Civility
Lost and Found

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Preface

Every society faces the challenge of behaviour by its members that frustrates its purpose and hinders it from flourishing. In the cities of ancient Greece and Rome, serious thought was given to the behaviour proper to their citizens (*politai; cives*) and the long history of thought on 'civility' goes back to those roots, as does so much of our civilisation. Right up to the Enlightenment, however, the moral precepts of Christianity provided across Europe another source of norms (thought to have divine sanction) for moderating behaviour in ways favourable to the survival of societies and to the happiness of their members.

But, in Europe and the UK at least, we now live in the after-glow of Christianity and the pressures to exclude Judaeo-Christian values from public discourse and praxis have become extremely strong. While individual citizens can and do seek to live their lives in accordance with precepts derived from religious faith, such systems will no longer be permitted to determine the formulation of public policy.

Since the arts and humanities are the part of the research base that most frequently focuses upon issues of values and belief (which is not to deny the relevance of the social and neurological sciences in this area), it is worth recalling that philosophical ethics derived from Utilitarianism or the duty-based ethics of Immanuel Kant can provide high level moral guidance for our actions of a non-religious sort.

Nevertheless, there is great appeal in revisiting the notion of civility with its direct bearing on the maintenance of attitudes and behaviour directly relevant to the experience of a functional, well-ordered and fulfilling *urban* life. Although the area has its complexities, there is a clarity to the notion of civility (and to its opposite!) that make it accessible as a guide to appropriate human interaction in a way that the thought of Jeremy Bentham and Immanuel Kant probably is not.

Research from across the arts and humanities is relevant to civility: philosophical ethics, history, literary studies, representation and perform-

ance. All of these dimensions will be needed to understand civility and bring it to life in particular contexts.

Accordingly, in warmly welcoming this pamphlet I look forward to the public policy debate it should provoke and to the subsequent improvements in public services that might follow. The Royal Charter that established the Arts and Humanities Research Council on 1 April 2005 calls upon us, *inter alia*, to contribute to the effectiveness of public services and policy. By being part of a process to promote civility we will certainly be answering that call.

Philip F Esler
Chief Executive, The Arts and Humanities Research Council

Summary

When people gather together to discuss what's wrong with society, the conversation invariably turns to questions of civility: whether standards of behaviour have fallen, and whether people treat each other with enough respect, kindness or decency.

Questions of civility also regularly become public concerns – whether what's at issue is the behaviour of TV presenters and celebrities, revellers on a Saturday night or drunks on airplanes.

But what do we know about civility? Has it in fact improved or worsened? Can it be cultivated or promoted? Is it always a good thing? Who deserves blame – or credit?

This pamphlet seeks to address what we mean by civility and to analyse what we know about whether we live in a more or less civil society; what lies behind the concept, and its history; and what might be done to cultivate a more civil society, with more respect, kindness and decency.

We show that civility has three sources: individual dispositions and to some extent, genetic makeup; the influence of immediate peers, friends and family; and the larger structures, laws and regulations that promote or constrain behaviours. We show that civility needs to be understood as a set of norms and rules that are first learned in childhood (through the family and through schools) and then reinforced (or undermined) in adult life through messages and experiences on the street, at work, in the media and in the many interactions that make up a society.

We show that civility includes both visible aspects (ie behaviours in public and on display) and much less visible aspects (ie how husbands behave to wives, or employers to employees). An extreme example is the contrast between the politeness shown in shops in areas like Knightsbridge and Kensington, and the presence of near-slaves in those same areas, held against their wills in houses, their passports confiscated, and subject to daily cruelty behind closed doors.

Civility has both superficial aspects – about manners or political correctness – as well as much deeper aspects, which are about treating

others with empathy and understanding. At its best, civility overlaps with mindfulness – including the learned habits of considering the effects of one's actions on others. And civility can be either reciprocal, or unequal, where one individual or group is expected to behave better, or with more deference, than another.

Almost everyone would prefer to live in a society where civility was a normal occurrence – we don't want others to be rude, aggressive, or thoughtless to us. Civility promotes wellbeing and, according to research, also contributes to productivity and creativity in the workplace.

But few of us think that our own behaviour is problematic, or that our freedom to do what we want should be constrained.

Striking the right balance between freedom and order is the challenge faced by any institution, any society, or for that matter any family or group of friends. However, quite a lot is known about how civility can be encouraged without infringing on freedom with an excess of laws and rules. It can be encouraged by schools cultivating habits of mindfulness; by designing physical environments that support reciprocity and trust; by influencing how people perceive norms. It can also be influenced by how individuals behave, particularly when their behaviour is very visible. When people in positions of leadership – from journalists to politicians, sports stars to business chief executives – behave badly, or are seen to be gratuitously offensive, or selfish, this inevitably affects how others behave. Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles; the footballer Didier Drogba; the former Chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland Fred Goodwin: each in their different ways has acted out values opposite to those of mindful civility.

Civility is part of the common wealth of a society. Much of what we value depends on civility, from feeling confident walking down a street to the easy, supportive spirit of public events like marathons. Yet it requires constant reinvestment, care and attention.

Although much is known about civility, there remain many unanswered questions: for example, about its place in different national cultures; about the situations when rudeness and incivility can be constructive rather than only destructive; about the influence of the arts or religion.

Sometimes events provide a very visible test of the state of a society's

civility. The Trafalgar Square plinth project will be one such – how will people respond to the performers? Will we see a repeat of the behaviour that accompanied David Blaine's public appearance in a box on London's South Bank? The Olympics will be another test: will the people of Britain and London be hospitable or hostile?

This pamphlet does not pretend definitively to answer these questions. But it does aim to provide a more rigorous frame for thinking about them, and it concludes with thoughts on how civility might be supported. It is also accompanied by a variety of responses from different disciplines and perspectives, including politics and religion, the role of volunteering and schools. So far this debate has been dominated by anecdote and assumption. We hope that with this collection, the debate can move onto a firmer footing.

Civility Today

The BBC recently faced a very high profile crisis of civility. It did not involve the usual suspects. There were no 'hoodies', but rather, two highly paid and very popular celebrity presenters who were accused of uncivil behaviour towards an elderly actor. The behaviour, consisting of rude messages left on the actor's answer machine during a live radio show provoked rage which started with more than 30,000 public complaints to the BBC, moved to statements by prominent politicians and the Prime Minister denouncing the act, and ended with the suspension and sacking (in one case) of the celebrities. Because BBC decision makers first deemed the behaviour as acceptable, and later changed their minds because of public pressure, the incident turned out to be one of the moments when social boundaries are remade.

Every week there is new evidence that civility matters to people. Polls show very high levels of concern about anti-social behaviour in all its forms. Community meetings soon turn to issues of noise, graffiti and low-level nuisances. Discussion in schools soon turns to questions of bullying. And many believe that we are witnessing a serious erosion of civility as Britain moves ever further from the polite, courteous and only partly mythical country of Jane Austen[1] and Dixon of Dock Green. A recent ITV survey concluded that Britain 'is getting ruder' with almost 90 per cent of its respondents convinced that manners have deteriorated. Anti-social behaviour has been a prominent issue of public concern throughout the last decade[2] and Britain is now reportedly the worst country for road rage in the European Union.

Here are some typical comments from recent research by one of the authors:

> People are not as nice and civil as they used to be. The other day, my son who is only seven was pushed over by a man in a shopping centre. He fell, the poor thing, and the man never even stopped to say sorry and help me out. Same with me…I drive to work every morning and you should see

how rude people are when they are in their cars. People are always push-ing over, so rude...I think people should be more polite and more respect-ful. This country has gone to the dogs.

Manchester, female, 40's

Some things have deteriorated, and I see a lack of civility about and there is much more crassness and vulgarity. People are a lot more worried and fearful than they used to be – although some of the fear is perceived (through the national media) rather than actual. I do also worry about the drunkenness around – it used to never be like that. I worry about my daughter going out in London.

rural Hampshire, male, 50's

I suppose I just like friendly and personal service. If people were nice to me, I would even buy a mouldy sandwich. I like a cheerful, positive attitude. I try to be friendly in my work and I expect others to be cheerful too. I get very cross when I don't get it. People should try their best to be nice. Society would be a lot more positive. Saying thanks is also important as it can make people's days. I always say thanks at the cashiers at Sainsbury's but I don't think they hear it that often.

rural Hampshire, female, 40's

There is also so much incivility and anger. People screaming and shouting at partners and children. Some people's modus operandi has shifted to frustration and anger. I feel that there is so much pressure to achieve a good appearance and material things. It's always pushed in people's faces. I do hope that there are still some values of community left out there.

Harlow, female, 40's [3]

These fairly typical voices portray a society that is uncomfortable about its lack of civility. They are partly consequences of a more mobile society in which there is more interaction with strangers; and they are partly consequences of a major shift in the character of the print media towards much greater emphasis on problems and bad news.

Clearly something is amiss. But it would be wrong to conclude that Britain has lost the ability to live harmoniously. According to the 2009 British Social Attitudes Survey, eight in 10 (79 per cent) feel they are treated respectfully in public in their day-to-day lives, although some groups such as single people, people living in cities, on lower incomes and manual occupations report more negative experiences. Young people are particularly likely to fall into this category: 68 per cent of 18-34 year olds say that most people treat them with respect and consideration in public, compared with 88 per cent of the 65-plus age group. Yet young people are also seen as the main perpetrators of 'incivility' by two-thirds of the people (67 per cent) surveyed.[4]

There is little agreement on the basic facts about whether British society is actually more or less civil than it was in the past. We know that murder rates are much lower than in the past, and that there appears to be much less casual violence. For the most part, Britain in even the most supposedly well-behaved periods of the past (eg the 1950s) was less or-dered and more violent than the present, whether street brawls or child murders are counted. By and large, there seems to be a strong sense of belonging within communities: 84 per cent of people questioned in the Citizenship Survey 2007 (England and Wales) felt that they belonged strongly to Great Britain. A slightly lower percentage (75 per cent) felt that they belonged strongly to their neighbourhood, up from 71 per cent in 2003. The Citizenship Survey 2007 results also showed an increase in the number of people agreeing that their local area was a place where people of different background got on well together and, in both 2007 and 2003, 47 per cent felt that many people in their neighbourhood could be trusted.[5] But compared to one or two generations ago, there is no consensus over whether standards of behaviour have risen or fallen. The answer may be both, with some types of incivility (domestic violence) possibly in decline while others (drink-fuelled Saturday nights) possibly on the rise.

