

Living with the cuts: Policy, politics and everyday lives

Friday 30th May 2014, 9.30-17.30

Auditorium, Conference Centre, British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB

Abstracts and biographical notes

9.30-10.00: Tea and coffee; registration; introduction

10.00-11.30: **Panel 1: Policies, stories and realities of recession living.**

Child well-being: How are children in the UK faring?

Anita Tiessen, UNICEF UK

UNICEF's 2007 comparative child well being report caused a political storm by ranking the UK bottom of the international league tables and later this year UNICEF will release its first comparisons about the impact of austerity and policy responses on children's well being. In this presentation, I will set out the concepts of child well being at the heart of the Report Card series, and outline the well being story told by these reports from 2007 to the present. And while internationally comparative data inevitably lags behind today's reality, I will show through UNICEF and other data that in the UK and throughout developed countries the economic crisis and austerity responses are leading to a dramatic deterioration in child well being.

Anita Tiessen is Deputy Executive Director at UNICEF UK, responsible for the organisation's public affairs, programmes and communications work. She leads on the organisation's efforts to embed children's rights in the UK, which ranges from work to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in law and policy through to rights based programmes in communities, schools and health settings. She has led several successful campaigns on child exploitation, HIV and AIDS, and led UNICEF's participation in the inter-agency campaign on food and hunger issues in the run up to the UK hosted G8 meeting in 2013.

Narratives of negotiating are not enough: Children, families and consumption in straitened circumstances.

Ann Phoenix, NOVELLA, TCRU, IoE

The question of what it means to 'live with the cuts' very much depends on the context within the cuts are experienced. As children in the global north and in affluent families in the south is increasingly constituted through the provision of consumer goods, so children whose families are subjected to cuts have to negotiate contradictions that exclude them from normative constructions of childhood. This paper considers different ways in which children and families actively negotiate these contradictions, but are subject to socioeconomic constraints, ranging from youth cultures to government policies.

Ann Phoenix is a professor at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. Her research is mainly about social identities and the ways in which psychological experiences and social processes are linked. Processes of intersectionality and narrative analysis in relation to racialisation, gender and social class are central to her research, which includes work on racialised and gendered identities; consumption, mixed parentage; young people and their parents; the transition to motherhood; serial migration and language brokering. She co-directed the Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre, funded by the DfE and is the Principal Investigator on Narratives of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches (NOVELLA), a National Centre for Research Methods research node, funded by the ESRC.

'I'm beyond caring'. The failure in social systems to support staff and the patients they care for: A response to the Francis report.

Marcus Evans, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

The Francis Report outlined the way a group of staff had systemically become detached, cruel, and disengaged from their responsibilities. The report highlighted the lack of compassion from nursing staff for their patients. In this presentation I will describe a fragmented management system that fails to authorise and support clinical staff. The target culture and NHS Trusts anxieties about survival has created a top down management system that pushes

anxieties about survival down the hierarchy into front line clinical staff. This persecutory environment can undermine the thoughtful relationship between management and clinical staff necessary for good clinical care to thrive

Marcus Evans is Associate Clinical Director of Complex Needs, Consultant Adult Psychotherapist and a Registered Mental Health Nurse, at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. He has published widely on psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and on the role of psychoanalysis in mental health services.

Discussant: Janet Boddy, NOVELLA and Sussex University

Janet Boddy is Co-Director of the interdisciplinary Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth at the University of Sussex CIRCY (www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/circy). Her research is concerned with family lives and with services for children and families, in the UK and internationally. Her recent research on family services includes Beyond Contact, a four-country European study of work with families of children placed away from home (www.nuffieldfoundation.org/), and research on the health needs of families involved with intensive support services (for the UK Department of Health). She leads a study within the ESRC's National Centre for Research Methods node NOVELLA (Narratives Of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches, www.novella.ac.uk), using a multi-method narrative approach understand Family Lives and the Environment in India and the UK. Her recent publications from her NOVELLA research include a chapter in *Disclosures of health and illness (Routledge 2014)* on disclosure in narratives of everyday family life, and two methodological working papers for the National Centre for Research Methods, on ethics in secondary analysis (<http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3301/>), and on combining narrative and thematic approaches to secondary analysis (<http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3269/>).

