

The Paradox of Diversity

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ABSTRACT

While there has been considerable literature that suggests that diverse groups are more capable at a variety of tasks than more homogenous ones, there has also been literature that suggests that diversity creates significant social discomfort. In light of this latter work, there have been proposals to create a broader “we” to smooth away the challenges posed by diversity. I argue that this approach is mistaken. Instead, I suggest that the benefits of diversity come about in part because of the discomfort that it creates, rather than in spite of it. If this is correct, then we must choose between two different models of society: a more rewarding but more complex diverse social environment, or a simpler, more homogenous, but less rewarding social environment.

Depending on which literature you read, social diversity is either the goose that laid the golden egg, or a major source of our social ills. Some literature link diversity to significant increases in productivity,¹ enhanced creativity,² and other clear material benefits.³ Others connect diversity to diminished community⁴ and lower happiness.⁵ One might think that each present reasons to downplay the conclusions of the other. However, that would only be the case if we were trying to make a very coarse-grained judgment about whether diversity is helpful or harmful. Happily, we can think about diversity in a more nuanced way. What I aim to show is that we can straightforwardly reconcile these two positions, and once we do so, we can better understand the political options available to us.

If we examine the literature on the harms generated by diversity, we can learn something about the mechanism behind how diversity’s social benefits come about. Indeed, I argue that some of the benefits of diversity are only possible if we accept some of the purported harms. This is important, as it suggests that a rather prominent line of reasoning—that we can gain the benefits of diversity and

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1. Giovanni Peri, *The Effect of Immigration on Productivity: Evidence from US States*, 94 REV. ECON. & STAT. 348 (2012).

2. Poppy McLeod et al., *Ethnic Diversity and Creativity in Small Groups*, 27 SMALL GROUP RES. 248, 248–64 (1996).

3. Sheen S. Levine et al., *Ethnic Diversity Deflates Price Bubbles*, 111 PROC. NAT’L. ACAD. SCI. U.S. 18,524 (2014).

4. Alberto Alesina et al., *Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions*, 114 Q.J. ECON 1234, 1234–84 (1999).

5. R.D. Putnam, *E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture*, 30 SCANDINAVIAN POL. STUD. 137, 137–74 (2007).

simply sidestep some undesirable consequences—is problematic. Creating, as Robert Putnam calls it in his 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture, a new “we,” simply will not work.⁶ Even if it works, it won’t come with diversity’s benefits.⁷ This puts pressure on several existing liberal approaches in political philosophy to deal with diversity by abstracting away from it. Instead, we are left with a choice between a more stable and potentially easier homogenous society, or a more dynamic, more difficult, and more productive diverse society. This suggests that proponents of more diverse societies need to do more to motivate people who may have perfectly good reasons for opting for a more homogenous society.

It will help to start with a working definition of diversity. In this piece, I aim to take a fairly broad understanding of diversity: the diversity that is broadly understood as *perspectival diversity*. Perspectival diversity is defined across ways of seeing the world.⁸ This may seem abstract, but it can be instantiated in familiar ways. For example, we have reason to think that men and women see features of the social world in different ways. This is due in part to the different social positions that they occupy and the different sorts of evidence that they must attend to. Likewise, different ethnic groups, religious groups, and linguistic groups can, by virtue of the differences in their social position and their experiences, find themselves carving up the world in different ways. Finally, political ideology can also be an important source of differences in worldviews.

So, a more diverse society is simply a society in which there are more, rather than fewer, differences across these dimensions. Individuals themselves are not more or less diverse—the relevant unit of assessment is a group. We can say that a given individual would increase the diversity of a particular group or do more or less than another individual to increase the diversity of that group, but such claims must always be relativized to a fixed group.

While one may contest that any one of these potential instances of diversity may be an imperfect proxy for perspectival diversity, there is in each case a reasonable literature suggesting that these groupings are predictive of some perspectival differences. It may well be the case that these differences only occur *contingently*—that is, the differences are a better measure of *different social positions* rather than some feature of one’s religion or language, gender or ethnicity—but that’s fine. Insofar as we’re interested in diversity for its influence over the societies that we find ourselves in, we have reasons to care about those contingent features of the world. Of course, in some real societies, we might find that differences in, say, ethnicity generate much less perspectival diversity than religion. And in some others, the reverse could be true. I am not concerned here with trying to articulate which dimensions represent “real” diversity. I assume it will be different in different times and places. This is one reason why I am relying on the

6. *Id.*

7. *Id.*

8. See MULDOON, SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY FOR A DIVERSE WORLD: BEYOND TOLERANCE 38–61 (2016) [hereinafter MULDOON, SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY].

more abstract account, and I am treating race, religion, language, politics, sex, and other possible dimensions as *generating mechanisms* for perspectival diversity. For my purposes in this article, I am interested in perspectival diversity itself, regardless of how it comes about.

