

ARCHIVE

London: City of Paradox



Edited by Paolo Cardullo, Rahila Gupta and Jamie Hakim

Organised by:

[Centre for Migrants, Refugees and Belonging](#) UEL

[Runnymede Trust](#)

[Iniva](#) - Institute of International Visual Arts

[London East Research Institute](#) UEL

[Raphael Samuel History Centre](#)

[Centre for Cultural Studies Research](#)

[Matrix East Research Lab](#) UEL

[Centre for Narrative Research](#) UEL

[Institute for Performing Arts Development](#) UEL

A publication based on papers presented at the International Conference

'London: City of Paradox'

3-5 April 2012 at University of East London

Docklands Campus London E16 2RD

This publication is Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

Individual authors might retain some rights, please check with them

Front cover photograph by Paolo Cardullo (from *Walking on the Rim*, 2012)

CMRB on-line publications – no. 3

Contents

Introduction.....	5
Section 1: London and the World.....	11
Glocal London: the Double Crisis of Governability and Governmentality — Nira Yuval–Davis (UEL).....	12
Understanding the Crisis — Michael Rustin (UEL).....	21
When Cities become Extreme Sites for our Major Challenges — Saskia Sassen (Columbia)	30
Dealing in Death: the Battle Against the UK Arms Trade — Barnaby Pace (Freelance)	41
Section 2 Contending Histories.....	47
City of Paradox: The Refugee Experience — Philip Marfleet (UEL).....	48
A Snapshot of the Jewish Community in London — Alex Goldberg (Surrey).....	54
After the Kettle, the Cordon — Dan Hancox (Freelance).....	59
London, Liberalism, and the Chinese Labour Question — David Glover (Southampton)	66
Section 3 East London.....	74
Can Real Critique be Faith-based? The Role of Religion as Electoral Opposition — Sukhwant Dhaliwal (Bedfordshire).....	75
‘Cleaning Up’: The Living Wage Campaign at the University of East London — Ana Lopes and Tim Hall (UEL).....	86
The Jewish Community in Multicultural London — Ben Gidley (Oxford).....	96
Section 4 Race, Racism and the City.....	104
The Tropes of ‘Diversity’: a Significant Face of Contemporary Racisms — Floya Anthias (Roehampton).....	105
Migrant London — David Feldman (Birkbeck).....	110
Visible and Invisible Migrants — Rahila Gupta (SBS).....	116

London and Riot — Jerry White (Birkbeck).....	123
England's Riots of 2011: uprisings or avarice? — Rob Berkeley (Runnymede Trust)	130
Section 5 London and Diasporic Belongings.....	142
Contested Memories: the Shahid Minar and the Struggle for Diasporic Space — Claire Alexander (LSE).....	143
Cyprus and the City: The Negotiated Home of Cypriot Refugees in London — Helen Taylor (UEL).....	150
Talking about Home: Exploring the Particular Communities in Particular Places that Create 'Localities of Belonging' — Nicola Samson (UEL).....	157
Section 6 Imagining London.....	166
The Inside/Outside World of Monica Ali's Brick Lane — Lucinda Newns (London Metropolitan).....	167
A Child of the Jago: the Reality and the Fiction — Sarah Wise (Novelist).....	175
Section 7 City and Spectacle.....	181
Value Creation in the Olympic City — Gavin Poynter (UEL).....	182
Is the Army invading British Civil Society? — Vron Ware (Open University).....	187
New Forms of Privatism — Mike Raco (King's College).....	193

Introduction

The London Olympics of 2012 was watched by a vast television audience worldwide. According to the International Olympic Committee, the opening ceremony attracted over 900 million people who saw an elaborate pageant celebrating British history and national culture (Olympic News, 2012). Images of the opening and closing ceremonies, the sunlit stadium, the medallists and happy crowds were part of a visual script for the Games that planners had long intended to project. For British politicians they expressed national pride and civic achievement, reflecting their approach to London 2012 as a project with distinct aims that complemented their own agendas. They were quick to assert its successes and benefits. Britain had “delivered” said Prime Minister David Cameron; the Games were “a spectacular success” said Tony Blair: they had portrayed a modern, multicultural Britain, proud of its traditions and diverse culture (Topping, 2012).

