



## Democracy, diversity and Europe

By David Hayes,  
Created 2007-06-13 16:30

The dominant argument in Europe seems to change with every decade. In the 1920s it was recovery from war and inter-state rivalry; in the 1930s, the rise of fascism and Nazism; in the 1940s, the struggle against these forces, and the dawn of the cold war; in the 1950s, the creation of a new institutional architecture, the beginnings of European Union; in the 1960s, the revolt against authority; in the 1970s, stagnation amid geopolitical detente; in the 1980s, nuclear fears, transatlantic tensions and east-west civic initiatives; in the 1990s, post-cold-war euphoria and post-Yugoslav nightmare. And in the first decade of the millennium, diversity, and the challenges it poses to the very heart of Europe's evolving identity.

The theme is evident and inescapable in a number of key, high-profile disputes:

- unstoppable "people flow" from beyond Europe's borders to south and east, the result of poverty, repression, war, hunger for betterment, and globalisation itself; met often by fear of the "alien", anti-immigrant sentiment and racism, as well as less toxic but widespread concerns over integration and coexistence
- post-9/11 fears over terrorism, made manifest on European soil with the bombs in Istanbul (2003), Madrid (2004) and London (2005), as well as several failed attacks and wider evidence of radicalisation
- controversies over the French law banning religious apparel in schools, the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, and British Muslim women's dress-code
- clashes of values both within "settled" populations of different origins, and between them and real or perceived "incomers, involving a range of tensions - religious/secular, generational, political, identitarian.

In many articles and debates since our foundation in 2001, **openDemocracy** has addressed these issues, attempting to bring to them fresh perspectives and voices.

The decision of International IDEA [1] to make the theme of "democracy and diversity" the focus of its 2007 roundtable reflects a significant overlap between our respective initiatives, not least in the fact that five of the participants at the Oslo gathering on 12 June 2007 [2] are valued contributors to **openDemocracy**.

In recognition of this affinity, what follows is a brief digest of material **openDemocracy** has published that is relevant to the International IDEA roundtable. It is divided into two sections: a full list of contributions by the five individual **openDemocracy** writers present at Oslo, and a selection of articles exploring the theme of democracy and diversity in a European context in the first years of the 21st century.

**openDemocracy authors / IDEA participants**

**Neal Ascherson [2]**

**Raieev Bhargava [2]**

**Tariq Ramadan [2]**

**Shashi Tharoor [2]**

**Theo Veenkamp [2]**

Neal Ascherson [2], journalist and author

From multiculturalism to where? [2]

*19 August 2004*

The concept of multiculturalism, and the policies that stem from it, have played an important role in displacing the imperial ideal of assimilation, but in its fatal linkage with hard notions of ethnicity it is deeply conservative and increasingly obsolete. The challenge now is to develop a "post-hybridity" politics based on common human nature.

Pope John Paul II and democracy [2]

*1 April 2005*

In his long life, the Polish pope, Karol Wojtyla, was at the forefront of the struggle for liberty. But in his twenty-six years at the Vatican, where did this towering figure stand on democracy? The distinguished writer Neal Ascherson dissects an ambiguous legacy.

A British letter to France: vote for Europe [2]

*26 May 2005*

As the French prepare to vote on the European Union constitution, a group of thirteen writers, politicians and constitutional experts in Britain follow the example of their Polish and German counterparts by urging a "yes".

Tbilisi, Georgia: the rose revolution's rocky road [2]

*15 July 2005*

The liberating unity Georgians discovered in late 2003 is dissolving under the pressure of political disputes, energy shortages, and regional turmoil. In Tbilisi, Neal Ascherson finds a country more at home with its past than its future.

The victory and defeat of Solidarnosc [2]

*6 September 2005*

The Solidarity trade union forged by the industrial workers of Poland's Baltic coast in August 1980 began the revolution that toppled communism in Europe. On its twenty-fifth anniversary, Neal Ascherson, who witnessed the days and nights of negotiation in the Gdansk shipyard that led to the historic breakthrough, assesses its political achievements and costs.

Poland's interregnum [2]

*30 September 2005*

Could the unlikely twins, Jaroslaw and Lech Kaczynski, offer Poland a route beyond corruption and sclerosis? Neal Ascherson assesses a pivotal moment in its politics.