Perhaps the most important work on the value of diversity has come from Scott Page's theoretical work. The Hong-Page theorem shows that (under certain constraints) groups of diverse problem-solvers outperform groups of homogenous problem-solvers, even when the homogenous groups are comprised of individuals of greater ability.⁹ This theorem, and related work, has spawned a large literature exploring the benefits of *cognitive diversity* when it comes to solving difficult problems. Page himself has written several books on the value of diversity, stemming from the complementarities across agents who see the world differently, or have different skillsets that they apply when problem solving.¹⁰ The basic idea is simple enough: if problem-solvers all try to solve problems the same way—even if it is the *best* way—they will all suffer from the same blind spots and limitations. There's not too much use to everyone solving a problem the same way except to catch and correct calculation errors. But for more complex problems, like predicting future events or optimizing a business strategy, too many people thinking in the same way is wasteful. Coming up with different ways of approaching a problem matters just as much as catching calculation errors. In a more diverse group, even if the individuals in the group are more likely to make mistakes than in the individuals in the homogenous group, the benefits come from those errors being less correlated with each other. When people approach a complex problem in different ways, it is more likely that they can fill in each other's blind spots. This makes the group perform better than any individual could.

There is also a growing empirical literature showing that in both lab settings and real-world settings, more diverse groups outperform homogenous groups on a number of metrics across a variety of tasks. We see these basic results even when we flesh out the meaning of "diversity" in different ways—gender, race, political, and religious diversity have all demonstrated sorts of gains. For instance, relying on National Organizations Survey data, Herring finds that racial and gender diversity within firms is associated with higher sales revenue, more customers, and greater profits.¹¹ A recent McKinsey study finds that gender-diverse firms are 15% more likely than less-diverse firms to outperform national industry median financial performance.¹² Ethnically diverse firms saw a 35% increase on

9. L. Hong & S.E. Page, *Groups of Diverse Problem Solvers Can Outperform Groups of High-Ability Problem Solvers*, 101 PROC. NAT'L ACAD. SCI. U.S.A. 16,385, 16,385–89 (2004).

10. See SCOTT E. PAGE, *THE DIFFERENCE* (2008), SCOTT E. PAGE, *DIVERSITY AND COMPLEXITY* (2010), SCOTT E. PAGE, *THE DIVERSITY BONUS* (2017).

11. Cedric Herring, *Does Diversity Pay? Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity*, 74 AM. SOC. REV. 248, 248–64 (2009).

12. Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton & Sara Prince, *Why Diversity Matters*, MCKINSEY & CO. (2015), <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters> [https://perma.cc/393C-HMAR].

the same measure. In a lab study, mock juries were more likely to engage in more deliberation, look at more case facts, and make fewer errors.¹³ Firm financial performance is improved when there is greater ethnic diversity in management. This is especially true when participative strategy making is employed as well,¹⁴ suggesting that more is gained when teams are more inclusive in their practice.¹⁵ Ethnic diversity among market participants can even deflate price bubbles in financial markets.¹⁶ Gender diversity is associated with more radical innovation on R&D teams.¹⁷ Cultural diversity was found to offer a small but significant boost to firm performance across firms of all types in London.¹⁸ And politically diverse teams of Wikipedia editors generate higher quality articles than politically homogenous teams.¹⁹ In general, we find a consistent bump in both real-world and lab performance when groups are more diverse.

These results should be not be too surprising. Economic theory depends on at least some diversity. Since David Ricardo's introduction of the concept of comparative advantage, we have had rational reasons to trade with people who are different from us, even if that means they are just *worse* than us at the same set of skills.²⁰ The standard example from Paul Samuelson is that even a lawyer who is also the best secretary in the city is made better off by hiring a secretary, as the lawyer's time is then freed up to focus on the higher-paying lawyer tasks.²¹ The logic of comparative advantage combined with the power of complementarities pushes us toward the view that more diverse groups will have much greater productive capacity. Empirical studies on group productivity bear this out, and it would be somewhat surprising if they did not. Taking this body of literature on its own, it would be difficult to come to any conclusion other than that we should do what we can to make our societies more diverse. It is as close to a free lunch as we can find.