London mayor Boris Johnson declared that London had shown it was the “capital of the world”. He called for “triumphalism” and “pointless displays of irritating flag-waving jingo”. All had been happiness and harmony: “Across London there has been a happy maelstrom of parties and celebration ... it has been everywhere.” Johnson continued, “These Games have not changed us. They have revealed us as we are: people who can pull off great feats... London has put on a dazzling face to the global audience. For the first time since the end of the empire, it truly feels like the capital of the world.” (Topping, 2012)

Following the Games all was feel-good. According to Sebastian Coe, chair of the [London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games](#), “London 2012 was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to showcase everything that makes Britain great... The winning, planning, delivery and legacy of the Olympic Games called upon all the qualities that make the UK stand out in the global economy.” (Olympic News, 2012) Official reports recorded that 590,000 people had visited London for the event, delivering an economic bonanza for the city and the wider national economy: by 2020 Games-related benefits were expected to total £41 billion. The Olympics had created jobs and attracted investment: they had also succeeded in stimulating what London’s mayor called Team London – an engagement of the city’s people in efforts to help their most disadvantaged fellow Londoners, producing “a sense of unity” and common purpose (Prashar, 2011).

Others were less certain. The *Financial Times* observed that government figures on the economic benefits of the Olympics had been called into question by many economists and

academics (Blitz, 2013). Business Secretary [Vince Cable](#) admitted that official estimates were open to challenge: “It is the best we can do – it is not necessarily something that would pass muster in the best academic journals”, he said. There were also unresolved questions about “legacy”, about the value of infrastructural change and of costly securitisation programmes, and the cost of displacing industrial enterprises and housing that “obstructed” planning for the Games. What were the long-term benefits? Who profited – and how?

These concerns echoed independent assessments of earlier Olympics. In 2008 Canadian academic Christopher Shaw had published *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*, an account of how the city of Vancouver won the bid for the 2010 Winter Olympics. He examined who was involved and what motivated their engagement in the process. Analysing the role of corporate media in promoting the Games, and the machinations of government and business, he concluded that the Vancouver experience was “a cautionary tale for future Olympic bid cities” (2008, p.4). All such bids, he suggested, produced “crops of lies, broken promises, debt, social displacement and environmental destruction”. Vancouver’s bid history was “utterly predictive” of what was likely to happen in London and in Sochi (venue for the 2014 Winter Olympics). He observed:

The same real estate developers organize and drive the Olympic bid, a litany of promises – all later broken – are made about people and the environment to garner public support, and once the bid is won, costs escalate wildly out of control. The names of people and places may differ, but the pattern is clearly recognizable across time and space (2008, p.4).

The experience of Vancouver and of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 also demonstrated, suggested Shaw, the importance of “imagineering” the Games: of constructing a spectacle that would present specific images of the host city, complementing official narratives of its history and of national traditions and values (2008, p. xiv). These, he argued, were largely false accounts of social harmony and political integration, used to endorse the agendas of those who profited, financially and ideologically, from the Games and its outcomes.

In London, radical critic Mike Marqusee saw the same processes at work. There was an excess of “Olympic hype” and “boosterism”, he argued, evident in efforts of the mass media to cajole audiences into “appropriate displays of Olympic enthusiasm... telling us again and again how unique, how special, how extraordinary these Olympics are (2012).” He observed:

The issues raised by the Olympics are not trivial: security in the context of the war on terror and the erosion of civil liberties; outsourcing and privatisation; the global ethics of giant corporations; the colonisation of the public realm through the super-enforcement of intellectual property rights; the subordination of local needs to the imperatives of global capital.

Whatever genuine engagement and entertainment the Games provided for sports enthusiasts, said Marqusee, the Games was not “a vacation from critical thought”.

City of paradox

Many of these issues were also examined by academics, researchers and activists at a conference in London in April 2012. London – City of Paradox, held at the University of East London, set out a framework for critical examination of the Olympics as a political project and as a spectacle, and for analysis of the city itself as a focus of attention in Olympic year. Organisers of the conference noted in particular an official emphasis on London as a global city, one with a long history of cultural diversity which now offered a welcome to people from across the world. They observed that such diversity was indeed an important part of London's stories past and present, but only a part. Among its many histories were those of tension and conflict, of exclusion as well as inclusion, and new border controls meant that many people who wished to visit the city could never do so. The Olympics focused attention on London and its contradictions past and present.