Figure 1   **Continuum from socially prohibited to socially encouraged behaviour**

Socially Prohibited								Socially Encouraged			
PHYSICAL ATTACKS	RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	TERRIFYING ESTATES (INTIMIDATION, BURNT CARS ETC)	DANGEROUS DRIVING	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	ABUSING POWER (I.E. BULLYING)	LITTERING AND GRAFFITI	BEING RUDE TO STRANGERS	SMILING TO OTHERS/ POLITENESS	PICKING UP LITTER	HELPING STRANGERS IN NEED	PHILANTROPY

While not new, civility has certainly become a political issue in recent years. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair regularly talked about the importance of respect, and put great energy into penalising and containing anti-social behaviour in all its forms. In 2007, Conservative Leader David Cameron said that "what builds society, what encourages civility, is people taking responsibility. Putting each other before themselves." On the other side of the Atlantic, civility has been a common theme in political rhetoric. In 1998, the then Mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani suggested that "students (should) learn the importance of civility in their history classes" while former US President George W. Bush suggested in his inaugural speech that "civility is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos."

Yet, despite these comments, politicians have been less convincing when it comes to explaining what should be done to encourage civility. There have been programmes to encourage volunteering (like Americorps or Millennium Volunteers), penalties such as Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), and technological solutions like CCTV cameras. Yet civility often feels like one of those intangible qualities that is largely beyond the reach of government programmes and, as we show, the legal responses to incivility have had limited success.

While some talk – as an alternative to acting – others feel uncomfortable even talking about the issue. For some the very word civility

appears to hark back to the past. It's seen as at odds with individual freedom, or implies one class, one culture or one generation imposing its values on others. And many feel uncomfortable with the word's link to that other problematic word, 'civilisation', which was too often cynically used to justify exploitation and oppression.

DEFINING CIVILITY

There are no widely shared definitions of civility. For some it refers to surface behaviours, to manners and etiquette. For others, it is "an attitude of respect, even love, for our fellow citizens".[6] Aristotle saw civility as a form of friendship, a mutual feeling of good will, and he ranked different kinds of friendship according to their degree of intimacy and commitment.[7] Adam Smith, on the other hand, recognized that the desire to do what is right by others is based on a human need to feel recognised and worthy in the eyes of other people. The pursuit of self-interest produces outcomes beneficial to others while individual behaviour is driven by the desire to win the justified approval of others. Again, civility is connected to self-esteem and recognition. We learn to treat other people in the way we would like to be treated; we expect to feel ashamed if we receive praise that we do not deserve. As George Washington noted in the last of his 110 rules of civility: "Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience". [8]

Experimental psychology has in recent years accumulated a great deal of evidence to suggest that there is a strong biological basis to moral behaviour. We are born with the grammars of sociability, just as we are born ready to learn languages. These include dispositions to help, and to care. But research has also shown how subtle these grammars can be: we almost instinctively know whether to get involved in some kinds of situation and not others.[9]

In the case of language we are born with a disposition to speak well-formed sentences. But we still need to learn how to speak, how to read and write, and our abilities are strongly shaped by what we see around us and by the constantly shifting norms of pronunciation, split infinitives and dropped 'h's. We argue that civility is very similar. It is a matter of

individual disposition but also has to be cultivated. So we define civility as a *learned grammar of sociability*, that demonstrates respect (both felt or imposed by norms) for others and which entails sacrificing immediate self-interest when appropriate. This definition is compatible with past definitions, but also helps us to make sense of the complex relationship between surface civility and its deeper meanings.

CIVILITY IN THE PAST

In his novel *Sybil*, Disraeli described Wodgate, a Black Country town derived from the real life Willenhall in Staffordshire

> *On Monday and Tuesday the whole population of Wodgate is drunk; of all stations, ages, and sexes; even babies who should be at the breast; for they are drammed with Godfrey's Cordial. Here is relaxation, excitement; if less vice otherwise than might be at first anticipated, we must remember that excesses are checked by poverty of blood and constant exhaustion. Scanty food and hard labour are in their way, if not exactly moralists, a tolerably good police. There are no others at Wodgate to preach or to control. It is not that the people are immoral, for immorality implies some forethought; or ignorant, for ignorance is relative; but they are animals; unconscious; their minds a blank and their worst actions only the impulse of a gross or savage instinct.*[10]

There is no easy way to judge the day-to-day civility of societies in the distant past. From diaries, novels, and reports, we generally get a picture of societies that were far rougher than today's: far more likely to resort to knives or brawls. We also learn that civility has often been seen as a measure of the health of societies. Corrupting morals, incivility and bad behaviours were, in ancient Greece and Rome, seen as deciding factors for the collapse of civilisations. In the 1700s, Edward Wortley Montagu in his *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republics*,[11] suggested that "the principal causes of the [decline of ancient Greek and Roman civilisations] was a degeneracy of manners, which reduced those once brave and free people into the most abject slavery".

Civility has often had to be encouraged and promoted, just as it has always been a matter of contention and concern. A 1944 wartime guide for British soldiers in Germany, for example, advised servicemen to "be smart and soldierly in dress and bearing", "avoid loose talk and loose conduct" and to "go easy on schnapps". In the early 18th century, Montesquieu, philosopher and admirer of England, suggested that civility was perhaps not quite so easy and endemic to a population: "The English have too much to do. They do not have time to be polite."

Similar arguments can be found in other parts of the world. In Japan, for example, the scholar Eiko Ikegami suggests that civility "may be thought of as a ritual technology of interpersonal exchanges that shapes a kind of intermediate zone of social relationships between the intimate and the hostile. Civility tends to govern non-intimate interpersonal relations because it provides a common ground for transactions between persons from different backgrounds with different interests."[12] In Japan, many of these transactions concerned the arts and crafts, poetry and painting, which provided the focus for extensive networks of civil exchange. But they also expressed a divide between ideals of rarefied exchange and the mundane realities of brutishness and violence. The question of civility has also come to the fore in Asia and Latin America, particularly in countries such as India, Thailand or Venezuela, where poor, seemingly less 'civilised' rural populations have become more central to politics. As was the case in Britain during the 1880s, more effective democracy is seen by some as producing corruption, political violence and a decline in civil standards of conduct by middle classes.

WHERE DOES CIVILITY COME FROM?

'Manners are of more importance than laws... Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in'

Edmund Burke

The notion of civility appeared first in early modern Europe. Its etymology comes from the Latin civilis meaning 'proper to a citizen', while the word 'citizen' comes from the word for 'city'. Civility is thus an urban concept, a public virtue – one that refers to how one should behave in the city or in a close proximity with other people, such as strangers or neighbours and colleagues. It overlaps with words such as 'kindness',[13] 'empathy' or 'mutuality' (timeless ideas which do not imply a social context). But it also overlaps with words like 'manners', 'etiquette' or 'politeness' (which are very much rooted in the social norms of particular places and times).

Norbert Elias provided the most influential account of how civility came to the fore in his great book *The Civilising Process*.[14] In it, he described how the concept of 'courtesy', a term reflecting the aristocratic values and attitudes derived from court society, was gradually replaced by the notion of civility. This shift marked the 'bourgeoisification' of European culture, in which etiquette and manners defined by the royal court gradually gave way to a new code emerging from the growing civil society. As one of Elias' followers, Roger Chartier, put it, "the traditional rules of chivalric society were gradually yielding before the new demands that arose from a denser social life and a closer interdependence among men."[15] In this view civility was essential for commerce and trade – dealing with strangers on an equitable basis. A shop would sell products as the same price regardless of whether the customer came from the same background as the shopkeeper.[16]

Civility represented the deepening of self-control, strict control over bodily desires, and the segmentation of personal space to protect a zone of privacy. Elias claimed that "social functions have become more and more differentiated under the pressure of competition … The individual is compelled to regulate his conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner." In part this was a consequence of relative peace: as states guaranteed order there was no longer the perpetual need to worry about self-defence, or to carry arms. And so civility also brought with it the suppression of passionate impulses (like drawing your sword in response to an insult). As Elias argued, "the web of actions grows so

complex and extensive, the effort required to behave 'correctly' within it becomes so great that besides the individual's conscious self-control is firmly established." The norms of civility evolved in part as self-imposed restraints, an example of what Jon Elster[17] calls 'self-binding', illustrated by the metaphor of Ulysses and the Sirens, a form of essential constraint where an agent restricts himself or herself for the sake of an expected benefit. In Elster's account, the 'self-binder' applies self-restraint strategies to control their behaviour, particularly if they fear that passions could cause them to act in a way they would not wish to when thinking more calmly. These passions cover "not only the emotions proper such as anger, fear, love, shame and the like but also states such as drunkenness, sexual desire, cravings for addictive drugs, pain and other 'visceral feelings.'"[18] People therefore 'pre-commit' themselves in ways that involve "attaching a cost or penalty to the choice one wants to avoid making."[19] Thus "pre-commitment embodies a certain form of *rationality over time*."[20]

Civility always involves some form of cost, some restraint and constraint. But it also offers benefits. In these respects it has parallels with the rules of markets. Aristocratic codes of honour divided others into two basic categories: enemies or allies, and incorporated this distinction into political calculations. In contrast, the new commercial society offered individuals more opportunities to interact with strangers – but to do so they had to accept the rules of the market. The growth of markets, and the division of labour, made relationships more impersonal, but also enforced higher standards of behaviour. These were themes explored by Adam Smith both in the *Wealth of Nations* and in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which discusses some of the tensions of the new situation, since people are more likely to concern themselves with maintaining their reputation and credentials in settings in which they assume that there will be many repeated social interactions.