Looking at the politics of the West, however, we see that diversity is currently being rejected at the ballot box. Donald Trump was elected on a broadly anti-

13. S.R. Sommers, *On Racial Diversity and Group Decision Making: Identifying Multiple Effects of Racial Composition on Jury Deliberation*, 90 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 597, 597–612 (2006).

14. Participative strategy making is when strategic directions are determined with a process that involves a wide variety of stakeholders within a firm.

15. Orlando C. Richard, Susan L. Kirby & Ken Chadwick, *The Impact of Racial and Gender Diversity in Management on Financial Performance: How Participative Strategy Making Features Can Unleash a Diversity Advantage*, 24 INT'L J. HUM. RESOURCES 2571 (2013).

16. Levine, *supra* note 3.

17. Christina Díaz-García, Angela González-Moreno & Francisco Jose Sáez-Martinez, *Gender Diversity Within R&D Teams: Its Impact on Radicalness of Innovation*, 15 INNOVATION 149 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.5172/impp.2013.15.2.149> [<https://perma.cc/7S7F-X4MR>].

18. Max Nathan & Neil Lee, *Cultural Diversity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship: Firm-Level Evidence from London*, 89 ECON. GEOGRAPHY 367 (2013).

19. Feng Shi et al., *The Wisdom of Polarized Crowds* (Nov. 17, 2017) (unpublished manuscript), available at <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1712.06414.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/7J67-M3ED>].

20. DAVID RICARDO, *ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION* 176, 326, 363, 484 (3d ed. 1817).

21. PAUL A. SAMUELSON & ANTHONY SCOTT, *ECONOMICS* 616 (8th ed. 1975).

immigrant, anti-cosmopolitanism platform. His voters have, on average, far more negative views of immigrants, minorities and women than did Hillary Clinton's.²² In the UK, the Brexit referendum was pushed by UKIP in large part on anti-immigration grounds. In France, the National Front ended up in a run-off election, achieving 34% of the vote, outperforming both of France's traditional mainstream parties.²³ In Austria, the Freedom Party won 51 of 183 parliamentary seats.²⁴ In Switzerland, the Swiss People's Party successfully advocated for a Constitutional amendment banning the construction of minarets.²⁵ Right-wing nationalist populism is on the rise even in countries that have significant liberal traditions, and in many instances it has been tied to a perceived "breaking point" on immigration. This is a notable political movement, and it has not been isolated to a single country. It can be found across the West.

While this political backlash against diversity has been rather heated, there is sobering literature on the costs of diversity that is also worth considering. In *Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions*, Alberto Alesina finds that the provision of public goods decreases as ethnic fractionalization increases.²⁶ This is predominately the result of white majorities being less interested in providing services to minorities in places where there are higher concentrations of minorities. However, disagreements about what goods to provide also contribute to this problem. Putnam argued that, in at least the short to medium run, increases in diversity challenge social solidarity and decrease social capital. Putnam observes a "hungering down" effect brought on by increased diversity.²⁷ People are less likely to trust their neighbors (of any race), to leave their homes, to have confidence in their government, and to participate in government or other civic organizations. In general, people are less happy and feel more socially isolated in more diverse environments.²⁸ Pairing Alesina's and Putnam's work, we find a consistent picture. Diverse societies confront sources of friction that simply are not present in homogenous ones. At the macro level, it is harder to engage in joint projects or work through the government to accomplish shared goals. At the micro level, it is harder to trust other people, harder to feel part of a larger whole, and it is simply less pleasant.

22. AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES, ANES 2016 TIME SERIES STUDY (2017), <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/36824/versions/V2> [<https://perma.cc/2YQ2-NZVP>].

23. Gregor Aisch et al., *How France Voted*, N.Y. TIMES (May 7, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/07/world/europe/france-election-results-maps.html> [<https://perma.cc/MG4R-LN4R>].

24. *Results of Austria Parliamentary Election 2017*, AUSTRIA EMBASSY WASHINGTON (Oct. 30, 2017), <http://www.austria.org/the-latest/2017/10/30/austrian-parliamentary-election-2017> [<https://perma.cc/9W55-WDV4>].

25. Nick Cumming-Bruce & Steven Erlanger, *Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 29, 2009), <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/30/world/europe/30swiss.html> [<https://perma.cc/JZ8U-CSYN>].