“Imagineering” of London as a Games venue depicted the city as uniquely qualified to welcome athletes from 205 nation-states. East London, where an Olympic Park was to be constructed, was celebrated in bid literature and later in advertising materials as a site of ethnic diversity, economic transformation and profound social change. On this account, the ‘other’ East London(s), noted conference organisers, had largely disappeared: the East End as a site of mass poverty, of uneven development, and of repeated struggles over racism and exclusion was absent from official accounts. The city's complexities and contradictions, its contended histories, remained – like its many marginalised communities – ‘invisible’ and ‘silent’.

As pre-Olympic hype gripped the British media the conference asked how to evaluate accounts of the city past and present, how to understand the complexities of London 2012 as civic/national projects, and how to address representations of the city that largely excluded the mass of its people and their experiences. It drew on insights from across the Social Sciences and Humanities, including research in Urban Studies, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Development Studies, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Migration Studies and Refugee Studies. The conference also addressed key issues in cultural production, especially in relation to public representation of cultural diversity, by involving Third Sector organisations undertaking community initiatives, especially in the arts, and practitioners including film-makers, photographers and performers in the theatre and in other public spaces.

Participants came from across Europe and North America, presenting some 70 papers and engaging in a series of plenary sessions on key issues of debate. These were clustered around a number of complementary themes:

- contending histories: London as an object of historical study; London in the national narrative; “peoples’ ” histories; London, gender and history; history and community today; “official” history and the Olympic project;
- London and the world: colonialism, neo-colonialism and the metropolitan city; commerce, slavery and empire; London and the neoliberal networks; global city – London and the cities of the South;
- race, racism and the city: “hidden” and “invisible” populations; inclusion and exclusion; geographies of community; immigration, work and settlement; refuge and asylum; citizenship, multiculturalism, “cohesion” and integration today;
- East London: the East End in narratives of London and nation; East London and the maritime networks; the East End as refuge; East End, gender and sexuality; resistance and radicalism; regeneration and the “new” East End;
- imaging and performing London: visual cultures yesterday and today – film, photography, multimedia, performance;
- city and spectacle: London and the Olympic cities – global spectacle and local reality. Documenting the Olympics then and now.

The conference

London – City of Paradox was organised by the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB) at the University of East London, in co-operation with Runnymede Trust, Iniva – International Institute of Visual Arts, London East Research Institute, Raphael Samuel History Centre, the Centre for Cultural Studies Research, Matrix East Research Lab, and the Centre for Performance Studies of UEL.

We would like to thank both these organisations for their support and hard work and all conference participants in plenary sessions, in parallel seminars and in the informal workshops. We also thank Mica Nava for her support, as she joined the organising team when both of us were ill and it seemed that the conference might not take place. We would also like to thank the tireless Mastoureh Fathi, CMRB and conference administrator, and all the students and other volunteers who helped to make this event as extraordinary as it was.

Finally our thanks to Paolo Cardullo, who worked on transcriptions and on layout of this e-book, to Rahila Gupta, who edited it, and to Jamie Hakim, CMRB's current administrator, who organised the publication project. We hope this publication will retain some of the flavour, excitement and the energy that characterised the conference and we look forward to receiving comments from readers.

Contents

This e-book contains a selection of the presentations and discussions at the conference. They confirm the importance of independent analysis of events that are weighted with national and global significance, projected by mass media, and in which the lives and experiences of the mass of people are marginalised or even excised in order to serve interests which may be far from their own. The papers published in this report are those that were presented in April 2012 and have not been updated to take into account any changes in legislation or developments since then.