Chair: Rebecca O'Connell, NOVELLA, IoE

Rebecca O'Connell is a Senior Research Officer at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, UK. She is a social anthropologist whose research interests focus on the intersection of care and work, particularly foodwork and childcare. She is currently Principal Investigator on two studies: 'Families and Food in Hard Times', a subproject of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods 'Novella' node, which is based at the Institute of Education and 'Families and Food Poverty in three European Countries', a five-year project funded by the European Research Council (Starting Grants, 2013). She is also co-convenor of the British Sociological Association Food Study Group

11.30-11.45: Tea and coffee

11.45-1.15: **Panel 2: Inequality, poverty and division.**

Class divisions in contemporary Britain: insights from the BBC's Great British Class Survey.
Mike Savage, LSE

This paper will argue for the need to place the issue of social deprivation and disadvantage within the context of growing social polarisation. Drawing on research from the Great British Class Survey, and the National Child Development Study I will argue that the growing role of elite classes is central to the generation of inequality. I will also argue that the disadvantaged are not usefully understood as part of a deprived 'underclass' and will suggest that the concept of precariat is a better tool to render their situation.

Mike Savage is the Martin White Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, where he is also Head of Department. He has previously been Professor at the University of Manchester (where he directed the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, CRESC) and at the University of York. He has explored the cultural aspects of inequality in a number of recent publications including 'Culture, class, distinction' (co-authored, 2009) and 'Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: the politics of method' (2010).

Insecurity, poverty and inequality - a temporary blip or here to stay?
Economics Foundation

Faiza Shaheen, New

The Great Recession followed by a prolonged period of economic stagnation and austerity have undoubtedly caused more insecurity, poverty and inequality. However, it is wrong to think that as economic growth returns and austerity

measures wane these trends will reverse. The root drivers of poverty and inequality, which lie in the labour market, financial and welfare systems, were growing in force even before the financial crash and have been further fuelled by the economic and social policies employed post 2008. Without a sea-change in our approach high and growing levels of poverty and inequality will become a permanent feature of our society.

Dr Faiza Shaheen is a Senior Researcher in the Economic Inequality team at the New Economic Foundation. Faiza co-ordinates NEF's work on economic inequality and conducts research on why inequality matters, the factors that have caused economic divides to grow and the policies that will help reverse trends and create greater equality. Faiza is particularly involved in NEF's work on labour markets and has published a range of reports on job quality, regional employment trends, migration and youth unemployment. Prior to working at NEF Faiza worked as an Analyst for Centre for the Cities where she led work on urban labour market policy and research. Faiza holds a PhD and MSc from the University of Manchester and a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from St John's College, Oxford University.

Living wage campaigns

of East London

Tim Hall, University

In this paper I look at what is innovative politically and organisationally about living wage campaigns. The living wage campaign was launched in the UK in 2002 by London Citizens. The campaign itself was based on a model developed in Baltimore in the US in the early 1990s. Since then it has been taken up by trade unions, political parties and a range of civic engagement groups. Drawing on my own experience as an organiser in east London and research conducted with Ana Lopes (UWE), I consider how this affects our understanding of political mobilisation and its significance for trade unions and 'left' politics more generally.

Tim Hall's main areas of interest are in social movements, political philosophy, and community organising. He currently undertakes research and teaches on justice, rights, ethics and the politics of work. He is actively engaged with local community organisations such as London Citizens and is involved in both campaigning and in capacity building through training on leadership and community organizing. He is currently active in London Citizens Living Wage and Just Money campaigns and is project manager for Enhancing Financial Awareness – a university funded project designed to improve financial skills amongst students at the university and local schools. Forthcoming publications include (with Alice Sampson) 'Paying through the nose: the use of high cost credit by students at the University of East London', *Social Policy & Society* and (with Dr Ana C. Lopes) 'Cleaning up: The Living Wage Campaign at UEL', *Journal of Industrial Relations*.