26. Alberto Alesina et al., *Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions*, 114 Q.J. ECON. 1234–84 (1999).

27. Robert D. Putnam, *E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century: The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture*, 30 SCANDINAVIAN POL. STUD. 137–74 (2007).

28. *Id.*

Taking a step back, we see that diverse groups can be more productive, but coordination is harder, and individuals like it less. These two bodies of literature are not incompatible. After all, they are talking about different things. Diversity might increase productivity, innovation, and profits, but it may inflict very real social costs in the process. Indeed, Putnam clearly *laments* this state of affairs. He approvingly cites studies pointing to the increase of innovation brought on by more diversity, but points out that this drives down social capital in ways that he finds to be civically harmful.²⁹

So, what should we do in light of these combined findings? Putnam's preferred answer is rather similar to what we find in the public reason literature, which makes it worth considering at some length.³⁰ He suggests that we need to find a new "we"—some new way of characterizing our social (or political) group such that we all are members on equal footing. I will argue that this approach is problematic, but let us first explore why it is appealing.

Building a new "we" holds a great deal of appeal. Putnam wants us to find a way to overcome ethnic obstacles to building up what he calls "bonding capital." Bonding capital is social capital that is built amongst people who are similar in some way.³¹ Putnam's work has, in a variety of settings, demonstrated how valuable bonding capital can be. Bonding capital is readily found in places with high levels of ethnic homogeneity. It is easy to see why this is—more homogenous environments have more people who are similar to each other, and social ties are easier to generate when social distance is shorter. Bonding capital makes it easier to have close neighbors and trust in strangers. What Putnam proposes, then, is an assimilationist approach to dealing with the challenges brought on by diversity. Irish Americans and Italian Americans were once seen as relevantly distinct groups, separate from other "white" groups in the United States. Now they are both just seen as white. We could similarly integrate others into a broader coalition of Americans. After all, as we defined diversity above, the various proxies we considered for perspectival diversity work only as contingent facts—they are placeholders for particular social positions, but these positions are just things that we have socially constructed. Putnam suggests that we just change those social constructions such that we would eliminate the contingent facts that generated the perspectival diversity.³²

As Putnam notes, this is part of the traditional American ideal. "E pluribus unum" is meant to convey that despite being different, we speak with one voice, or become one people. Then-Senator Obama's speech to the Democratic National Committee in 2004 offered the same sort of ideal: "Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America; there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and

29. *Id.*

30. *See generally* JOHN RAWLS, *POLITICAL LIBERALISM* (1st ed. 1993).

31. PUTNAM, *supra* note 27.

32. *Id.*

Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America."³³ President Obama was speaking to the idea that, despite relatively shallow differences, there are deep and valuable common bonds that unite us. Our participation in the American project is meant to forge these bonds. Both President Obama and Putnam suggest that, if we embrace these common bonds, we can forge the common "we" that we need to overcome the challenges of diversity. There is more that makes us alike than makes us different, and once we realize that, our differences will not be insurmountable.³⁴

E pluribus unum is not only found in the sociology of American politics. There is also an important philosophical tradition that speaks to this idea. As best as I can trace the idea, the notion of e pluribus unum is found first in Hobbes. In chapter 17 of the *Leviathan*, he notes:

The only way to erect such a common power . . . and thereby to secure them in such sort as that by their own industry and by the fruits of the earth they may nourish themselves and live contentedly, is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that they may reduce all their wills, by a plurality of voices, unto one will . . . and therein to submit their wills, everyone to his will, and their judgments to his judgment. This is more than consent, or concord . . . This is done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH . . . This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather to speak more reverently, of that mortal god to which we owe . . . our peace and defense."³⁵

For Hobbes, the notion of e pluribus unum consists of the citizens submitting their wills to the government—the mortal god to which they owe their peace and defense. Of course, this is also in the context of trying to solve the problem of diversity. Hobbes found the problem of diverse interests amongst relative equals so severe that he thought it necessary to institute an absolute monarch who reduced their many voices to a single voice. This is not quite the friendly picture offered by Putnam or President Obama, but it is still an important effort at developing a mechanism for reducing the costs of diversity. Hobbes does not suggest we execute everyone different from us—he instead suggested that we demand that they submit their will to the sovereign's. Thus, diversity is dealt with by eliminating any ways in which it could politically matter. Once there is the single voice of the sovereign, there is no more conflict amongst diverse citizens.