Phil Marfleet and Nira Yuval-Davis (UEL)

CMRB, Conference organizers

References

- Blitz, R. (2013) "Olympics 2012: Cameron's claims over economic legacy questioned", *Financial Times*, 21 July; online at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/009f532a-f207-11e2-8e04-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2fUn5YkD>; accessed 1 September 2013.
- "London 2012 to provide long-lasting economic benefits", Olympic News, official website of the Olympic Movement, online at: <http://www.olympic.org/news/london-2012-to-provide-long-lasting-economic-benefits/207219>; accessed 1 September 2013.
- "London 2012 to provide long-lasting economic benefits", Olympic News, official website of the Olympic Movement, online at: <http://www.olympic.org/news/london-2012-to-provide-long-lasting-economic-benefits/207219>; accessed 1 September 2013.
- Marqusee, M. (2012) "London 2012: spare us the jingoistic Olympic hype", *Guardian*, 7 August.
- Prashar, A. (nd) "Team London: Interview with Boris Johnson", Ipsos Mori report online at: http://www.ipsos-mori.com/_emails/sri/understandingsociety/may2011/mobile/team-london.html
- Shaw, C. (2008) *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games* (New Society Publishers: Gabriola Island, BC [Canada])
- Topping, A. (2012) "London 2012: Olympics success hailed by politicians", *The Guardian*, 13 August; online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/aug/13/politicians-success-london-olympics>; accessed 1 September 2013.

Section 1: London and the World

Glocal London: the Double Crisis of Governability and Governmentality

— Nira Yuval-Davis (UEL)

In a conference called 'London: City of Paradox' we need to examine the different ways in which London is a 'glocal city', as so many of the issues discussed in this conference are specific to London and/or the UK but, at the same time, are also a reflection of much wider global phenomena. As Saskia Sassen (2012) writes in her paper, global cities are the frontier battle zone in the contemporary world and London probably more so than many others, especially in the year of the Olympics spectacle.

Recent election results across Europe have seen growing disenchantment with incumbent governments which have been perceived as being unable or unwilling to deal with the financial crisis while also maintaining the living standards of ordinary people. Meanwhile in many countries a series of scandals in the banking sector has led to increasing but as yet unavailing calls for a major overhaul of the industry which I take to be symptomatic of a crisis of faith in financial institutions.

This paper reflects on the overall context in which these events are taking place, and the ways in which they are related to each other. My argument is that these phenomena are signs of neoliberalism's systemic, multi-faceted, global political and economic crisis, a crisis that is central to relationships between states and societies and to constructions of subjectivity; and that we are seeing a related crisis of both governability and governmentality. In the limited space available here I can only outline this crisis in general terms before going on to focus briefly on some of its implications for political action. But I hope that analysing events within this context will be suggestive, and point others towards undertaking similar investigations. My focus here will be on the implications of this double crisis for the growth of the global phenomenon of autochthonic political projects of belonging, both locally and globally; and also for the simultaneous growth of libertarian activist citizenship movements of resistance.

The crisis of governability

Some commentators, like Mike Rustin, have looked at the crisis of governability that occurred

when the British government in the 1970s was not able to control the unions. The current crisis of governability is a different one: as the recent economic crisis has shown, with the growing entanglement and dependency not only of local and global markets but also of local private and public institutions, various states have been forced to bail out banks and large corporations for fear of total economic collapse. However, the governability of state agencies vis à vis the private sector – the ability to reinforce regulations – is highly limited. As Robert Imrie & Mike Raco (2000), Richard Murphy (2011) and others have pointed out, in many ways there can no longer be a clear differentiation between the public and the private: whole locations and domains which used to be part of the public space – from schools to shopping centres – are public no more. In some ways the situation today has parallels with the period of the enclosures in the 18th century when what was considered to be public land began to be fenced in; this is a new stage of the same phenomenon but it is much more radical. Interestingly – and this is highly significant for contemporary relations between states – these privately owned assets are now less likely to be held by national corporations.