And while in early modern Europe civility helped to lubricate relations and transactions, it also served to differentiate between groups of people. In the 16th century, for example, Erasmus promoted the idea of the use of the fork to distinguish between civility and barbarism. Elias indicates that not only the fork but also the napkin symbolised the new

civility of the earliest stages of modern capitalism,[21] as the new middle classes in Holland and England adopted dining rooms and more refined eating habits. So while civility started to symbolise a more open and democratic set of values than those of aristocratic or feudal society, it also brought with it new distinctions. In Chartier's words:

> *(Civility) is inscribed in the public space of the society of citizens, and it stands opposed to the barbarity of those who have not been civilized. It thus appears closely linked both to a cultural heritage that connects the Western nations to the history of ancient Greece, the first source of civilization, and to a form of society that presupposes the liberty of the subjects in relation to the power of the state.*[22]

Box 1   **Civility and Civil Society**

Civility is different from civil society. Civility can provide the basis for reinforcing civil society but it is not the same. Civility is in many ways a benchmark, setting the standard for what most people see as a 'decent' way to deal with others. Adapting Michael Edwards' three-pronged definition of civil society, we here bring out the overlaps.[23]

Civil society is a goal to aim for (a 'good society' - the type of society we want to live in). Civility can, as an unspoken language for interaction, provide the basis for achieving the 'good society' – through emphasis on qualities such as respect, empathy and compassion. Yet civility is not implicit and needs to be learnt, made relevant, incentivised or often regulated.

Civil society refers to associational life, the 'space' of organised activity not undertaken by either the government or for-private-profit business. It includes formal and informal associations such as voluntary and community organisations, trade unions, etc. Civility makes it easier to cooperate with strangers.

And finally, civil society is the public sphere in which citizens deliberate and define their common interests. Again, civility is an essential precondition for peaceful dialogue of this kind.

The Sources of Civility

The starting point is **individual disposition.** People are born with dis-
positions that make it easier for them to empathise or cooperate with
others. These dispositions then co-evolve with their environment, leaving
people (most of the time) in the space between saintly patience and vio-
lent impatience. That genetic factors matter is no longer much contested.
Our nervous systems "are constructed to be captured by the nervous sys-
tems of others, so that we can experience others as if from within their
skin".[24] At such moments, we resonate with their experience and they
with ours. Neuroscience has shown that 'mirror neurons' ensure that the
moment someone sees an emotion expressed on another's face, they will
at once sense that same feeling within themselves. When someone sees
an act of kindness, it typically stirs in them the impulse to perform one
too.[25] These dispositions clash with other ones, which may be equally
fundamental: fears, threats, insecurities and desires. In environments of
rushed and occasional encounters, empathy may be less likely. Hence the
need for cities to cultivate norms of self-control that in such contexts
are unnatural. As Schopenhauer once said, "civility is to human nature
what warmth is to wax." Civility is essentially about self-control and 'af-
fect structures' (as Elias calls them), emotional patterns that are built by
historical pressures and tensions which do not relate to the immediate
self-interest of individuals.

These norms may be particularly unnatural for young people. Recent
research shows that teenagers, for example, are more likely not to think
about the consequences that their actions will have on others because of
the incomplete maturity of their brain. Adolescents use a different part
of the brain to make decisions on actions (superior *temporal sulcus*) and
mainly think about the action they are going to take and not its con-
sequences.[26] This partially explains anti-social and violent behaviour in
teenagers, which is most likely to start around age 16, and generally stops

later on in life (some two-thirds to three-quarters of violent youth grow out of it and people who have not committed a violent crime by the age of 19 only rarely start committing them).

The second source of civility is the **direct influence of family, friends and peers**. Their norms of behaviour strongly shape what we think is acceptable – from minor examples like throwing chewing gum onto the street, to major ones like the acceptability of joining a brawl in a bar. Social expectations that are instilled in people from birth through family and institutions make social life possible and motivate certain 'accepted' types of behaviours while disincentivising others. They create moral judgements and behaviours of right and wrong that are accompanied by strong emotions, both positive (including gratitude) and negative (moral indignation). Moral emotions involve learned expectations about what circumstances should result in social emotions of pride, guilt, shame, empathy, scorn and so on. For most people, the family is the first source of socialisation. Through families, children are introduced to the expectations of society. Children learn to see themselves through their parents' eyes; for example, anti-social behaviour and lack of civility are more likely among youth that come from weak or absent families. Poor parenting skills, a weak child/parent relationship and a family history of problem behaviour can be factors that increase the likelihood of a young person committing acts of anti-social behaviour.[27]

So teenagers in continental Europe, for instance, spend significantly more time at home than British children, talking to their parents and eating family meals around a table. British children are much more likely to spend time with their friends most evenings, and about a third of British parents don't have, or make, time for their children.[28] The result is not just lifelong unhappiness; for some, this has an impact on potential future involvement in crime and incivility. Where social expectations and moral rules are solid and evident, the costs of incivility are also obvious. Where social expectations are present and strengthened through schooling, family, religious organisations or professional etiquette, the costs of incivility are made more visible, and made less socially acceptable.

The third source of civility is more structural – the **prevailing laws,**

systems and rules that condition behaviour, and the external norms of a society. At one extreme there are acts of incivility deemed so serious that they are punished as crimes; at the other are acts of civility that are rare, and in some cases so precious that they are rewarded with incentives. As Jeffrey Rachlinski, Professor of Law at Cornell Law School argues, "no society can function if it cannot constrain the self-serving behaviour of its members. Clear rules enforced by legal sanctions deter a great deal of socially destructive conduct but social norms enforced by informal sanctions might create even more powerful constraints."[29] Social norms can work both through incentives and disincentives and can frequently influence behaviour more than the law. Incentives can promote pro-social behaviour and create ways of persuading people to stop bad behaviour and adopt more civil ways. For example, the youth opportunity cards introduced by the British Government in 2006 are a good example of a scheme designed to dissuade young people from 'hanging around' in the streets, by entitling teenagers to spend £12 a month in better-off areas and £25 in the most disadvantaged areas. Fines and bans are the traditional ways to control behaviour and contain the costs of incivility – from smoking bans to speeding fines, or alcohol bans in public spaces. In modern society, positive incentives are usually financial, and penalties consist primarily of a mix of fines and incarceration.

Modern Britain uses penalties ranging from fines and compulsory classes for parents of truant schoolchildren, to ASBOs and injunction orders for noisy neighbours.[30] Social landlords have introduced 'acceptable behaviour contracts' alongside tenancy agreements – often in response to pressure from their residents. Norms that control behaviour through both incentives and disincentives can – if well thought out – help to contain incivility, or at least to make the costs of incivility obvious to everyone. However, the risk of any formal rules is that they implicitly free individuals from responsibility and can in some cases lead to increased asocial behaviour, which then requires more state intervention in an unhealthy ratchet.[31]

An interesting development in many cities has been to *contain incivility* rather than outlawing it. A good example is the management of fly-post-

ing. Cities often contain signs stating that 'billposters will be prosecuted'. But local authorities (such as Leeds) then provide free advertising spaces on which anyone can put a poster. In the same way, late night clubs may be put into out-of-town retail parks to avoid disturbing residents. Norms of behaviour that might be unacceptable in a city centre at 6pm may be acceptable in a place clearly designated for young people, and for fun. Seen through this lens, some disorder and incivility are unavoidable or even necessary for cities to thrive.[32]

Frameworks for Understanding Civility

Civility is often discussed with a broad brush. But to understand it better we need to deconstruct its different dimensions:
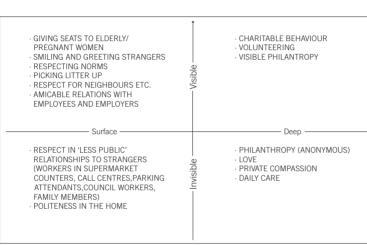
Figure 2   **A Framework of Civility**

- GIVING SEATS TO ELDERLY/
  PREGNANT WOMEN
- SMILING AND GREETING STRANGERS
- RESPECTING NORMS
- PICKING LITTER UP
- RESPECT FOR NEIGHBOURS ETC.
- AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH
  EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

- CHARITABLE BEHAVIOUR
- VOLUNTEERING
- VISIBLE PHILANTROPY

Visible — Surface ——— Deep — Invisible

- RESPECT IN 'LESS PUBLIC'
  RELATIONSHIPS TO STRANGERS
  (WORKERS IN SUPERMARKET
  COUNTERS, CALL CENTRES,PARKING
  ATTENDANTS,COUNCIL WORKERS,
  FAMILY MEMBERS)
- POLITENESS IN THE HOME

- PHILANTHROPY (ANONYMOUS)
- LOVE
- PRIVATE COMPASSION
- DAILY CARE

I. SURFACE CIVILITY AND DEEP CIVILITY

No one can persuade me that it takes a better-paid nurse to behave more considerately to a patient, that only an expensive house can be pleasing, that only a wealthy merchant can be courteous to his customer and display a handsome sign outside, that only a prosperous farmer can treat his live-stock well (Vaclav Havel, May 1992).

The first distinction is between surface civility and deep civility. Politeness and good manners are **the superficial marks of civility**. They can be found anywhere, but tend to be less common in urban areas, where there is low trust, high turnover or less belonging. In shops and services, civility may be at its most pronounced in the most expensive places, merging into

obsequiousness. These more superficial types of civility are rarely 'deeply felt' – they are more about appearances, manners, etiquette, and can easily be simulated. They can include anything from smiling to strangers, customers or employees; picking up litter and respecting norms, to being kind and respectful to call centre workers or service providers. It is the type of civility that serves a clear purpose, it is helpful for lubricating and smoothing up transactions, and it can guarantee a more helpful and amicable society but not one that would necessarily lend help to strangers in times of need. They may be more likely either where there is a shared sense of community and cooperation, or where there are strong economic incentives. But they don't require any underlying emotions of care and commitment, and are often associated with hypocrisy.

Deep or mindful civility, by contrast, involves acting with others in mind, requiring empathy and awareness of another person's feelings. It is motivated by an understanding of how a person's feelings will be affected by a certain kind of behaviour. It is a proactive type of civility that is motivated by the will to have a positive effect on someone's life: volunteering, helping strangers in time of trouble (the traditional example of helping an elderly lady crossing a road or carrying shopping bags), and charitable donations. This good ethics means that civility does not rest upon a concern or sympathy towards specific others but is rather a by-product of a generalised empathy, which we feel we owe to all who share society with us.

2. VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CIVILITY

A second useful distinction is between 'visible' and 'invisible' civility. **Visible civility** refers to norms which are on display – on the street, at public events, when people gather together. Its mirror, visible incivility, is what the media often reports – anti-social behaviour, vulgarity, road rage, binge drinking. It is an incivility that is easier to curb when people are confronted with their responsibility and harder when people cannot be easily made accountable, shamed, or directly confronted with the costs of their behaviour. Visible incivility is easier to commit when face-to-face contact is limited and fleeting, and when anonymity is guaranteed. For example,

it is a lot easier to swear and bully other drivers in a traffic jam (when one knows that they can make a quick getaway) than it is to cut in line at airport security, when there is a possibility of having to be in close proximity to the people one has insulted. Equally, it is a lot easier to name call, and deride people in an anonymous blogosphere than it is in a conference. Visibility explains much about the politics of civility: the more young people there are in a local authority, for example, the more concerned the population will be about anti-social behaviour.[34]

Invisible civility refers to behaviour behind closed doors – how spouses behave to each other, how parents treat children, how employers treat employees. These are the situations that often profoundly shape wellbeing, but are harder for public opinion or policy to reach. An extreme example is the contrast between the courteous civility of the expensive shops of areas like Kensington in London, and many hundreds of stories that have emerged in recent years of people being effectively held as slaves in wealthy houses in the area, their passports confiscated, not allowed out, and invariably treated cruelly.[35]

Invisible incivility is the hardest to tackle as it is generated and encouraged by major inequalities of power, being those between different social classes, rich and poor, powerful and powerless. In particularly controlled environments like the workplace, the 'quiet encroachment' of the powerless is often avoided: thanks to rights and anti-discrimination laws, the costs of invisible incivility become too high to incur. However, reducing invisible incivility always requires a significant investment of resources to become automatic. It still takes place in uncontrolled settings where norms and expectations do not clearly apply or where the degree (and type) of incivility is not necessarily and easily punishable – ie disputes between neighbours, rudeness at work, bullying, uncivil behaviour in care homes, abuse of power by 'uncivil and greedy bankers' and so on. These issues are highly contested in new spaces, like the internet, where anonymity can favour incivility towards others, and the media, which often celebrates uncivil behaviour.
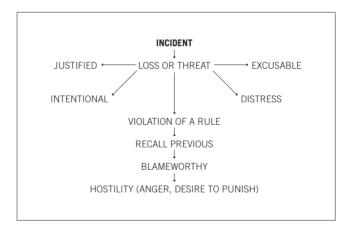
REASON, EMOTIONS AND CIVILITY

Civility has often been presented as the assertion of reason over the pas-

sions. It restrains the impulse to violence or excessive reaction. Yet recent findings on the relationship between emotion and reason are undermining this common frame. As the neurophysiologist Antonio Damasio argues,[36] it is misleading to see reason and emotion as separate systems: instead, we use emotion to help our decisions and reasoning. Civility becomes second nature when it is felt as well as thought.

But we can learn how to feel as well as how to think. Psychologists have researched in detail the chains of emotions that can lead to acts of incivility. As Aaron Beck,[37] for example, suggests, hostility and hatred can begin with what are seen as acts of disrespect or humiliation.

FIGURE 3   **Beck's algorithm of the factors leading to hostility**

More civil communities depend on people being able to understand their own feelings and reactions, and to learn whether they are appropriate or not. As Beck suggests, when hurt is unintentional, acts that may have been deemed as incivility are justified – if, for example, the offender is not regarded as responsible for the act:

> *'While you walk down the street, someone puts a cane in your path and you stumble. You instantly decide that this person was deliberately trying to harm you and you become intent on punishing him. But then you*

discover that the person who inadvertently placed his cane in your path is blind. You correct your construction of the event, perhaps feeling a little guilty or embarrassed than the relatively mild jolt you received. Once you understand that the incident was unintentional – owing to neutral circumstances – then nobody is to blame. You no longer feel the need to punish the other person.' [38]

A person's reaction to an act of incivility will thus depend on the meaning he or she attributes to the act. If that act is seen as intentional disrespect, it can cause stress, a damaged ego, hurt pride, injured psyche and it is likely to lead to further desire to retaliate, further eroding a social quest for civility. And if the 'offender' is seen as a repeat 'offender' – and someone who is perhaps thought to have a history of similar incivility (ie a 'hoodie' for example) – then hostility and stereotype will be reinforced. Recent research from the University of Florida shows that witnessing an act of rudeness or incivility towards others can also have an intense reaction on people – it can stunt a person's creativity, impair their mental performance and make them more likely to commit an act of incivility themselves. [39]

According to Beck, regardless of the form of danger or the nature of pain, we fall back on the strategies that served our ancestors in their quest to survive and to avoid physical injury: fight, flight or freeze. [40]

Reaching a consensus on civility
– what can be done about it?

Hannah Arendt wrote in *The Human Condition* that "society, on all its levels, expects from each of its members a certain kind of behaviour, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to normalise its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement."[41] These impositions bring with them costs as well as benefits. Sigmund Freud famously wrote about how civilization breeds its own discontents through the repression of freedom. Norbert Elias was also very conscious of the costs of greater civility, of societies that became more rigid, and perhaps more hypocritical, more self-repressive as they controlled impulsive emotions. Not surprisingly, these same norms have often been contested – and modernity has as a consistent *leitmotif*, the acts of rebellion, riot and disrespect that are essential to social change. Too much respect and too much deference freeze the old order, and some aspects of civility are anachronisms which embody unacceptable inequalities of power (think, for example, of opening doors for women, the use of honorific titles, bowing, curtseys…). Yet too much disrespect makes life unpleasant.

HOW SHOULD WE STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE? AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CIVILITY?

The simple answer is that everyone is. How each of us behaves shapes, challenges or reinforces norms. The everyday acts that people do – the choice to smile, to act with kindness – can be infectious. This is the sense in which civility is a shared product, well beyond the reach of laws and institutions. The same is true of the mirror force of shame.[42]

Everyone is both shaped by norms and in turn shapes them. The most visible have a particular responsibility for the implicit messages their behaviour sends. Those who take pride in being gratuitously offensive, bullying or simply selfish are influencing norms far more than people whose actions are invisible. This is why incivility among the pow-

erful – from bickering politicians to foul-mouthed media personalities, greedy bankers to arrogant sports stars, speed-boat enthusiasts to users of private jets – can be so corrosive. Incivility is sometimes discussed as if it's mainly a problem at the bottom of social hierarchies. In fact it matters even more when it occurs at the top.

Encouraging responsibility among the powerful and visible is one way to promote civility. But fortunately there are many other ways in which societies can choose to cultivate civility. Many institutions are involved in shaping character – from childcare centres that cultivate sharing and empathy to primary and secondary schools that can choose to place an emphasis on behaviour, soft skills, and cultivating responsibility.[43] Experience suggests that involving more young people in project-based learning, working in teams with other age groups, and learning to reflect on behaviour, are all better ways of learning civility than formal pedagogy in the classroom (these are covered in more detail in a forthcoming Young Foundation publication on 'Grit and Character' in education).

Almost every institution will define and sometimes enforce acceptable standards of behaviour: employers do so, as do colleges, or the armed forces. Each sometimes has to grapple with incidents that challenge the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, determining what counts as high spirits and what counts as anti-social rowdiness, or what counts as unavoidable social interaction and what counts as bullying.

Public institutions and institutions with very visible faces struggle with these choices. The BBC has already been mentioned, and is constantly seeking to adjust its norms to the shifting perspectives of a complex society. Nightclubs and bars are another example. Moves to require bars to take some responsibility for the behaviour of their customers have been suggested in many big cities. In principle, those who profit most from heavy alcohol consumption should also take responsibility for dealing with its consequences. But it may also be reasonable to expect that there should be some places where people can go wild and escape from everyday norms.

When it comes to the spaces that everyone has to share, some rules are unavoidable. Neighbourhoods can employ wardens or Police Com-

munity Support Officers (PCSOs) to deal with the more serious aspects of anti-social and uncivil behaviour, and thus leave more space for better mutual care and respect. By-laws can be regularly reviewed by whole communities as a way of reflecting on what to tolerate and what to prevent (for example, many would probably want to block the more extreme uses of ASBOs to punish fairly normal behaviour by children and teenagers). Some of the schemes recruiting teenagers to play roles of this kind (for example, in the Netherlands and France) have similarly helped to sustain norms of civil behaviour without excessive use of punishment.

Another field where civility has become a prominent concern is communication over the internet. The anonymity of the web can encourage rudeness, while the immediacy of email can encourage intemperate messages. One suggestion to address this is that there should be a Civility Check in emails – which would automatically flash up a message when a draft email appears to be too angry and inconsiderate.[44]

In everyday life, there have been many initiatives to harness and amplify the infectious nature of some acts of civility or kindness. These range from student movements promoting local kindness in Japan,[45] to the Singaporean Government-funded World Kindness movement[46] promoting a World Kindness day in November and a campaign suggesting good manners for every situation. The South Korean Bright Smile movement[47] promotes the importance of smiling and sharing smiles through programmes in schools and local communities, while the Kindness Offensive in London's West Hampstead performs small and large random acts of kindness towards strangers through the work of volunteers. The US-based 'extreme kindness crew' of four people (formed in the wake of 9/11) have performed more than 50,000 acts of kindness[48] from massaging strangers to tiling people's roofs, and have staged kindness protests. A UK organisation against bullying initiated the campaign 'B decent for a day' with the strapline 'it's cool to be kind' , while the Australian Free Hugs Campaign[50] – a global phenomenon started by one man 'who had no one to hug' has now spread globally thanks to Youtube. There is no shortage of examples, some perhaps trite: yet even the trite ideas build on the sound insight that social behaviours are infectious, and that if humans

are naturally suggestible it is better to suggest generosity and care rather than callousness and self-regard.