Rousseau offered a somewhat friendlier take on this same idea with his conception of the General Will.³⁶ Rousseau introduced the idea of *reasoning as a citizen*—instead of each of us considering our diverse and conflicting private

33. *Transcript: Illinois Senate Candidate Barack Obama*, WASH. POST (July 27, 2004), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html> [<https://perma.cc/G535-3JF2>].

34. PUTNAM, *supra* note 27.

35. THOMAS HOBBS, *LEVIATHAN* 81 (Renaissance Books 2013) (1651).

36. See JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, *THE SOCIAL CONTRACT* 22–32 (J.M. Dent and Sons 1923) (1762).

interests, the intersection of which Rousseau called the “will of all,” we instead consider what we need in virtue of being citizens such that we can maintain proper relations with other citizens and the state. Once formed, the General Will does not make errors, and is the relevant guide to our actions. The General Will guides our politics for the simple reason that it *is* our politics—it defines the rules that citizens have come to see as the appropriate way of allowing them to function as a political unit. Once again, we get rid of our diversity by supposing that there is a single political conception that will speak with a single voice. Our diversity is simply assumed away—either it is fully captured by the Will of All, which is not used for any political consideration, or the diverse views that disagree with the General Will are mistaken. This offers us a way to deal with diversity, but not in a way that is remotely *responsive* to diversity. It is hard to see how diversity could be a benefit or a burden in this kind of approach, since it’s just eliminated from consideration.

Rawls offered a framework that is in many ways the culmination of this kind of tradition. This is done in two ways. First, he relies on his veil of ignorance to allow us to engage in reasoning where we do not know anything about ourselves beyond our own agency. This creates a moral decision context that can’t possibly include the kinds of conflicts generated by a diverse society. While we might be able to reason about issues that arise due to a pluralistic society, we have no resources to work to defend “our” side. We can only see the structure of the situation and consider what we think would be most fair to all parties. Second, Rawls’ public reason project borrows liberally from the Rousseauvian conception of reasoning as citizen. On this account, we focus only on those reasons shared by all reasonable comprehensive moral doctrines. We are asked to conceive of ourselves as citizens and reason from that vantage point about what rules we ought to live by.

What we can notice in all of these accounts is that we solve the challenges posed by diversity by somehow sidestepping them. We eliminate our diversity through abstraction, by turning our wills over to a single will, or by reconceiving ourselves as primarily holding a different social role than we often take ourselves to hold as the primary way of understanding ourselves. This broad family of proposals aims to at least deliver the appearance of homogeneity, or at least creates a plausible view on which we can be understood to be the same. The benefits of this approach are obvious—diverse people conceive of themselves as homogenous and thus give us the best of both worlds: a diverse population that acts like a homogenous one.

In other work,³⁷ I have criticized this basic approach, generally by arguing it is impossible to drive diversity out of the picture. Rather than rehash those arguments here, I want to offer a different reason to reject this approach that can help

37. See MULDOON, SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY, *supra* note 8; Ryan Muldoon, *Exploring Tradeoffs in Accommodating Moral Diversity*, 147 PHIL. STUD. 1871 (2017); Ryan Muldoon, *Expanding the Justificatory Framework of Mill’s Experiments in Living*, 27 UTILITAS 179 (2015) [hereinafter Muldoon, *Mill’s Experiments in Living*]; Ryan Muldoon et al., *Disagreement Behind the Veil of Ignorance*, 170 PHIL. STUD. 377 (2014).

reframe our discussion about the costs and benefits of diversity. In particular, I want to suggest that the benefits of diversity in the form of increased production, problem-solving, and other material gains are not solely captured by the standard complementarity story suggested above. While complementarities do drive real gains from trade, political philosophy literature has ignored a second component: the discomforts caused by diversity are part of what explain diversity's benefits.

