities and, secondly, trust in public services and welfare to deliver in a way that is understood as just. In both cases, the pressures of – rapid – levels of immigration were seen as an obstacle to building trust between communities and in public services.

5.3.1 Trust between and within communities

During the discussions about obstacles to solidarity, multiple respondents cited rapidly increasing levels of immigrant-generated ethnic diversity as an important factor in declining levels of trust within and between communities. Respondent D, a middle-aged community worker in a multicultural neighbourhood, immediately mentioned the multiplicity of new immigrant communities as having a damaging impact on cohesion when asked about how they understood the concept of solidarity, providing one example of one nearby school in which "twenty five languages" were spoken. Such diversity was repeatedly raised by respondents as a contributing factor to rising levels of mistrust and a "lack of understanding about how communities work" – the suggestion being that new arrivals had disrupted pre-existing social ties of trust that had been built over a long-period of time.

Bilgic et al. (2019, 1286) have argued that particular constructions of trust relationships – defined as the 'levels of confidence people have in the moral orientation or trustworthiness of their fellow citizens' – also work to generate distrust against outgroups, emphasising the role that trust plays in 'us and them' dichotomies. Sturgis makes a related distinction between 'strategic' trust (between people one is familiar with) and 'generalised' trust (between fellow,

unknown, citizens). This latter example is described by the authors as more akin to 'a social value, or an evaluation of the moral standards of the society in which we live' (Sturgis 2011, 62). Respondent D's description of the impact of multiple new communities would suggest that there has been a fall in 'generalised trust' as a consequence of changing demographics. The important role of trust in social relations has also been explored by Giddens, who suggests that the dislocating impact of 'disembedding mechanisms and abstract systems' has made social trust especially important for establishing a sense of ontological security in contemporary societies (Giddens 1991, 3). Falling levels of 'generalized trust' therefore seem to form one component of the broader trend towards greater social isolation, described in the previous section – ultimately engendering a sense of loss and dislocation at the growing atomisation of long-standing communities.

Talking about her personal experience and her involvement with local community groups, Respondent D suggested that it was as though individuals had "lost that community feel because people are in little silos, and they're not together, which is sad". This aligns with a subsequent anecdote told by the same participant, who discussed how the demise in trust and cohesion had engendered a profound sense of loss amongst long-standing ethnic minority communities. The anecdote concerns the story of an old-fashioned dressmakers in the neighbourhood, run by a Caribbean woman:

> "*They were featured in Vogue in the seventies and eighties. They were featured in Vogue magazine. This shop in (the neighborhood) was featured in Vogue magazine. And all the Caribbean women would go there and get their church outfits. And their hats. And everything. And then that lady, she ran that shop for years and years. She aged. And then she couldn't manage it anymore. And then she's retired, and she's gone. And her shop's gone. And she would literally would say, 'I am not selling my house to...' (one has to) keep your voice down…she wouldn't sell her house to someone outside the community*".

The respondent goes on to assert that members of the Caribbean community had blamed new arrivals for the demise of the dressmakers and for "driving her out", bemoaning that "it's been taken away from us. It's not the same as it used to be". The anecdote encapsulates the sense of loss and dislocation at the changing nature of the local community and the way in which this disquiet is then connected to the arrival of new residents. Repeated reference to the fact that the dressmakers had been featured in Vogue magazine is also indicative of the pride (and thus the painful loss) for what had once been a pillar of the community.

For the respondent, the story was a clear example of the decline in trust between communities and the pervasive sense of loss that she understood to be a roadblock to building local solidarity. In more explicit terms, Respondent C, a union employee and member of a local tenants union, suggested that a dislike of "immigrants and foreigners" had been the biggest obstacle to gathering support on the doorstop for various forms of collective action: "and so when you're trying to build solidarity in a housing estate or in a workplace, this is the thing you come up against, like, all the time." An important caveat to these responses, however, was the suggestion, explicit or implicit, that it was in particular the *pace* of change that was eroding trust and cohesion in the community:

> "*you've got Somalis, you've got Eritreans, people from Libya. There's such a mish-mash. The other week, somebody said, "well, we want this side to be known as the Caribbean quarters"...and, so there's no sort of cohesion. Whereas in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, when it was Irish, Caribbean, Asian, people were more together because they found solidarity in being together and supporting each other. That's not happening now. So there is a lot of that tension*".

