

## The Rich Are Opening Their Doors

### Time for Some Clarity

Notwithstanding a financial crash, over the last twenty years the rich (and the well-off) have got richer and the gulf between the haves and the have-nots has widened. At the same time, they have opened up their lives as never before. We feel this must be having an impact on social cohesion.

#### **The Delivery Driver**

A few months ago, I talked to a delivery driver about his job. Apart from the monotony, traffic and time pressures, he talked about the people he was delivering to. For him it was an eye-opener what he was delivering (it may be in plain packaging, but they know) and the sheer volume of it. So much so he could describe in detail the privileged lives of his recipients. He was shocked by the evident disparity with the life he and his family lead. There are more than 4 million vans on the road in the UK and it is increasing rapidly. Since that conversation I have become the scourge of delivery drivers and when they can spare a minute, they tell similar stories.

#### **Remember Going Shopping**

In the old days people went to shops and took their stuff home discreetly in the boot of the Rover. Of course, people came to the houses of the better-off to clean, build and repair things, but the relationship was more intimate and the gulf smaller.

Nowadays everything is being delivered relentlessly and impersonally, including your groceries, putting consumption on full view. In the middle-class area where I live, the days before Christmas become a traffic jam of vans delivering; it could be described as obscene to see the level of consumption on display.

#### **Let's Show Everyone What We Bought**

At the same time the 'haves' decided to share their lives more overtly on social media, painting a sugar-coated lifestyle for the rest to gawp at. This couldn't be described as subtle and could be judged unwise.

## Looking Over the Wall

The politics of envy and greed is a murky one. You could argue this is simply a modern e-commerce driven society becoming more open and sharing success and aspiration. We're not sure it is that simple or healthy. From what we see the divisions, frustrations and dissatisfactions in the UK were laid bare in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

We think it's more than that however; there is despair and bitterness felt by a significant section of the population, that they are trapped and aspiration is pointless. You have to wonder whether the overt display of wealth by a large section of the population is contributing to this and augurs well for the future cohesion of our society.

The obvious risk for the well-off is that having opened their doors the 'hordes' might be prompted to rush in.

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