Victory's lost sister - the wreck of the Implacable [2]

21 October 2005

The epic story of a French battleship conquered, renamed and deployed by the British fleet after the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 illuminates modern Britain's obsession with a constipating "national heritage", says Neal Ascherson.

A carnival of stupidity [2]

6 February 2006

The conflagration over Danish cartoons of Islam's prophet reveals that Europe's balance of freedom, mutuality and coexistence is at a trigger-charge moment, says Neal Ascherson.

Good Night. and Good Luck [2]

17 February 2006

George Clooney's new film brilliantly examines the freedom of the American media during the McCarthy period. But, asks Neal Ascherson, is it really old news, and who can take up the challenge today?

Torture: from regress to redress [2]

1 March 2006

A new Human Rights Watch book examines the return of torture as practice and doctrine. Its core theme is United States policy in the era of "war on terror", finds Neal Ascherson.

The case for pre-emption: Alan M Dershowitz reviewed [2]

18 May 2006

Alan Dershowitz's advocacy of new rules to codify pre-emptive state attacks in the era of "war on terror" is partisan sophistry with chilling historical echoes, says Neal Ascherson.

Scotophobia [2]

28 June 2006

A reviving English nationalism that targets its northern neighbour's financial dependency exposes deeper flaws in the British political settlement governing the two countries, says Neal Ascherson.

Catholic Poland's anguish [2]

11 January 2007

The painful exposure of senior clergy's collusion with the communist-era secret services reflects the ambiguities of the Catholic church's place in post-war Polish society, writes Neal Ascherson.

Ryszard Kapuscinski: from Poland to the world [2]

25 January 2007

The foreign correspondent's decades-long observation and insight revealed truths of power from Tehran and Addis Ababa to Warsaw itself, writes Neal Ascherson.

Scotland's democratic shame [2]

9 May 2007

The fallout of Scotland's messy election may be a London-centred deal that corrodes the democratic potential of Britain's post-devolution politics, reports Neal Ascherson.

Who needs a constitution? [2]

22 May 2007

Britain's lost it, Scotland's found it, now it's England's turn, says Neal Ascherson.

Rajeev Bhargava [2], professor of political theory

### The Indian experience [2] (co-author)

13 May 2001 (republished 12 May 2006)

What is the connection between elections, democracy, and the life-chances of the poor? Rajeev & Tani Bhargava draw a lesson from India in this, **openDemocracy's** first article.

### Understand the whispers [2]

19 September 2001

Our New Delhi editor gives us a careful, elegant picture from the point of view of those who suffer injustice and see it erased before it is spoken of. He argues for a common humanity: even the mighty can be humbled.

### India's majority-minority syndrome [2]

7 August 2002

In recent months, the state of Gujarat in western India has witnessed horrendous massacres of Muslims by Hindu nationalist gangs. **openDemocracy's** New Delhi editor sees the violence as the latest example of a wider phenomenon in India: an imprisoning syndrome of mistrust which has both Hindu majority and Muslim minority in its destructive grip.

### Words save lives: India, the BJP and the constitution [2]

2 October 2002

The Indian government of militant Hindu nationalists is trying to exploit the communal tensions in Gujarat for electoral gain, says **openDemocracy's** New Delhi editor. But the hope for democracy in India is that the political and moral force of the country's constitution will constrain the actions even of this unscrupulous movement.

### Gujarat: shades of black [2]

17 December 2002

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has just been re-elected to govern Gujarat. On a recent visit there, our New Delhi editor found a near-uniform hatred of Muslims among the Hindu middle class. Beneath the communal poison, a deeper crisis of the Indian public realm is at work: an egoism that is fostered by caste-based identity, and reinforced by globalisation.

### India in the face of globalisation [2]

26 February 2003

There is intense concern in India about the divisive impact of globalisation on the country's economy, society, culture, and even its democracy itself. **openDemocracy's** New Delhi columnist reports from a recent conference where discussion centred around the dilemma: should the beast be fought, tamed, or humanised?

### The Indian refusal [2]

28 July 2003

The Indian government has finally refused America's request to send thousands of troops to help police Iraq. Our New Delhi columnist welcomes a triumph of principle over power but questions the meaning of its long delay. For India's ambitious new elite, the request appealed to the country's martial-imperial legacy and its own hunger for global status. Can the moral foundations of Indian statehood survive this elite's ambition to make India a superpower?