Some evidence for this is seen in the contemporary empirical literature on diversity's productive benefits. Diverse groups, on average, perform better than homogenous groups, but at the cost of social cohesion, individual happiness, and sometimes with the belief that the diverse group did worse. These results are usually interpreted as the unfortunate side effects of diversity, but I think we can understand them instead as one of the mechanisms that drive the benefits. Individuals in diverse groups have less in common with each other, and like each other less. This importantly shifts the epistemic stance they take as new ideas, arguments, and evidence are presented by those that are different to them. They are a bit more likely to be critical of those ideas, and a bit more likely to argue or demand more evidence, or otherwise challenge their interlocutors. This process is less pleasant than what happens in a more homogenous group—amongst like-minded people, we are more likely to agree with someone's idea, and feel like it is a good one, and potentially what we should settle on. This sort of agreement feels better. We like what our peers have to say because they are close to what we would say. So, it is easier for us to feel like the group is doing a good job—after all, all the ideas we hear seem like good ones—even though the group is likely doing worse. Homogenous groups are more subject to groupthink, more subject to belief polarization, and less subject to challenge and debate.³⁸ What makes us *like* to be in homogenous groups is what makes them underperform while simultaneously feeling successful. What makes us *dislike* being in diverse groups is what makes them over-perform while simultaneously feeling like a failure. Lack of initial consensus is valuable. Lack of comfort is valuable.

In this way, homogenous groups, and their purported benefits, can be seen in a new light. Homogenous groups are pleasant *when people agree*. People like homogeneity because interactions are easier and more predictable, and conversations are more pleasant because they are amongst people who share the same views. This has some obvious appeal. However, it also means that people in such an environment are going to have a much harder time deviating in their views or behavior. It would be far more noticeable in such an environment, and likely be one of the few sources of friction. It makes it easier for everyone else to push back on the deviant. Indeed, since homogenous groups are more likely to be polarized and extreme in the views on which they agree, any deviant would be more aggressively punished. As Kuran has suggested, this provides a strong

38. There is considerable literature on this topic, but one important early paper is Cass R. Sunstein, *The Law of Group Polarization* (Coase-Sandor Working Paper Series Law & Econ., Working Paper No. 91, 1999).

incentive for people to publicly falsify their private beliefs and preferences so they don't rock the boat.³⁹ Homogenous societies may be pleasant for those who agree with each other and are similar to each other, but they can be hell for those who don't or aren't.

Certainly, this view has some limits. If we ramp diversity up too high, or look at more complex cases, we might find that diversity is just straightforwardly harmful. However, I argue that the boundaries on levels of beneficial diversity are quite wide, and that there are real, identifiable costs to being too homogenous. To make this a bit more plausible, let's consider some longer-run historical accounts that help us see the outlines of the boundary conditions.

Eric Chaney's "The Rise and Fall of Islamic Science" examines the explosion of scientific, mathematical, and philosophical production of the caliphate centered around Baghdad early in the second millennium, along with its rather large collapse.⁴⁰ The Islamic world was for a long time the intellectual center of the world, but then somehow ended up a relative intellectual backwater compared to Europe. He argues that a core driver of this knowledge production and decline was tied to the state's interest in convincing non-Muslims to convert to Islam.⁴¹ There were three basic tools for this: first, Islam has a ratchet effect—one is allowed to convert in, but not out.⁴² Second, the state instituted a tax for non-Muslims within the caliphate.⁴³ Third, and most interestingly, there was a huge state effort to come up with demonstrations of Islam's superiority.⁴⁴ Since relying on the Quran is not convincing to a non-Muslim person, the state invested in logic, math, and philosophy to generate arguments on neutral grounds. Likewise, scientific investments were made to demonstrate the superiority of the Islamic world. This strategy was, by Chaney's account, rather successful.⁴⁵ However, once the population of the caliphate had more or less entirely converted to Islam, there was no reason to keep up this kind of investment. Intellectual efforts instead turned inward, working on Quranic interpretation, or scientific investments in understanding of the described miracles, rather than broader phenomena. Competition between different religions drove investment up. Once that competition was no longer present, the investment ended.

We see a similar story in China's early history. China was in some sense simply too successful too quickly—once there was Han control of an enormous landmass without any obvious new opportunities for useful expansion, there was a considerable atrophy of the intellectual investment of the state. Focus was instead

39. TIMUR KURAN, PRIVATE TRUTHS, PUBLIC LIE: THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF PREFERENCE FALSIFICATION 3–8 (1997).

40. See generally Eric Chaney, Religion and the Rise and Fall of Islamic Science (May 2016) (unpublished manuscript), <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/chaney/files/paper.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/2LJN-JKQH>].

41. *Id.* at 9–11.

42. *Id.* at 10 n.33.

43. *Id.* at 9.

44. *Id.* at 10–13.

45. *Id.* at 13.

turned to cementing a reasonably rigid hierarchy for internal political stability. As with the Islamic world, there was a decrease in the knowledge base over time, despite an initially large head start over European nations. Europe's eventual success was not a matter of anything inherent about Europeans, but rather that Europe was composed of a number of small political units that were roughly balanced in their ability to attack one another. This drove innovation, and as there were more prominent internal divisions brought on by events such as the Reformation, there were institutions and concepts developed to help manage that diversity. Europe succeeded in part owing to its diversity and the social frictions that this generates.