Discussant: Nira Yuval-Davis, Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, UEL

Nira Yuval-Davis is the Director of the [Research Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging \(CMRB\)](#) at the University of East London. She has been the President of the Research Committee 05 (on Racism, Nationalism and Ethnic Relations) of the International Sociological Association, a founder member of Women Against Fundamentalism and the international research network of Women In Militarized Conflict Zones. She has been a member of the Sociology panel of the UK 2008 RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) and is currently on the 2014 REF (Research Excellence Framework) Sociology panel. Currently she is a partner in a major EU research project on 'Borderscapes', leading an international team which is examining everyday bordering in metropolitan cities and different European border zones from an intersectional situated gaze perspective. Among her written and edited books are *Woman-Nation-State*, 1989, *Racialized Boundaries*, 1992, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, 1995, *Gender and Nation*, 1997, *Warning Signs of Fundamentalisms*, 2004, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*, 2011.

Chair: Gavin Poynter, London East Research Institute, UEL

Professor Gavin Poynter has widely published on 'London 2012', the economics of the service industries, and urban regeneration. He has completed several studies on the East London region, including for the OECD/DCLG, GLA, and local boroughs. In 2009, he published (with I. MacRury) *Olympic cities* (Ashgate). His 'From Beijing to Bow Bells' was published in Portuguese by the Ministerio do Esporte, Brazil as part of that government's analysis of major sporting events and their socio-economic legacies. He co-authored 'A lasting legacy?', a report for the GLA (2007) on 'London 2012' and has recently completed a new publication (with MacRury and A. Calcutt) that focuses upon London's economy in the wake of the credit crunch and the global economic recession – *London after Recession – a fictitious capital?* (Ashgate, 2014).

1.15-2.15: Lunch; tea and coffee

2.15-3.45: **Panel 3: Everyday lives and the cuts.**

Living in areas of disadvantage in an age of austerity: what can we learn from those who use food banks?

Angie Voela, Myrto Tsilimpounidis and Alice Sampson, UEL (Centre for Social Justice and Change and Psychosocial Studies Research Group)

Whilst public debates about the rise of food banks has centred on their use by 'scroungers' and 'cheats' these accusations masque some disturbing everyday realities for many hungry people who are living in disadvantaged areas of East London and turning to food banks through no fault of their own. Many are living on a 'knife edge', a delay in benefit payments means that there is no money to buy food; others have longer term problems, as a result of cuts in benefits and 'hard working families' on low incomes, rent and bills cannot be paid; and, there are signs that the welfare state is being dismantled, that we are no longer a caring and compassionate society – users of food banks include people who have long term illnesses, survivors of domestic violence, the homeless and unemployed.

Angie Voela is a senior lecturer in Psychosocial Studies, UEL. She has published on aspects of contemporary identity, gender and culture. She is currently working on the notion of the charitable subject and feminist and psychoanalytic approaches to neoliberal subjectivities.

Myrto Tsilimpounidi is a social researcher and photographer; a post-doctoral fellow at the University of East London and the co-director of Ministry of Untold Stories. Her research focuses on the interface between urbanism, culture, and innovative methodologies. Her current projects focus on street politics, landscapes of belonging, and the new aesthetics of crisis in Southern Europe.

Alice Sampson is a criminologist and community researcher. She is co-director of the Centre for Social Justice and Change, School of Social Sciences, UEL, and her current research includes researching with young people living in violence-prone areas and those living in stressed low-income communities and assessing the effects of government policies on extremism, particularly for women.

Living with HIV: Precarity and para-liberalism
Corinne Squire, NOVELLA and CNR

Drawing on a study conducted in 2011 with people living with HIV in the UK, this presentation examines the effects of medical and social service cuts and marketization on people's stories of their day-to-day lives; the precarity and sequestering of such HIV positive lives in this context; people's accounts of resistance and resourcefulness; and many participants' tangential, para-liberal relations with medical and social services.

Corinne Squire is professor of social sciences and co-director of the Centre for Narrative Research at UEL and a partner in the NOVELLA research methods node. Her research interests are in HIV and citizenship, popular culture and subjectivities, and narrative theory and methods. Among her publications are *Living with HIV and ARV s: Three-letter lives* (Palgrave, 2013) and *Doing narrative research* (edited with Andrews and Tamboukou, Sage, 2013).