A possibly more sustainable approach to civility focuses less on acts of kindness and more on habits of mind. The spread of 'mindfulness' techniques, including mindfulness Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), both in schools and among adults, is another example of how the fundamental aspects of civility can become more second nature – as people learn to understand better not only their own emotions, but also how they affect others (some of these methods are, for example, being taught to several thousand pupils as part of the Young Foundation's resilience programme). These draw on very old lessons from Buddhism and other religious traditions, combined with recent scientific findings about the mental habits that are most conducive both to wellbeing and good relationships.

In all of these cases, civility evolves best with communities and civil society playing a strong role. In the past, civil society has frequently taken the lead in promoting civility, often through faith based communities – from the Sunday Schools, blanket groups, maternity groups, charity schools, coal clubs and temperance societies of the 19th century[51] to campaigns to reclaim the street. Governments are by their nature more mechanistic, less attuned to the subtleties of day-to-day culture.

Underlying many of the better methods is the desire to cultivate empathy, and seeing others as ends rather than means. One such initiative was an AHRC funded project 'Other People's Skin', based on Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, which made it possible to inhabit 'other people's skins' across time and geography through interacting with virtual diners. By differentiating everyday practices common across diverse cultures, the project revealed the similarities between people but also challenged the 'truth' of ritual as the foundation of civility – by showing that the norms and behaviours common in one society, such as using utensils to eat, may be entirely different in another culture. Its aim in other words was to dig beneath surface civility to a notion of deep civility. A parallel study originating in the Netherlands and Germany used drama and arts to try to reduce the recidivism of offenders. Teaching offenders to take the per-

spective of another through drama therapy led to a decrease in offences of 50 per cent during the follow-up measurement of a treatment group compared to a placebo and control group.[52] In the same vein, volunteering and mentoring schemes can deliberately challenge the risk of incivility being normalised. There can even be rewards for good behaviour as an alternative to reliance on punishments. A good example is the Motiv8 scheme in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, in Devon, where youngsters doing good deeds like picking litter up or helping pensioners, get on the spot prizes from a police force.

These are just a handful of the many ways in which civility can be nurtured. Civility is not easily amenable to the usual tools of states – laws, programmes, and transfers. But it is not a fact of nature. It can be chosen, shaped, supported and rewarded. And societies that do so are likely to live better than those that do not. That's why the time is right for a more serious discussion about what we mean by civility and who has the responsibility to influence it.

Views and Responses

It is increasingly important today to ask how we can respond to the common threat faced by our economy in a way that renews a common purpose in our society, and in a way where we become not a country of soulless wealth but a country with a wealth of soul. We have to concentrate on 5 key areas where civility has contemporary relevance.

The first area is a common story. When we feel we share a national story it is easier to see our links to each other. Sir Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, made this point in his book *The Home we Build Together*. Now Jack Straw has begun an important conversation about our shared values and the opportunity to codify this common story through the Green Paper on Rights and Responsibilities. It is an opportunity to get our story straight, to share it and to live it.

The second area in which we can strengthen shared values is in our cities. Take, for example, Birmingham, a city with an extraordinary history. At the end of the 19th century there was a large movement of people from the countryside to towns and cities. This movement resulted in a burst of civic inventiveness: when the Labour Representation committee met for the first time in Birmingham in 1904, it brought together over 30 working-class organisations; pioneers like Chamberlain, the Cadburys, Matthew Boulton and the hundreds of civic entrepreneurs they inspired created a strong civic fabric to match wider and wider civic frontiers. In this way we created Britain's great civic fabric that knitted those new communities together. Today we have the same opportunity and the chance to re-weave the civic fabric of our society – if we shape these plans together. Yet we have to take far greater care to get the balance right with far clearer power and a more civil civic order.

The third issue is in our classrooms – the education of our children not only in their rights but on what it is right to give. In Hodge Hill we are now pioneering character education in the time set aside for PGCE in a way that boosts self-confidence and self-esteem by strengthening

children's understanding of their place and space in society. But we are only at the beginning of this agenda and more needs to be done.

The fourth issue is our communal work. The law-abiding majority in this country is stronger than ever, and the number volunteering is up compared to five years ago. One in four say they volunteer once a month. We compare well to countries like the United States, well known for their volunteering tradition but where only 26-28 per cent of adults volunteer each year, and where half of all Americans are members of at least one voluntary group or association. But we should not be content, as our goal should be to see that civic core grow even bigger.

Finally, conversations. The playwright Arthur Miller once said that he wrote to help people feel less alone. That is a task that each of us could take on by finding new ways of showing each other our common interest. In Birmingham, in the community I serve as a MP, I am always struck by how the things we have in common with each other are greater than what set us apart. There is no moral diversity in Britain. There are rift issues, but on the basics, we see eye to eye. Yet we fail to see this, often because we do not talk to each other enough. That is why the work of local leaders, whether these are religious, political or community leaders, is in finding ways of bringing people together and getting them out of the streets they live in, into the streets of others. By working with each other, by drawing together to see common interests, we can navigate the years ahead and still have Britain feel like home. A more united Kingdom.

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP

CIVILITY AND EDUCATION

Schools are fundamental to civility because what children learn at school will make a big impression. Schools need thus to be kind and compassionate places, where children are treated with respect, but equally they learn that they have to respect adults too.

Schools of the past, both state and independent, were run on hierarchy and authority; even the overtly 'religious' schools, which should have known better. 'Manners', as at the table, ties and shirts always worn properly, and the saying and writing of 'thank you' were stressed, but it

tended to be the outer veneer rather than the inner child that was being addressed. But that was not true civility.

Civility requires deep human respect, and needs to be at the core of every school. Behaviour should be based not on the fear of punishments and outward sanctions, but on an inner reasonableness and respect. If a child avoids misbehaving in class, or bullying another child, merely because they are afraid of punishment, they will learn nothing. If they refrain from anti-social behaviour on the other hand because they respect what the teacher is trying to do, and the right of other children to learn, and if they are supportive of other children because they recognise that they too have a right to get through their day without being hectored, then that is what I mean by a civil school.

In reality, children could have bad table manners, could dress untidily, and never write thank you letters, but one could imagine them belonging to an infinitely more civil school than one of yesteryear where everyone kept their elbows off tables, looked immaculate, and mouthed mechanical 'thank yous'. True civility has to be far more than skin deep, and based on love.

Anthony Seldon

DEVELOPING KINDNESS

The concept of civility is not an easy concept to describe. Is a perceived lack of civility widespread throughout western societies? Is the phenomenon of the badly-behaved British youth, a concept that is so beloved by the British tabloids, genuinely unique to this country?

There is a tendency for the media to exaggerate how bad things are. If you had to rely on the *Daily Mail* only, then you wouldn't go outdoors for fear of being attacked or offended. Actually, most people behave well. If you travel on the tube, and if you get jostled by someone, people generally say sorry. I saw someone a few months ago accidentally jostle a man who turned around and thumped him. Everyone subsequently turned on the man who thumped him and this man got taken away. Incivility is normally condemned in this country.

There is, in general, less of a degree of restraint in society. We live in a 'post-deferent' society; my children are much ruder to me than I was to

my father, but the benefit is that they are much closer to me and we have a more open relationship. I'll take and accept that trade off.

This lack of restraint is something that has changed over time – this is not a recent phenomenon. Language that was considered unacceptable 200 years ago is nowadays casually used in public. Is that bothersome? I don't personally find it so, but others might. However, there is a sense that such willingness to use language that can cause offence to other people is an incivility.

There is also a tendency to attack political correctness. Political correctness, at its best, is actually about civility. It is about a discouragement to use language that causes offence to particular people. While profane language may be on the increase, there is, on the other hand, more restraint on the language that causes offence to some. In general, there is still an understanding that not only is it right, but that there is also a self-interest in being polite – if you don't behave well to people you can't expect them to behave well to you.

The general phenomenon of less restraint is a mixed picture. There is the much more intractable problem of the communities where there is not that sense of self-interest in good behaviour, where in fact the reverse is the case. Knife-crime is a case in point – in certain communities disfigured by gang culture, illiteracy, worklessness and addictions, some young people think that they benefit and that their self-interest is served by carrying a knife. And the state is not very good at tackling the problem of re-offending. Prisons are full of people who re-offended within two years of being discharged. This is a massive failure.

So how do you solve these problems? A long-term approach is required. Proactive intervention has to be undertaken by agencies other than the state, who can tackle the needs of the individual, the family and the community. The market will not resolve it, nor can we expect 'good' social norms to spontaneously appear. It requires proactive effort in getting people into work, into sustainable work.

Aldous Huxley wrote at the end of his life that it is somewhat embarrassing to have spent all one's life writing and thinking about the human condition, and then come to the conclusion that the single thing that would

make the most difference is if people were a little bit kinder towards each other. That is a magnificently simple and unavoidable conclusion.

Francis Maude MP

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS OF CIVILITY

If nothing else, the recent increase in concern about the behaviour of Britons is evidence of a crisis of civility which is underpinned by strong historical sensibility. Whether seen in complaints about Britain's 'broken society' or concern that MPs break every standard of decency and fair play in making up their expense claims, there is a sense that in Britain something has changed for the worse. Discussion of 'civility' is dominated by a nostalgic mood, in which we falsely remember supposedly better standards of public and private life in the past. Whichever past we actually wish to investigate – the 1850s, 1950s or 1970s – things were actually far worse, at least by criteria by which we would choose to judge civility now. People in the actual, historical past – not the nostalgic invention of politicians – were poorer, less comfortable with diversity and more violent than they are now.

But all this is beside the point, as is the fact that similar periods of breast-beating about the decline of standards and decency occurred regularly in the past. Crises exist in people's perception, not in statistics. The real, if statistically false, sense that standards of behaviour have declined needs to be taken seriously.

Crises of civility occur because of real changes in behaviour. They happen when norms of behaviour alter before society has yet worked out a coherent story about what it values in the new world. As the historian Norbert Elias argued, modes of civility consist of the particular ways in which people in any society discipline their emotions. Elias suggests that civility is a process in which 'individual drives and affects' are channelled socially. The values people hold, or the stories they consciously tell themselves about what is good or bad in the world in which they live, lag behind changes in these more visceral emotional responses. When standards of civility seem to be in crisis, it is because our emotional reactions don't have a legitimate language to articulate themselves in. As a

result of the absence of widely-received accounts about what is good and bad in present-day behaviour, we hark after the one thing we do have comprehendible narratives about – the past. Yet precisely because it is no longer with us, the past provides us with no firm basis for sound ethical judgements about what is right or wrong now.