Of course, one does not want to make too much of a few examples, but this is certainly suggestive evidence that, when paired with micro-level details of lab experiments, help to paint a picture of diversity helping to generate better institutions because of social frictions, and better productivity because of the push of inter-group competition. This is contrasted to the view of a well-ordered society, or a new "we", where we get better institutions or more productivity because of a richer set of social bonds that helps to compel us to act in accordance with our shared values.

What unites these (very) quick histories and the more recent studies looking at firms and teams is that diversity creates benefits not simply due to a complementarities account, but for mechanistic reasons. Diversity generates frictions between members of society. It increases skepticism, heightens our standards of evidence, and promotes competition and debate. This has advantages, as it creates incentives for improved performance and more production. Complementarities of course help with production, but the friction provides the impetus to take advantage of those complementarities. Diversity isn't beneficial in spite of the frictions it creates; it is beneficial because of them.

There are two basic social options that we can choose between. One, we can opt for a more homogenous society, but this gives up on the idea that we might be able to benefit from diversity. This sort of society makes life easier for any given conforming individual, but at the expense of economic and non-economic productivity, innovation, and growth. This is kind of society is more likely to have strong bonding capital but is less likely to allow individuals a full range of possible life plans. As Mill notes in *On Liberty*, China was an exemplar of this, and he feared that Victorian norms would cause England to follow the same path.⁴⁶ The second sort of position is the diversity-forward view. This society is harder for any given individual, as there is more conflict and misunderstanding and less in the way of trust and shared values. But it is also more innovative, more creative, more likely to have a bigger economic engine, and more prone to have institutions that foster broader individual autonomy.

46. JOHN STUART MILL, *ON LIBERTY* 103–39 (1859).

It is important to note that these two sorts of positions are both entirely reasonable in the sense that we can readily imagine people choosing either in good faith, depending on their background sensibilities. There are plenty of people who would just like to keep their communities as they are, raise their children the way that they themselves were raised, and surround themselves with people whose values they share. Burkean conservatism is not too far from this kind of a position.⁴⁷ In the same way, there are plenty of people who would rather be in a more dynamic kind of society, with a more wide-open debate about what the good life entails, and with opportunities to encounter all kinds of people. Mill,⁴⁸ Hayek,⁴⁹ Popper,⁵⁰ Gaus,⁵¹ myself⁵² and others have all advocated for social arrangements that are more centered around promoting a dynamic diverse society rather than fixing on a single ideal.

Indeed, this sort of choice looks a lot like a Stag Hunt—we have a *payoff dominant* coordination equilibrium,⁵³ but we also have a *risk-dominant* equilibrium. In a Stag Hunt, two hunters independently choose whether to try and jointly hunt a Stag, or individually hunt Hare. Choosing to hunt Stag requires the cooperation of the other, and is therefore risky but comes with a larger reward if successful. Choosing to hunt Hare has no risk, but comes with a smaller reward. It is fair to say that the those who pursue a more diverse society (modeled here as hunting Stag) are taking on more risks—they have to hope that they successfully coordinate with others, and they have to work to manage misunderstandings. They are, however, rewarded for taking on this risk in the form of more overall wealth. The Hare hunters in this model are not bad people, they are just risk averse. But they pay for their risk aversion with smaller payoffs.

While I happen to prefer the Stag solution to this game in which we take on the potentially risky cooperation, I do not think the Hare solution is unjust (assuming the Hare hunting population really is homogenous). Hare hunters may just be risk-averse. The two solutions represent different models of how societies can be organized, and people can have reasonable disagreements about what kind of society they would like to live in. For instance, I take no umbrage with Amish communities who want to preserve their way of life and feel that the only way to do so is to maintain their own communities. Those that want to leave those communities can do so. Forcing Amish people to move to Manhattan would be obviously

47. See EDMUND BURKE, REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE (1790).

48. See generally MILL, *supra* note 46.

49. See generally F.A. Hayek, *Competition as a Discovery Procedure*, 5 Q.L.J. OF AUSTRIAN ECON. 9 (Marcellus S. Snow, trans. 2002) (1968); F.A. Hayek, *The Use of Knowledge in Society*, 35 AM. ECON. REV. 519 (1945).