Austerity, social media and mental health communities
Ian Tucker, UEL (CNR and Psychology and Social Change Research Group)

Mental health communities are feeling the full extent of current austerity measures due to the redistribution of social care services and significant closure of physical community spaces. This results in less provision of 'real world' peer-support initiatives that are known to enhance a greater sense of life satisfaction, social inclusion and belonging (Hodges, 2007). Mental health communities are consequently subject to radical transformation, with digital media increasingly recruited to 'fill the gaps' left by reductions in physical community spaces and the support services that can occur within them.

Ian Tucker leads the Psychology and Social Change Research Group at UEL. He is currently PI on an EPSRC Communities & Culture Network+ funded project exploring the impact of digital technologies on mental health communities in a culture of austerity. His research interests span digital media, space, community mental health, and affect.

Austerity media, 'poverty porn', and welfare reform

Tracey Jensen, UEL

Accompanying the present austerity regime has been an explosion of media representations (and misrepresentations) which present those at the bottom of the labour market as responsible for their own poverty. What has become known as 'poverty porn' TV plays a significant part in procuring public consent for austerity economics. This short talk will reflect upon the fast media production of poverty porn and how the figures of failure, waste, excess and indiscipline produced by it are held up as evidence of a bloated welfare state. It will also examine forms of resistance to poverty porn and austerity media; where viewers have 'talked back' to poverty porn, and more recently where residents of neighbourhoods being scouted as potential locations for poverty porn have refused access to poverty porn producers.

Dr. Tracey Jensen is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of East London. Her research looks at neoliberal formations across policy, social life, media and culture, especially around families, motherhood, thrift culture, austerity, food, and welfare reform. She is currently writing a book called *Parenting the crisis*.

LiveElse[W]here

the drawing shed, Institute for Health and Human Development, UEL:

Sally Labern and Bobby Lloyd (the drawing shed) will present their current work co-produced with residents, moving between Twitter as a performative space and LockUpNumber11. This is against the backdrop of 'austerity' on Britain's social housing estates. In this context, austerity works by stealth, creating obstacles that can shape-shift to block active participation, even on people's own doorsteps.

the drawing shed is a contemporary arts project led by visual artists **Sally Labern** and **Bobby Lloyd**. Based on two housing estates in London E17 since 2009, its mobile studios - the drawing shed, ClayOven and PrintBike - alongside their project space, LockUpNumber11, form central platforms for their work across London and further a-field. **the drawing shed** is supported by a diverse range of local, regional and national partners with regular funding from Arts Council England and Waltham Forest Council. Labern and Lloyd are Fellows of the Institute for Health and Human Development at UEL.

Discussant: David Harper, UEL (CNR and Psychology and Social Change Research Group).

David Harper, PhD is Reader in Clinical Psychology at UEL and Joint Programme Director (Academic) of the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Before he moved to UEL in 2000, David worked as a clinical psychologist in the NHS mental health services in the North West throughout the 1990s. His research interests are in critical psychology and social constructionist approaches in mental health. He is particularly interested in the effects of social inequality and he has written about both attributional and discursive approaches to lay explanations of the causes of poverty. He is a co-author of *Psychology, Mental Health and Distress* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

Chair: Cigdem Esin, CNR, UEL

Cigdem Esin is Senior Lecturer in Psychosocial Studies, and Research Fellow of the Centre for Narrative Research, at University of East London. Her research interests are in interactions between individual stories and grand socio-cultural narratives within historically specific contexts. Currently, in addition to analysing the personal narratives of academic immigrants in London, she explores the possibilities that narrative-led visual methods create for research on the link between identity and location in multicultural and multilingual settings.

3.45-4.00: Tea and coffee

4.00-5.30: **Panel 4: Reframing the future.**

Austerity and the fate of the humanities **Martha Nussbaum, University of Chicago**

Among the areas most threatened by cuts, all over the world, is the humanities. Derided as useless to national economic growth, it is regarded as a frill that need not be supported in hard times. My talk will make three arguments for strengthening rather than cutting the humanities: (1) an argument from democratic citizenship, (2) an argument from the needs of a healthy business

culture, and (3) an argument from the meaningful life. I shall also discuss the value and the dangers of private funding, in the quest to keep the humanities strong.

Martha C. Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, appointed in the Law School and the Philosophy Department. Among her books are *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities* (2011) and *Political emotions: Why love matters for justice* (2013). She is currently delivering the John Locke Lectures in Oxford, on the topic of Anger and Forgiveness.