The response to our present crisis of civility should not, therefore, be to anxiously frame this or that policy proposal to mend our broken society – or to restore a sense of community we are supposed to have lost. Despite the best efforts of policy professionals, social change in such complex things as the way people discipline their emotions is rarely a consequence of planned state action; and pasts are never recoverable. More importantly, we should start taking the present-day world seriously, and think in particular about the new ways in which humans today engage – emotionally as well as intellectually – with the world in which they live. For example: how does one make sense of the public display of very personal feelings on facebook or twitter; or the sense that people from many different walks of life seem more vulnerable, and have a greater sense of hurt when their opinions are contradicted? Thinking about phenomena such as these might enable us to develop the basis for ethical judgement in the social interactions we take part in now.

<div style="text-align: right">Jon E Wilson</div>

CIVILITY AND LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Does civility matter? Yes, it does. But what are we actually talking about? Clearly, the subject of manners is at the top of the agenda. Yet manners can be very relative. My children, despite my best efforts, are hopeless about table manners, but there are things they are better at than I am. They feel that it is very important to look after pregnant women on the tube, but equally they would say that it is important to look after small children and to make sure they have somewhere to sit when they need to. They would say this is much more important than how you use your knife and fork.

Young people's attitudes towards older people are, contrary to what many argue, better and more respectful than in my generation. Take the

National Council of Midwives, which argued that nurses should no longer automatically call people by their first name. People should be asked how they would like to be addressed. They make them feel more trusted and respected. That would not have happened in the past.

The other matter of importance is the nature of apology, the ability to admit that sometimes we are wrong. An important part of leadership is understanding success and failure, when a job is done well and when it is not, and what can be learnt from failure. Yet the tendency in many of our public institutions is to blame when failure is blatant. Civility is to understand when we fail and how we can make it better. It is important that institutions should reflect that.

How did we get here? I think it is through increasingly being risk averse. Take CRB checks. It is certainly the case that some people should not work with children. Yet if we want to do something about ex-offenders who would automatically fail a CRB check, because they have been in prison, for example, and if we want to re-integrate them into the labour market, we should look into ways of encouraging them to volunteer and help young people who may be at risk of offending themselves. How we think about risk and blame affects civility. If we don't trust people we are automatically on our guard.

We must recognise that mistakes happen, and instead of shouting at the people who make mistakes we should deal with how the mistake took place. All the evidence from the NHS is that when mistakes happen, most people want an apology and an assurance that some work will be done to ensure it will not happen again. Often an apology and a gesture of civility matters more than compensation. This tells you something about the nature of civility in our society. Rather than the lengthy process of finding out what went wrong, we use a cash transaction. Cash and compensations have all too often replaced human gestures of civility and respect.

Baroness Julia Neuberger

DOES VOLUNTEERING IMPROVE CIVILITY?

Does volunteering improve civility? Does it lead to a more polite and respectful society? And does this matter? Indeed, should we even be looking

for volunteering to improve civility, or should we place a higher premium on its role as an agent for social change where conflict is perhaps inevitable and may run at odds with the desire for a more mannered society?

The evidence is inconclusive, but we can make a stab at some answers. We know that volunteering can help build citizenship. Volunteers are more likely to feel better about the place they live in and to feel greater attachment to their community.[53] They are more likely to vote and take part in other forms of civic life. They know more neighbours than non-volunteers and are more likely to feel that they have control over the issues that affect their lives.[54] In the language of the day, volunteering helps build up reservoirs of trust and reciprocity essential for the generation of social capital.[55]

We also know that volunteering boosts volunteers' confidence and self-esteem,[56] both essential requirements, one could argue, for greater civility. If you feel better about yourself, you are more likely to be able to develop healthy, respectful relationships with others. And of course at the heart of volunteering is the concept of reciprocity and exchange, a belief that the Good Society will only be created if people are prepared to give and receive of their time and talents, in a spirit of mutual respect and common purpose.

But volunteering is also about social change, about campaigning and protest. It has been pointed out, somewhat ironically given New Labour's enthusiastic support for volunteering, that the peak number for volunteering over the past decade coincided with the outbreak of the Iraq War and the demonstrations by millions against British involvement. Alongside its philanthropic and service tradition, volunteering has an equally honourable parallel history of opposition to the status quo, which could be seen to lie at odds with aspirations of greater civility.

So where does this leave us? Much depends on our definition of civility. If we see it largely as a passive concept, with its golden age in Victorian Britain when people knew their place and were respectful or indeed deferential to those in authority, then we might conclude that such a vision is out of step with our contemporary understanding of volunteering and what it can offer.

But if we view civility as a more dynamic concept, which allows for the existence of conflict and change alongside a belief in such traditional values as decency and respect, then I believe volunteering has much to contribute. At its best it can help people to grow as citizens; to equip them with the power and resources to change their lives and the lives of those around them, and to do so in a spirit of decency and respect, rooted in a better understanding of, and empathy with, their fellow citizens.

<div align="right">Justin Davis Smith</div>

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN ENCOURAGING CIVILITY

The subject of civility cannot be considered adequately without reference to religion. Of course, religion can be deeply uncivil (like any ideology, it can be exclusive and sectarian) but there are, perhaps, three especially important reasons why religion has an important contribution to make to the civility debate.

In the first place, religion is set to be more not less significant in society. Despite predictions of religion's decline throughout the 20th century, 'rumours of God's death' have been greatly exaggerated. In 1968, the sociologist, Peter Berger, confidently predicted that by "the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture".[57] *In The Desecularisation of the World* in 1999, however, he admitted that he had been mistaken, arguing that "the assumption that we live in a secularised world is false: the world today, with some exceptions … is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever."[58]

In global terms, religion is growing at an exponential rate. Incidentally, Christianity will continue to be the world's biggest religion by 2050, but the vast majority of believers will be neither white nor European, nor Euro-American. The events of 9/11 and 7/7 are obviously evidence of religion re-asserting itself, but there are other reasons why religion is back on the domestic agenda. These include research on human wellbeing, the emergence of identity politics and the nature of civil society. Since religion is set to play an increasingly important role in society, it is crucial to understand it properly.

In the second place, the evidence is compelling that people of religious faith are significant in encouraging civility. One of the findings of the *Citizenship in Britain* study, for example, was that those individuals who regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion often exhibited atypical characteristics. Such people recorded comparatively high levels of interpersonal trust, of trust in the police, of respect for the law and of a citizen's duty to vote. They also recorded higher than average levels of group membership, of engagement in informal activities, of political participation and of time 'donation'.[59] It is frequently people of religious faith who are the most active and innovative in rebuilding broken communities across Britain.

In the third place, religious faith groups possess in themselves the 'resources' to promote civility. In exploring what has gone wrong in our social ecology over the past 50 years, the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, has observed that we have made a simple, well-intentioned, but fundamentally wrong assumption. "Namely, that there are only two institutions that can deal with social problems, either the state or the market. Some on the left prefer the state, some on the right prefer the market, but on the most fundamental point they both agree, and they are both wrong, namely that the state and market are all there is."[60] In reality, people actually find meaning and belonging in families, congregations, faith communities, fellowships, neighbourhoods, voluntary organisations - all of which are bigger than the individual, but smaller than the state. In the words of the Chief Rabbi, "They operate on a different logic. Families and communities are held together not by the coercive use of power, not by the contractual mechanisms of exchange, but by love, loyalty, faithfulness and mutuality: being there for one another when we need one another."[61] If we want to create civility, we need to nurture belonging, and religious groups excel at this.

Paul Woolley

HOUSING QUALITY, CONGESTION, SECURITY AND
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

There is an increasing body of evidence on the way in which the physical environment influences physical and mental health. For example, housing congestion, exposure to chronic noise and housing security have direct effects on children's emotional well being, cognitive functioning and behaviour. The environment also has indirect effects on children, particularly younger children when it undermines parents' capacity to function.

This is exemplified by a number of studies[62] showing an association between overcrowding and lower motivation in task performance among children aged 6 to 12 years of age. Congestion is also associated with increased levels of social withdrawal among pre-school children. Primary school children who live in more crowded homes reveal higher levels of psychological distress, poorer behavioural adjustment at school, and lower social and cognitive competence, independent of social class. Parents are less responsive to infants and older children in more crowded homes, and there is evidence of increased aggression in pre-schoolers when high density is combined with poverty. Stressors require adaptive strategies and it is likely that withdrawal is one way of coping with too much unwanted social interaction. Some of the harmful effects of residential crowding on children are buffered by having a place in the home where the child can find refuge. Studies on what primary school children want from space have drawn attention to their desire for combination of opportunities for privacy/ reflection as well as social interaction.

The structure of housing also affects parenting. In an early study in London, Stewart[63] documented widespread restrictions on play activities plus inadequate play spaces for children among families living in high-rise apartment blocks. Women who live in high rises have been found to report greater social isolation and depression than those in smaller, lower buildings.

Overall, poor housing quality is associated with more negative outcomes for children - research in the US has found that overall housing quality was inversely related to learned helplessness among third to fifth graders independent of income. As a result of the fact that housing is

critical to social identity, poor quality housing affects children's self esteem, particularly as they interact with peers who live in better quality homes. British children who live in rented accommodation, whether this is owned by the council or private landlords, are more than twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems than those who live in privately owned homes.

Housing which is of good quality and secure is not only a basic human right, but a significant determinant of children's mental health and development. If we want to better understand civility, it is essential to give priority to urban and physical environments that enhance, rather than undermine, wellbeing and social capital.

<div style="text-align: right">Anita Schrader McMillan and Jane Barlow</div>

HONESTY AND CIVILITY?

As a child, the most common experience of incivility I recall encountering was name-calling on the school playground or in the streets – often involving abusive remarks about the colour of my skin. As someone who arrived in the UK after having spent my first seven years in another country, an act of such hostility was in itself completely alien.