Poverty and political freedom [2]

*12 August 2003*

The great Indian economist Amartya Sen has proposed the mind-opening idea that democracy is a protection against famine. Rajeev Bhargava takes up the theme. How can political freedom help the poor, he asks, not just in their material life but in expanding their sense of society and its horizon of possibility?

The political psychology of Hindu nationalism [2]

*5 November 2003*

Why does Hindu nationalism take an aggressive, exclusive form? This is a question of psychology as well as politics. Rajeev Bhargava, in New Delhi, examines the worldview of activists who use "Indianness" as a weapon against their Muslim, Christian, and secular fellow-citizens.

The magic of Indian democracy: questions for Antara Dev Sen [2]

*27 May 2004*

"Democracies are coded for impatience. Voters can wait, but not indefinitely." After India's astonishing election, Rajeev Bhargava counsels Congress: deliver fairness, or the BJP and Hindu chauvinism will be back.

India's model: faith, secularism and democracy [2]

*3 November 2004*

Western variants of multiculturalism and secularism are being challenged by religious demands for public recognition of faith. Instead of reinventing the wheel, the world should learn from India, says Rajeev Bhargava.

Tariq Ramadan [2], author and teacher,

India's model: faith, secularism and democracy [2]

*3 November 2004*

Western variants of multiculturalism and secularism are being challenged by religious demands for public recognition of faith. Instead of reinventing the wheel, the world should learn from India, says Rajeev Bhargava.

Reinventing Islam in Europe: a profile of Tariq Ramadan [2]

*6 July 2004*

The sophisticated exponent of a European Islam, Tariq Ramadan, articulates a project that speaks to a continent, and a faith, in transition. openDemocracy's Rosemary Bechler encounters a complex mind on a restless journey.

A bridge across fear: an interview with Tariq Ramadan [2]

*14 July 2004*

"I want to go beyond the perception that I am only different from you, or that difference is the beginning and the end." In an interview of remarkable range and frankness, the influential Swiss-Egyptian philosopher, teacher and writer Tariq Ramadan talks to Rosemary Bechler of openDemocracy about his life's project: bringing Muslims and Europe home to each other

**Shashi Tharoor [2]**

A United Nations for a fairer, safer world [2]

*15 September 2005*

The international organisation is applying its founding principles to renew itself and address human needs worldwide, says Shashi Tharoor, the United Nations's under-secretary-general.

Theo Veenkamp [2], researcher and policy advisor,

Dutch sign on Europe's wall [2]

*2 June 2005*

The Dutch referendum vote against the European Union constitution demands that Europe's leaders enter a fresh dialogue that addresses their people's "complicated cocktail of mixed feelings", says Theo Veenkamp.

People Flow: Migration and Europe (co-author) [2]

*1 May 2003*

Does migration erode or enhance national culture? This question is highly sensitive in many European countries. The problem with the existing European approach to migration is that official distinctions between categories of migrants do not match reality. We need a new, sustainable model that recognises the evolving complexity of human mobility. In our People Flow pamphlet, openDemocracy and Demos have proposed such a model to open up debate. This article summarises its main arguments.

People Flow: onwards and upwards [2]

*13 August 2003*

Theo Veenkamp extends his review of the first part of openDemocracy's debate on his People Flow report by elaborating an ambitious programme which sees new strategies towards migration as part of a project to give practical form to the humane, protean and dynamic space that is within Europe's grasp.

People Flow: taking stock of the first round [2] (pdf only)

*13 August 2003*

The innovative "thought experiment" about how best to manage 21st century European migration has provoked a rich, diverse debate in openDemocracy. Here, People Flow author Theo Veenkamp reviews the debate so far, and reaffirms the core principles of pragmatism, firmness and imagination which animate the report's ideas.

After tolerance [2]

*24 November 2004*

The murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh has left the Netherlands in turmoil and its reputation for tolerance in tatters. What does the second political murder in thirty months mean for the Dutch multiculturalist model? The strategist and author Theo Veenkamp looks back and thinks forward.