The importance of this response is the suggestion that is it not ethnic diversity per se that has reduced trust and solidarity in the community, but rather the speed and volume of arrivals of new groups. Indeed, "when it was Irish, Caribbean, Asian people", this was not in itself presented as a hinderance to mutual support between communities. It is not the bare fact of

ethnic diversity, but rather the speed of change and the rapid influx of new arrivals that has since made building social bonds more difficult. It therefore seems imperative, as Kesler and Bloemraad have suggested with their research, to take a longitudinal perspective into the impact of ethnic diversity on 'collective mindedness' and how social ties may change over time (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010, 320). This is something Putnam himself alludes to in his work, when he notes the diminishing importance of ethnic and racial identities over time in a variety of American institutions (Putnam 2007, 162).

Moreover, the same respondent used the example of the growing Somali and Kuwaiti communities to make the point that "they're the first generation to come. They're not grounded. They don't have a community centre. They don't have any places to go, so they stick together and meet in their homes". This utterance would seem to support Stolle and Harell's (2015, 323) argument that too little attention has been paid to levels of intergroup contact or segregation, as opposed to the sole focus on objective levels of neighbourhood diversity. The lack of community spaces, discussed above as obstacle to solidarity, therefore also prevents opportunities for different communities to come together and breeds both individual and group isolation.

5.3.2 Fairness and reciprocity: the welfare state and public services

How, then, is this apparent decline in trust and solidarity linked to support for the welfare state? Intimately connected to the subject of trust and welfare is the notion of reciprocity – the idea that recipients of support would themselves be willing to contribute 'if and when the time comes' (Kymlicka 2015, 10). Kymlicka has argued that this notion of reciprocity is one of three key factors that determine if certain groups are seen as legitimate recipients of welfare, in

addition to the over-arching question of whether the individual's misfortune is perceived as being under their control. Along with reciprocity, Kymlicka also discusses 'attitude' regarding the extent to which measures of social protection are accepted "in a spirit of civic friendship", as well as 'identity' – the perception of the recipient being a member of the shared society (Kymlicka 2015, 10).

All three factors certainly seemed to be at play when analysing respondents' considerations about who should be eligible for welfare and what factors impact willingness to contribute to welfare states. For Respondent D:

> "*It goes back to people being precious about who's coming into the country….there are people in the community who are angry, you know, who have the attitude of "this is our country, and why should I? They've ruined it*".

This interpretation would certainly seem to support Kymlicka's thesis that what underpins support for the welfare state is an ethic of social membership, as opposed to class solidarity or universal humanitarian concerns. Immigrants are posited as outsiders, clearly excluded from "our country", and as such not viewed as legitimate members of the community deserving of social protection. Similarly, the suggestion that "they" have "ruined it", implies that these recipients constitute an active detriment to the country and its welfare system. Thus, it remains judgments of identity, attitude and reciprocity that underpin support for a welfare state, understood as embodying a 'direct sense of community membership'. As Kymlicka argues, this also helps to understand how these judgements about eligibility for the welfare state often work to the detriment of immigrants, who are presented as 'an economic burden, or as irredeemable others and thus cultural threats' (Kymlicka 2015, 10).

Indeed, when Respondent D was asked about what factors influence how much money they were willing to contribute in taxation, she noted how "we can see how certain people in society are just so hard done by through no fault of their own", implying that individuals who could potentially be considered responsible for their own impoverishment might not be deserving of support. The respondent also strongly opposed the idea that greater universalism in welfare support schemes would help promote social solidarity, something that Holtun and others have posited as a solution in which there would be reduced incentive to ask whether individuals were personally responsible for their need and thus 'limit the inclination to perceive the needy as out-groups with which one cannot identity' (Holtun 2021, 146). For Respondent D, however, the idea was unconvincing, stating clearly: "No. Richard Branson don't need a free bus pass. Everybody getting the cold winds weather payment? No. David Beckham don't need that".