So imagine my horror when, a decade later, I was walking through the streets of Covent Garden with a group of university friends – and found myself being singled out with a barrage of abusive remarks by a stocky, angry and bitter-looking man shouting: 'I hate you Pakis, why are you here? Why don't you go back where you came from?' I remember feeling dismissive at first and thinking about what I should say - as I often did as a teenager when challenging racists who made similar remarks: 'I'm not from Pakistan, I'm from Bangladesh and we fought a war for our independence – so get your facts straight!' I also thought, 'If everybody in Covent Garden followed this man's order the whole place would be virtually empty'. However, as I pondered, the man's behaviour got more aggressive. My friends and I moved out of his way as quickly as possible, but the episode was threatening and upsetting. My lasting impression of this ugly incident was not only what this man had done or said, but also the reaction of one of my friends – who behaved as if the incident hadn't

occurred. It was as though it would be bad manners to discuss it; in itself a kind of denial. I felt betrayed.

While I didn't expect my friend to take the man on, I had hoped he would discuss it with me - but he said nothing. I wondered what his school had taught him. He had studied in one the most exclusive public schools in the country – famous for its teachings of civility and etiquette. What had he learned if not to disavow this sort of behaviour?

This story strikes at the heart of the debate about what it means to be civil: my notion of civility was to engage with my friends about this behaviour, but my friend's notion of civility was to avoid discussing a challenging incident – which to me looked like a failure to confront reality.

Civility, applied inappropriately, runs the risk of reinforcing a kind of 'old English repressiveness and stuffiness' and associated gender and social class stereotypes and divides, while also denying individual expression and creativity. I am still struck by the level of discomfort I observe when I see friends and colleagues who come from working class backgrounds squirm when they sit in boardroom-style dinners, or other events characteristic of 'polite society'.

This same cultural repressiveness is what comes to mind when thinking of how the concept of 'civility' might be introduced by the Right should they come into Government. Policies, practices, laws and customs to encourage good behaviour are the ostensibly the Right's answer to the Left's 'Respect' agenda. But we know that a strong focus on using laws to enforce good behaviour can backfire and fail to achieve the goal of achieving widespread and positive change in behaviour towards fellow citizens. We also risk cultivating a society in which everyone is civil to one another on the surface but doesn't really mean it. A dishonest society that is polite on the surface and ultimately disingenuous and hypocritical can be harmful even if there are surface benefits.

Britain could be characterised as a society where one section of the population is rich in civility along with other forms of social capital, whilst another section of the population may lack awareness of what civility means and what the codes of behaviour are in different circumstances. This is manifested in a somewhat schizophrenic perception of

Britons abroad. British people are often seen as ultra-polite and civilised – the kind of people who love to queue and who would try anything to avoid offending their hosts - but they are also those who are seen as more likely to get drunk, and become disorderly, violent, and uncivil – so much so that one Greek island banned such characters entering their shores.

Every successful society thrives because of the bonds and social relationships that bind people together. Civility has the potential to be a great asset in developing positive encounters and relationships between people – building solidarity and preventing conflict. It needs to be an inclusive concept where it is clear to all what counts as civil behaviour, thereby avoiding certain groups being lost in translation. Ultimately, the challenge is to make sure that people are civil to each other as a matter of course and that it becomes a state of mind, something we do because we mean it, not because we are obliged to. We will be richer for it as a society.

Rushanara Ali

Biographies

Alessandra Buonfino is programme leader at the Young Foundation, where she is responsible for work on communities, cohesion, civility and creativity. She joined the Young Foundation at its inception in 2005 and has previously been Head of Research with the think tank Demos, a Research fellow at the University of Birmingham and a consultant to several organisations, including Tesco and the British Council. Alessandra holds a doctorate in international relations from Cambridge University and is co-author of *People Flow: managing migration in a new European Commonwealth*; *The Future face of enterprise* on making Britain into a successful and thriving enterprise nation; *Porcupines in Winter: the pleasures and pains of living together in modern Britain* (with Geoff Mulgan); the Demos publication *Wishful thinking: dreams, agency and wellbeing* and the Young Foundation/ British Council report on urban creativity, *Breakthrough Cities*.

Geoff Mulgan became Director of the Young Foundation's precursors (Institute of Community Studies and Mutual Aid Centre) in the autumn of 2004 and oversaw the Foundation's launch in 2005. Previously, Geoff had various roles in the UK government, including director of the Government's Strategy Unit and head of policy in the Prime Minister's office. He began his career in local government in London, where he pioneered policies to support creative industries that have been emulated all over the world. He was the founder and director of the think tank Demos; and has been chief adviser to Gordon Brown MP; a consultant and lecturer in telecommunications; an investment executive; a reporter for BBC TV and radio; and a columnist for national newspapers. He has lectured in over 30 countries and is a visiting professor at LSE, UCL and Melbourne University, and a visiting fellow at the Australia New Zealand School of Government. He was a Thinker in Residence for the Government of South Australia. His publications in-

clude *The Art of Public Strategy – Mobilising Power and Knowledge for the Public Good*, *Good and Bad Power: The Ideals and Betrayals of Government*, *In and Out of Sync: The Challenge of Growing Social Innovations*; and *Social Innovation: What it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated*.

Philip F Esler became Chief Executive of the AHRC in September 2005. Before becoming an academic, Professor Esler worked for 10 years as a litigation solicitor and then a barrister in Australia. In October 1992 he moved, with his family, to St Andrews, where he took up a position as Reader in New Testament studies. He was promoted to Professor of Biblical Criticism in St Andrews University in September 1995 and more recently served as its Vice-Principal for Research. He sat on the Board of Scottish Enterprise Fife in a personal capacity from 1999 to 2003. In 1984 he was awarded a D. Phil from the University of Oxford (Magdalen College). His thesis was in the New Testament area and applied social-scientific ideas to Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. He has published very extensively, particularly in the social-scientific analysis of New Testament and other biblical and apocryphal texts, and in New Testament theology. He also has a recent monograph in the area of the Bible and the visual arts co-authored with a British artist.

Liam Byrne is the MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill. He is Chief Secretary to the Treasury and previously, Minister for the Cabinet Office and responsible in the Cabinet for the co-ordination of policy across Government. He also chairs the Council of Regional Ministers. Before that, Liam was Minister of State for Borders and Immigration at HM Treasury and the Home Office. Before entering Parliament, Liam, was a technology entrepreneur, co-founding the European-wide eCommerce company, eGS Group. Previously, he worked for merchant bankers, NM Rothschild and multi-national consulting firm, Accenture.

Anthony Seldon is an authority on contemporary British history and headmaster of one of Britain's most famous independent schools. He became the 13th Master of Wellington College in January 2006, hav-

ing been Headmaster of Brighton College since September 1997. He is also author or editor of over 25 books on contemporary history, politics and education. Anthony Seldon's books include *Churchill's Indian Summer*, which won a Best First Work Prize, *The Thatcher Effect, Major, A Political Life,* the authorised biography of the former Prime Minister, published in 1997, *Conservative Century*, published by Oxford University Press, and the standard academic history of the Conservative Party, *Blair's Britain*, 1994-2007 (with Peter Snowdon) and (November 2007) *Blair Unbound: The Biography Part II*, 2001-2007. He has been historical consultant on the memoirs of several former prime ministers and foreign secretaries.

Francis Maude is MP for Horsham. He practised at the criminal bar from 1977-85 and was a councillor for the City of Westminster from 1978-84. He was elected as Member of Parliament for North Warwickshire in 1983 until 1992 during which time he was Minister of State for Employment; Assistant Government Whip; Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs at the Department of Trade and Industry; Minister of State at Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Francis was appointed a non-executive Director of ASDA Group Plc in July 1992. He was a Director of Salomon Brothers from 1992-93; a Managing Director of Morgan Stanley & Co Ltd 1993-97. Francis was Chairman of the Government's Deregulation Task Force from 1994-97. In May 1997 Francis was elected to serve as Member of Parliament for Horsham. In June 1997, he was appointed Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Francis was Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer from June 1998 until February 2000 and from February 2000 to September 2001, he was Shadow Foreign Secretary. In May 2005, Francis returned to the Shadow Front Bench when he was appointed Chairman of the Conservative Party.

Jon E Wilson teaches history and social theory at King's College London where he is also Deputy Head of the School of Arts and Humanities. He is the author of *The Domination of Strangers*, *Modern Governance in Eastern India*, and is currently working on a book about the emotional as well as intellectual significance of the British conquest of India.

Baroness Julia Neuberger, DBE is a rabbi, social reformer and member of the House of Lords, Neuberger was Britain's second female rabbi and the first to have her own synagogue. She was also Chair of Camden and Islington Community Health Services NHS Foundation from 1992 to 1997, and Chief Executive of the King's Fund from 1997 to 2004. Baroness Neuberger was Chancellor of the University of Ulster from 1994-2000. Her book, *The Moral State We're In*, a study of morality and public policy in modern Britain was published in 2005. In 2007, she was appointed by the Prime Minister Gordon Brown as the government's champion of volunteering.

Justin Davis Smith is Chief Executive of Volunteering England and formerly Director of the Institute for Volunteering Research. He has over 20 years' experience in the volunteering movement and has advised the UK Government, the World Bank and the United Nations over the development of volunteering policy. He has been assisting the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) with the development of its 2012 volunteering strategy and is a member of the advisory committee for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Justin was a member of the Russell Commission on youth volunteering and the Commission on the Future of Volunteering, and a former chair of the Nationwide Foundation. He has written widely on volunteering and is a Visiting Professor at Birkbeck, University of London. In his earlier career Justin was political assistant to the Rt. Hon Sir James Callaghan MP. Justin's hobbies include football and cricket and he is a season ticket holder of Watford Football Club.

Paul Woolley is Director of Theos, the public theology think tank. He has a background in theology and politics and is a regular conference and media commentator. In addition to working as a Parliamentary Researcher and directing a political unit, he has had extensive public affairs experience in the charity sector. Paul's current research interests include social cohesion in a pluralist society and the role of government. Paul is engaged in post-graduate study at the University of St Andrews. He is married to Ruth and lives in Central London.