#### o **Europe and diversity: a selection of articles**

Tariq Modood, Muslims and European multiculturalism [2]

*15 May 2003*

Anti-Muslim sentiment in post-9/11 Europe contends that Muslims compound their "alien" status by claiming special treatment from their "hosts". But what if the aspiration to a recognised "Muslim" identity is itself characteristically European? In the British context, Tariq Modood argues that a healthily multicultural society needs to accommodate religion as a valid social category - and rethink Europe so that the Muslim "them" becomes part of a plural "us".

Johannes Willms, [France unveiled: making Muslims into citizens?](#) [2]

26 February 2004

France's education system has long worked to transform peasants, migrants and believers into national, secular citizens. Will the process fail with the headscarves worn by the country's young Muslim women?

Patrick Weil, [A nation in diversity: France. Muslims and the headscarf](#) [2] (pdf only)

25 March 2004

Behind the French parliament's ban on religious apparel in schools lies not anti-Muslim prejudice but the secular, liberal reasoning that gives the French republic its life and soul, argues one of the policy's architects.

Gilles Kepel, [Europe's answer to Londonistan](#) [2]

24 August 2005

The London bombs expose the failure of Britain's multicultural model, but also pose a challenge to Europe's sense of identity, says Gilles Kepel.

Saleh Bechir & Hazem Saghieh, [The 'Muslim community': a European invention](#) [2]

17 October 2005

Europeans' tendency to view immigrants from Algeria and Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq as belonging to a single, homogeneous "Muslim community" reflects an essentialist, neo-colonial view of the "other" which carries negative political consequences, argue Hazem Saghieh & Saleh Bechir.

[Muslims and Europe: a cartoon confrontation](#) [2]

6 February 2006

The row over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed raises profound tensions - between freedom of speech and mutual respect, ethics of satire and sacrality, shared values and coexistence, perceived western arrogance and Muslim victimhood. openDemocracy writers respond to the dispute and seek ways forward.

Tariq Modood, [The liberal dilemma: integration or vilification?](#) [2]

8 February 2006

The Danish cartoon scandal poses a stark choice to "progressive" citizens and thinkers in western Europe, says Tariq Modood.

Markha Valenta, [Facing up to Islam in the Netherlands](#) [2] (pdf only)

9 February 2006

As the Dutch parliament considers banning the burka from all public spaces, a measure that would apply to fifty or so women in total, Markha Valenta explores how a piece of clothing is disturbing the Netherlands' tradition of tolerance.

Kalypso Nicolaidis, [Europe and beyond: struggles for recognition](#) [2]

21 February 2006

The services directive and the Mohammed cartoon affair each demonstrate the need for a spirit of managed mutual recognition in Europe and beyond, argues Kalypso Nicolaidis.

Hazem Saghieh, [The cartoon iihad](#) [2]

3 March 2006

Muslim and Arab anger over the Danish cartoons is directed at the wrong target, says Hazem Saghieh.

Faisal Devji, [Back to the future: the cartoons, liberalism, and global Islam](#) [2]

13 April 2006

Muslim protests over the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed mark the arrival of a force challenging liberal democracy from the future: a global Islam that is inventing new forms of ethical and political practice for a global arena. Faisal Devji, author of *Landscapes of the Jihad*, maps the trajectory of this ultra-modern phenomenon.

Tina Beattie, [Pope Benedict XVI and Islam: beyond words](#) [2]

18 September 2006

Pope Benedict XVI has provoked outrage in the Muslim world with a historical citation associating Islam with violence. Tina Beattie asks: was this calculated critique or well-meaning blunder?

Faisal Devji, [Between Pope and Prophet](#) [2]

26 September 2006

Muslims' response to Pope Benedict's address at Regensburg is a fresh chapter in the arrival of global Islam on the world's political stage, says Faisal Devji.

Olivier Roy, [Islamism's failure, Islamists' future](#) [2]

30 October 2006

Islamist movements' entry into the electoral arena is changing them from within, making the choice for their western adversaries stark, says Olivier Roy in an edited version of a talk given at the Institute of Public Policy Research in London.

Maruf Khwaja, [The veil of political Islam](#) [2]

13 November 2006

The wearing of the face-veil by a minority of Muslim women in Britain must be seen in the light of an Islamist political project, says Maruf Khwaja.

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