Related to this understanding of the just provision of welfare payments emerged the declining quality of public services. The recurring theme of the "country being on its knees" highlighted a sense of injustice at being asked to contribute to systems that were not providing effective services. Respondent B, for example, maintained that they were happy to pay taxes for welfare and public services, but that they were frustrated at how they were used when "the amount that you pay in taxes goes up and the quality of every single public service…goes down...we're getting taxed more and getting way less benefits from it". This frustration was also often linked to the perceived strain put on services by new arrivals, Respondent A stating that " I wouldn't blame anybody for trying to come, but in that respect, there's not the infrastructure for a rapid influx of people. The country's on its knees as it is..all the means of dealing with a large influx of people are just so pressured", while Respondent D stated that the depletion of public services in response to funding cuts had encouraged greater anti-immigrant sentiment.

Others, however, attributed lower levels of social trust and solidarity to the decline in the quality and availability of public services – and omitted any mention of immigration. Respondent B stated that "I feel like lack of trust in politics then results in lack of wanting to pay your taxes. Because I don't feel that I can trust the people that I'm giving it to". Respondent C, meanwhile, suggested that the precarious nature of modern work and the collapse of a stable housing market had also made people less trusting, asserting that: "you can only build trust if you're in a place for a long time, whether that be a workplace, whether that be a community."

The relationship between immigration, solidarity, and support for social welfare policies is therefore presented as one part of the broader question of the retrenchment of the welfare state and declining quality of public services. In other words, as Meer has argued, possible connections between rising levels of immigration and a weakening of the welfare state must be situated within the 'wider question of political economy' and the constraints that global neoliberalism place on the ability of the state to make significant public spending decisions. Understood within this wider context, immigration and cultural diversity is only one aspect of the question of how to maintain democratic support for welfare states (Meer 2016, 2).

6. Final Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis has sought to contribute to scholarly discussion about the relationship between immigration and support for social welfare policies by exploring some of the assumptions surrounding different forms of solidarity that lie at the heart of the debate. It began by asking how the term social solidarity should be understood and who it is between, as well as the potential obstacles to solidarity, and how notions of solidarity intersect with attitudes to immigration and the welfare state. It has also sought to remedy the lack of attention paid to institutions as 'key intervening factors' in the 'progressive's dilemma' debate (Kwon and Curran 2016, 375) by situating the analysis within a framework of social and institutional norms relating to the specific 'welfare state regime' of the United Kingdom (Esping-Andersen 1990, 2). In particular, it has noted the shift away from the principle of universalism to means-tested benefits in Britian, as well as the decline in support for welfare assistance from the 1980s onwards, and how this may have produced a situation whereby immigrants are more likely to be stigmatized and excluded from any notions of collective social membership which act as a prerequisite for access to social protection.

The 'progressive's dilemma' – the suggestion that higher levels of immigration and immigrant-generated diversity reduces support for social welfare policies – implies that the boundary between immigrants and natives constitutes an overriding form of social difference, and that immigrants represent a salient 'out-group'. Increased immigration, and the multiplicity of new cultures and identities this engenders, is therefore expected to erode the social solidarity that underpins support for the welfare state – understood by Stjernø (2009, 338) as 'an expression of institutionalised solidarity'. The 'dilemma' hence assumes that national and ethnic forms of solidarity are the most salient for the shared sense of 'sameness' that encourages individuals to contribute to systems of social protection, that will in turn aid other members of the community.

Keeping these arguments in mind, how does the research help to answer the questions outlined at the outset of this thesis?