Jane Barlow is Professor of Public Health in the Early Years. She is Director of the Warwick Infant and Family Wellbeing Unit (WIFWU), which provides training and research in innovative evidence-based methods of supporting parenting during pregnancy and the early years. Jane has also researched extensively on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at preventing and treating abuse and is a strong advocate of a public health approach to child protection.

Anita Schrader McMillan is a social psychologist with 15 years experience of research and programme development involving socially excluded children and families, with a particular focus on street children, parent education and promotion of mental health. She is the former director of the Consortium for Street Children and is now a Research Fellow at the Health Sciences Research Institute at the University of Warwick and a Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics.

Rushanara Ali is an Associate Director of the Young Foundation, where she is responsible for research and international work. Before joining the Young Foundation in 2005, she worked at the Communities Directorate of the Home office, and at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; as a Research Fellow for the think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research; and as a Parliamentary Assistant. Since joining the Young Foundation, Rushanara has established the Young Foundation's research and action research programme, which focuses on contemporary life and changing needs in urban and rural communities; has initiated three new practical projects due to become separate organisations; and has led the Young Foundation's international work programme – overseeing the establishment of the social innovation exchange, which brings together a network of some 200 organisations from around the world to help build the field of social innovation. Selected co-authored publications include Systemic Innovation in Vocational Education and Training; *In and Out of Sync: The Challenge of Growing Social Innovations; Social Innovation: What it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated*; and *Cities in Transition*.

Notes

1   The Italian Agosto Bozzi argued in the 1800s that "not only vast stores of English words and colloquial expressions, but of English manners and peculiarities, the knowledge of which converted me almost into an Englishman at once" (In Granville Payson, ed, 1874, *Autobiography of A.B. Granville*, vol 1, p 273).

2   Home Office statistics: http://www.respect.gov.uk/members/article.aspx?id=9822 (accessed April 2009)

3   Interviews with people around the country, conducted in 2008 – see Buonfino Alessandra and Guglielmi Silvia, 2009. *Wishful thinking*, Demos: London, UK.

4   British Social Attitudes Survey 2009. Source: http://www.natcen.ac.uk/bsa/docs/BSA-25-Report.pdf (accessed, April 2009).

5   Office of National Statistics, May 2009, *Equalities and wellbeing*, Branch working paper on measuring societal wellbeing in the UK.

6   Carter Stephen, 1998. *Civility: Manners, morals and the etiquette of democracy*, Basic: New York, USA.

7   Chazan Pauline, 1998. *The Moral Self*, London: Routledge.

8   *George Washington's rules of civility & decent behaviour in company and conversation*, Mount Vernon: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 1992.

9   See Mark Hauser's *Moral minds: How nature designed our universal sense of right and wrong*, (Harper Collins, 2006) for an excellent current survey of the field of empirical moral study.

10   Disraeli Benjamin, 1845. *Sybil*, Bernhard Tauchnitz: Leipzig.

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12   Ikegami Eiko, 2005. *Bonds of civility: aesthetic networks and the political origins of Japanese culture*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

13   Philips Adam, 2009. *On kindness*, Hamish Hamilton.

14   Elias Norbert, 1978. *The civilising process: the history of manners*, Urizen: New York, USA.

15   Chartier Roger, 1997. *On the edge of the cliff*, John Hopkins University Press: Washington, USA.

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17   Elster Jon, 1979. *Ulysses and the sirens: Studies in rationality and irrationality*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK; and Elster Jon, 2002. Ulysses unbound: Studies in rationality, pre-commitment and constraints, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

18   Elster Jon, 2002

19   Elster Jon, 2002

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24   Goleman Daniel, 2006. *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*, Bantam Books: New York, USA.

25   Goleman Daniel, 2006: 53.

26   Blakemore Susan, den Ouden Hanneke, Choudhury Suparna, and Frith Chris, 2007. *Adolescent development of the neural circuitry for thinking about intentions Soc Cogn Affect Neurosci June* (2): 130-139.   http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1948845; also: Steinberg Laurence, 2008. A social neuroscience perspective on adolescent risk taking; *Dev Rev*. March 28 (1): 78-106; also: Why adolescents put themselves first, 2006. *New Scientist*, http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn10030-why-adolescents-put-themselves-first.html.

27   For example, Home Office, *Tackling anti-social behaviour and its causes*, www.respect.gov.uk (accessed 15 May 2009)

28   'Britain's kids: Unhappy, unloved, and out of control,' *Time Magazine* March 2008; Also, UNICEF 2007 *study on child wellbeing*.

29   Rachlinski Jeffrey, 2000. 'The Limits of Social norms' *Chicago Kent Law Review*, 74: 1537-1567.

30 For example, "Busk Meadow man banned from disturbing his neighbours with noise has been warned that he could be jailed if he does it again", press release, Aug 2008, Sheffield City Council: http://sccplugins.sheffield.gov.uk/press/news/aRelease.asp?akey=5230&Mon=01/08/2008 (accessed February 2009)

31 Mueller Dennis, 2003. *Public Choice III*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

32 Crawford Alexander, 2003. 'Contractual Governance or Deviant Behaviour', *Journal of Law and Society*, 30(4): 479-505.

33 Hwang Hyunseo, Borah Porismita, Namkoong Kang and Veenstra Aaron, 2008. *Does Civility Matter in the Blogosphere?* Presented at the annual convention of the International Communication Association Montreal, Canada, May 22-26 2008. http://www.journalism.wisc.edu/smad/papers/hwang-borah-namkoong-veenstra-2008.pdf

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36 Damasio Antonio, 2000. *The feeling of what happens*, Vintage: London, UK; Dowling John, 2007. *The Great Brain debate: Nature or nurture?* Princeton University Press: Princeton.

37 Beck Aaron, 1999. Prisoners of hate: The cognitive basis for anger, hostility and violence, Perennial: New York, USA.

38 Beck Aaron, 1999.

39 Through three experimental studies, the academics Christine Porath and Amir Erez provide an empirical test of how rudeness affects task performance and helpfulness. Different forms of rudeness (rudeness instigated by a direct authority figure, rudeness delivered by a third-party offender, and imagining a situation in which a perpetrator was rude) converged to produce the same effects. Across three studies, the academics recruited undergraduate students to take part in what they were led to believe was an investigation into personality and task performance. Porath and Erez contrived situations in their lab so that the student participants witnessed either a researcher be rude to a student for turning up late, or one student be rude to another student for taking so long over a consent form. Witnessing an act of rudeness, whether committed by a researcher or student, led the participants to solve fewer anagrams, come up with fewer uses for a brick, made them less likely to offer to participate in another study, and worsened their mood. A third study showed that the harmful effects of witnessing rudeness were greater when students were enrolled

in a collaborative group task, compared with when they were enrolled in a competitive group task where they had something to gain from the rudeness victim's ordeal. Although the harmful effects were lower in the competitive scenario, they were still present. See: Porath Christine and Erez Amir, 2007. 'Does rudeness really matter? The effect of rudeness on task performance and helpfulness' *Academy of Management Journal* 50, 1181–1197.

40   Beck Aaron, 1999.

41   Arendt Hannah, 1958. *The human condition*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, USA

42   Shame –seen by the anthropologist Mary Douglas as intimacy in the wrong place, and traditionally connected to the exposure of bodily functions or desires that a person cannot control. See for example, Douglas Mary, 1970. *Natural symbols: explorations in cosmology*. Random House: London, UK.

43   There is evidence for example that children in Sure Start centres exhibit greater independence and self-regulation, and more positive social behaviour than children living in similar areas that did not have Sure Start.

44   Thaler Richard and Sunstein Cass 2008. *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness* Yale University Press: Yale, USA.

45   The Small Kindness movement in Japan: www.kindness.jp/english/(accessed February 2009)

46   The World Kindness Movement in Singapore: www.worldkindness.org.sg (accessed February 2009)

47   The Bright Smile movement: http://www.smilekorea.org/e_sub01_01.htm (accessed February 2009)

48   Extreme Kindness Crew: www.extremekindness.com (accessed February 2009)

49   Acts against bullying: www.actagainstbullying.com (accessed February 2009)

50   The official website of the free hugs campaign: http://www.freehugscampaign.org/ (accessed February 2009)

51   Spencer Nick, 2006. *Doing God: A future for faith in the public square*, Theos: London.

52   Smeijsters Henk and Cleven Gorry, 2006. The treatment of aggression using arts therapies in forensic psychiatry: results of a qualitative inquiry. In *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 33: pp. 37–58.

53   See, for example: Kitchen Sarah, Michaelson Juliet, Wood Natasha and Peter John, 2006. *2005 Citizenship Survey: Active communities topic report*, DCLG: London, UK.

54   Kitchen Sarah et al., 2006.

55   Kitchen Sarah et al., 2006; See also Seyfang Gill, 2002. *The times of our lives: Using time banking for neighbourhood renewal*, New Economics Foundation: London, UK; and ODPM, 2005. Citizen engagement and public services: *Why neighbourhoods matter*, ODPM: London, UK.

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59   *Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment*, 2005. Northwest Regional Development Agency.

60   Sacks Jonathan, 2000. *Our nation's poverty of hope*, 8 July, speech.

61   Sacks Jonathan, 2000.

62   Evans Gary 2006. Child development and the physical environment. *Annual Review of Psychology* 57: 432-451.

63   Stewart William Frederick Roy 1970. *Children in flats: a family study*. National society for the prevention of cruelty to children: London, UK.

When people gather together to discuss what is wrong with society, the conversation invariably turns to questions of civility: whether standards of behaviour have fallen, and whether people treat each other with enough respect, kindness or decency. Questions of civility also regularly become public concerns - whether what's at issue is the behaviour of TV presenters and celebrities, revellers on a Saturday night or drunks on airplanes.

But what do we know about civility? Has it in fact improved or worsened? Can it be cultivated or promoted? Is it always a good thing? Who deserves blame or credit? This pamphlet addresses what we mean by civility and analyses whether we live in a more or less civil society; what lies behind the concept, and its history; and what can be done to cultivate a more civil society, with more respect, kindness and decency.

Alessandra Buonfino is programme leader at The Young Foundation and Geoff Mulgan is director of The Young Foundation.

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