Against Quietism Michael Rustin

So far, the deficit-reduction and austerity programmes in Europe which have followed the 2007-8 Financial Crisis have met with little effective opposition. In Britain, the Coalition Government has taken the crisis to be an opportunity to lay waste to the state, and to all collectivised forms of social protection and provision. Elsewhere in Europe, the responsibility for deficits has been ascribed even more than in the UK to overspending by governments. It is held that only if government expenditures and wage levels are drastically reduced can the peripheral countries of Europe (which now include France, Italy and Spain!) be 'competitive' in the global market economy. The 'Euro' is now the equivalent of the 'gold standard' (an inflexible and overvalued currency) which condemns most economies to contraction. Conservative economic policies which contributed to the rise of Nazism in Germany are having effects reminiscent of an earlier history in Europe. We will shortly have a European Parliament filled with representatives who in hating immigrants in effect say that they hate each other, as well as the institution to which they have been elected, since much migration is now between the countries of Europe itself. What durable alliances this strange situation will produce remains to be seen.

I believe we have to think not so much of 'living with the cuts', as of imagining how the system which has produced them can be discredited, and an alternative constructed in its place. Probably the recreation of a measure of economic growth is indispensable to this process - depression does not usually generate radicalisms of the left - and since even the owners of property have some interest in prosperity, we may hope that some economic recovery will return. What needs to be examined is what forms of political and social reconstruction can be envisaged and worked for, in a context which is very different from the period of ascendancy of organised labour in the 1960s and 1970s.

Michael Rustin is a founding editor of *Soundings*, with Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey, in 1995, and is a co-editor of *After Neoliberalism: the Kilburn Manifesto*
<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/manifesto.html>

Discussant: Meera Tiwari, UEL

Dr Meera Tiwari is Reader in International Development specializing in multidimensional poverty, the Capability Approach and sustainable human development. Her research interests are - exploring social and economic poverties within the Capability Approach, exploring deprivation in both Northern and Southern contexts, the MDGs and the post 2015 discourse, and how can globalization be made to work for the most vulnerable communities.

Chair: Ian Tucker, Psychology and Social Change Group, UEL

Participants from community groups and the voluntary sector

Some conference participants have sent us details about their community involvement.

James Beckles: I'm a trustee and member of the executive committee with Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham. Like a lot of charitable organisations my organisation had been affected by the cuts, and I would like to hear about perspectives for dealing with it.

Hannah Berry: I work as a freelancer for Gap Unit, a community organisation based in Manchester. The website is here: www.gapunit.org (under construction). I'm about to start running a 'popular education' project for women who live in Hulme, supporting them to tackle issues affecting the local community

Ray Campbell is a founding member of Left Unity and is the newsletter editor for Left Unity's West London Branch. He is an active member of West London Save Our Hospitals campaign, which is now fighting the closure of Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals. Ray has also been a past member of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Union. He is a regular blogger and is the owner of the political polemical blog, "Guy Debord's Cat", which can be found at <http://buddyhell.wordpress.com/> He is currently finishing a PhD in Cultural Studies at the University of East London.

Liam Crosby: At Community Links we have recently completed an in-depth qualitative piece of research, looking at the overall cumulative impact of the welfare reforms on people in our community; see: <http://www.community-links.org/our-national-work/publications/tipping-the-balance/>

Helia Lopez: I support (in various ways) a couple of NGOs working with migrants. I ran a Community Saturday School and a Theatre Company for children of refugee and immigrant families in London in the past. Last year, I volunteered for the Children's Society Scheme working with refugee children in mainstream schools in Oxford.

Penny Wilson: I work for the Play Association Tower Hamlets. I am currently working on estates in Mile End which are undergoing massive redevelopment. I am using Playwork theory and practice as a community development tool. In the play world we have pressure to evaluate using numbers. But it is impossible to demonstrate the role play has in the life of a child with a graph. For this reason we have been using play memories and anecdotes to research and monitor our work. www.playtowerhamlets.or.uk/gallery/stringofbeads

Ayath Ullah: I work in government and have an interest in how reforms are impacting citizens and communities. I also do some voluntary work at Home Start within strategy and capability building.