Firstly, with regards to the nature of social solidarity and the relative importance of different social identities, this research would seem to strengthen Kymlicka's conception of the welfare state as being underpinned by a shared ethic of social membership – comprised of 'attitude, identity, and reciprocity' – within which included members are considered legitimate recipients of support (Kymlicka 2015, 10). This understanding raises the question of *who* exactly belongs to the deserving community; which group boundaries and what forms of solidarity are considered to be the most salient in relation to eligibility for social protection? Virtually all of the respondents conceded that solidarity must be exclusive to some degree, yet often wished to express their understanding of the term in strictly class and issue-based language. As the analysis moved beyond semantic or manifest readings of the dataset, however, it revealed that ethnic and national identities were often perceived as more salient as opposed to class-based ties. Elsewhere, immigration was cited more explicitly as a direct obstacle to building solidarity-based movements and weakening social bonds. This would appear to strengthen Wim van Oorschot's thesis that immigrant groups are the least likely to be viewed as deserving recipients of assistance by the public (Oorschot 2006b, 23). To return to Kymlicka's criteria for shared membership, this may help to explain why immigrants are often left out from narratives of deservingness and therefore why the perception of higher levels of immigration may be a contributing factor to reduced support for welfare-based forms of solidarity.

At the same time, however, perhaps the most prevalent theme to emerge from the discussions was the role of social isolation as a major obstacle to solidarity. Certainly, there was a ubiquitous sense that there has been a general weakening of the bonds of trust and reciprocity that

constitute social capital, and that this was by no means caused by the fact of immigration alone. Where immigration was discussed in connection to social isolation, it was most often in terms of the *speed and volume* of new arrivals, as opposed to the presence of immigrants per se. Indeed, much more attention was generally attributed to declining trust in beleaguered public services and their capacity to deliver just returns on taxation. Emphasis was also placed by all respondents on the importance of space (community centres, stable housing, public spaces) and time (for communities to develop 'organically'). This was also paired with a sense of loss due to rapidly changing and increasingly isolated communities, understood as one legacy of Thatcherism and the political disruptions of the 1980s.

All these factors, in turn, were presented as weakening the feelings of trust and reciprocity that underpin willingness to support the welfare state through progressive taxation. Perceptions of large and rapid inflows of immigration were a component of this, although by no means the only or even the most important factor. The multiplicity of factors at play here helps to shine a light on why previous efforts to try and establish a clear causal link between immigration and support for welfare policies have often delivered mixed and inconclusive results. Immigration appears to be one aspect of a broader trend of social fragmentation and isolation, as well as declining trust, that has weakened the bonds of solidarity and social membership which underpin support for the welfare state. As such, a more holistic approach may be necessary in the future, one that follows Meer's advice to contextualise the retrenchment of the welfare state within a broader framework of globalisation, austerity, and devolution, and that therefore might influence social welfare delivery 'in a way that has very little to do with shared identity' or a simple trade-off between diversity and solidarity (Meer 2016, 2).

The findings of this research would also support future studies to likewise take a qualitative approach to try and further understand the intersection of different forms of solidarity and attitudes to immigration and welfare that presuppose the apparent 'dilemma'. The emphasis that respondents placed on the rapidity of new arrivals in their community indicates the importance of studies that take a longitudinal approach to the topic, and can therefore account for changing attitudes as communities become better established (or fail to). The importance of social and institutional norms relating to attitudes towards immigration and the welfare state also highlight the usefulness of a single-country case study. Indeed, the number of important factors and the conceptual fuzziness about who exactly constitutes an immigrant or 'outsider' in the first place perhaps indicates that the debate surrounding a straightforward trade-off between diversity and solidarity obscures more than it reveals. As discussed above, this is borne out in the inconclusiveness of the huge number of past quantitative studies and regression analyses that have previously been conducted.

The framing of the 'progressive's dilemma' therefore remains problematic. Immigrant-generated diversity represents only one component of a broader trend of isolation, declining social trust, and reduced support for public services. Which groups are considered immigrants or 'outsiders' is often contingent and subject to change and, as Meer argues, attitudes towards the welfare state should be considered within the broader context of the political and economic transformations of the last thirty years (Meer 2016, 2). Assumptions regarding the overriding saliencies of ethnic and national boundaries, however, do suggest that the problem of how to persuade voters and tax-payers that immigrants should be considered as members of the same community of deserving recipients will likely remain a problematic one for progressives and policy-makers alike.

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