50. See generally KARL POPPER, THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES (1945).

51. See generally GERALD GAUS, THE TYRANNY OF THE IDEAL (2016); GERALD GAUS, THE ORDER OF PUBLIC REASON (2010).

52. See generally MULDOON, SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY, *supra* note 8; Muldoon, *Mill's Experiments in Living*, *supra* note 37.

53. See generally BRIAN SKYRMS, THE STAG HUNT AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE (2004).

unjust—they would be forced to live a kind of life that they have rejected. In a less extreme example, plenty of (typically more rural) Americans and British people are deeply concerned that the way of life that they were raised in is going away, and will not be available for their children, and diversity is to blame for that.⁵⁴ In part, they are right. Just as I do not want them to be able to force me to live in the kind of community that they would prefer, I do not want to make them live in a diverse and dynamic society if they prefer a homogenous, stable one.

I do not think that the appropriate political response to this Stag Hunt game is to *require* the Stag solution. But our politics, and our political philosophy, can and should devote more attention to finding ways of *enabling* it. At the very least, this task of enabling this more diverse social arrangement fuels an important research project. For example: what can we do to help ensure that the frictions generated from diversity remain grit in the gears or creative frictions, and not full-blown conflicts? We have seen plenty of firm-level evidence that diversity can work without generating unmanageable conflicts, but there is much more to learn about here.

But what can we offer individuals to help them better navigate these much more complex environments? Some people may simply be ill-equipped to deal with a great deal of diversity. Indeed, one of the complaints about globalization and cosmopolitanism in actual political discussion is that it fosters a kind of global elite that has the skills necessary to navigate that environment, while leaving everyone else behind.⁵⁵ Mill suggests that developing autonomy is part of the answer,⁵⁶ and I find this suggestion compelling, but there is much more work to be done in fleshing out that story. Mill himself was skeptical that the average individual would end up all that autonomous.⁵⁷ The challenge, then, is discovering what can be done such that the average person would rather be in the more diverse environment.

Finally, we might think that the Stag-Stag equilibrium relies on significant upfront costs for (potential) downstream benefits. After all, a more diverse environment is one in which coordination is more challenging. There is much more room for error and misunderstanding, and there are real differences to navigate. Joining a more diverse society means that one is required to deal with these challenges whether or not one gets any benefits. But while there are clear social benefits to a more diverse society, for most individuals, the benefits may come a bit later. Higher returns and more cultural and market options are features of more

54. For a careful look at this in the American context, see ROBERT WUTHNOW'S *THE LEFT BEHIND: DECLINE AND RAGE IN RURAL AMERICA* (2018).

55. See, e.g., Robert J. Shiller's, *The New Cosmopolitans*, PROJECT SYNDICATE (Dec. 15, 2016), <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-new-cosmopolitans> [<https://perma.cc/7G9Z-ETDU>] or Chrystia Freeland, *The Rise of the New Global Elite*, ATLANTIC (Jan.–Feb. 2011), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/the-rise-of-the-new-global-elite/308343/> [<https://perma.cc/UY9X-XKV8>].

56. See MILL, *supra* note 46, at 136–39.

57. See *id.* at 110–12.

diverse environments, but it may take some time before those benefits emerge. Just as we have developed institutional tools to assist with income smoothing to enable people to make upfront financial sacrifices for an eventual benefit, we may want to consider whether there is a socio-cultural parallel. It is easier to convince people to be in more diverse environments when the benefits are more readily apparent from the start.

Our politics, at least if one squints enough, appear to be aligning around this choice between equilibria. There is a coalition (on both the left and the right) who are interested in more robustly shared values and stable, more homogenous communities, even if that comes at some economic penalty. Likewise, there is a coalition that favors more immigration, more trade, more dynamism, and more diversity, even if it comes at a cost of some tradition and social cohesion. It is worth thinking more carefully about what our options are. I have argued that we have two: (1) the Hare-Hare option of homogeneity; and (2) the Stag-Stag option of diversity. The new “we” proposal from Putnam, in its attempt to reconstruct a homogenous society out of a diverse one, is unlikely to succeed. By trying to make diversity more palatable, it reduces the benefits one gets from diversity. Instead, if we choose diversity, we are choosing a harder, more complex society that has more sources of social friction. So insofar as we believe diverse communities to be better ones, we need to find mechanisms to help guide ourselves towards an embrace of diversity without being naïve about reasons for why many would not choose it.