Between 1990 and 2006 (and today the figures are even higher), the proportion of global assets in foreign ownership rose from 9% to 26%, and foreign ownership of government bonds rose from 11% to 31%. In 1987, when the Kuwait Investment Office took advantage of the privatisation of British Petroleum to buy 22% of the company's outstanding shares, Thatcher's government was so horrified by this attack on its 'crown jewels' that it forced Kuwait Investment to reduce its share to 9.9%. However, when in 2008 Sheikh Mansoor of Abu Dhabi bought 16% of Barclays Bank and then sold it less than a year later at 70% profit, "nobody even blinked". (*Independent*, 2011). Furthermore, the sphere that is regarded as part of 'national security', and thus as off-limits for foreign ownership, is also continuously shrinking. A French company now owns a British energy company, and British airports are owned by a Spanish company. It is not that government cannot bring in regulations; indeed, some regulations such as the separation between retail and investment banking might well be introduced as well as further bank levies although the effect of all this might be marginal. Much of it has to do with the basic legal relationships between corporations and states in which companies have a status of fictional citizenship which enables the people who run these companies to escape responsibility for the results of their corporations' action: the famous 'LTD' affix. At a time of globalisation, the ability of companies – and the people who run them – to change locations, base themselves in tax havens and thus escape having to bear the social, economic, environmental and other consequences of their actions is becoming clear not just in the South but also in the North.

Moreover, while states were forced to bail out banks to avoid major economic collapses,

states – such as Ireland, Greece and others and, of course, also the UK – found themselves forced to cut their budgets severely, against the interests of their citizens, because they have become dependent on their credit assessment by the global financial market. The City of London occupies a central place in this global system. David Cameron's fight to keep the exceptional position of the City free from regulation and taxation stems out of his attempt to prevent the desertion of corporations once the extra privileges offered here lose their edge over those offered to them elsewhere. This, like the tax cuts in the last budget, needs to be seen as part of the close relationship between the Government and the City; they cannot be seen as the City being governed by the state. In Italy, these days, corporation technocrats are even running the state.

One of the issues that needs further study is the ways in which neoliberal capital interacts with authoritarian states where such a crisis of governability has not taken place. The growing power of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) states highlights the apparent paradox that global neoliberalism operates most successfully in non-liberal states (Bichler & Nitzan, 2012).

It is an open question as to what extent authoritarian states can limit internal crises within the financial sector and not just between it and the state. Neoliberalism, unlike liberalism during earlier phases of capitalism is not inspired by what Max Weber (1905) called 'the protestant ethics' or long-term investments policy and reliance on production. It can be symbolised by the hedge fund which is aimed at maximising short-term profits by stripping assets and hunting for new markets to exploit. Asset stripping of what used to be the public sector in Northern states has been its latest big endeavour.

As Bichler and Nitzan (2010) point out, one can detect major systemic fear among the most successful contemporary, global, neoliberal corporations. Part of the explanation for this, probably, is that the two largest commodities traded globally – ie oil and arms – have an inherent instability and complex relationships with states in both the North and the South and might prove to be unsustainable in the long term under the present globalised political and economic system. The situation in Libya is a good but not unique example of this. It is, even more than Syria, an example of the growing imbalance between the global economic, political and military powers of states and super-states such as the EU.

All of this, of course, has also had a direct effect on the relationships between state and society; hence the crisis of governmentality which I am going to address now.

The crisis of governmentality

In one of her earlier works (2007), Saskia Sassen argued that the liberal state, rather than weakening as a result of neoliberal globalisation, changed internally so that the executive powers have strengthened at the expense of the legislative branches of the state. This is a direct result of the privatisation of the state where a lot of the regulatory tasks of the legislative have been lost and, at the same time, it is almost exclusively the executive branch which negotiates with other national and supranational governance executives (such as the EU, the UN, the World Bank, the WTO) as well as with private, national and especially transnational corporations.

This is an important observation which offers some explanation of the governmentality crisis: because of the increasing power of the executive, there is growing disenchantment and alienation from the state on the part of citizens, who accordingly begin to refrain from internalising and complying with the neoliberal state's technologies of governance. This disenchantment is particularly important in countries where voting in national elections is solely for the election of members of parliament, rather than also for the head of the executive. At the same time, in parliamentary democracies the right to rule is dependent on formal endorsement of particular parties by the electorate; this is what gives the state legitimacy. Hence the growing worry of governments at the lack of involvement of the electorate in both national and local elections.

The growing securitisation and militarisation of the liberal state need to be related directly to the growing fear of ruling elites which stems from this crisis of governmentality. The resistance of people to this crisis, however, can take widely different forms, depending on their intersected positionings, identifications and normative values: more or less violent; more or less radical; more or less guided by primordial versus cosmopolitan value systems. In the short time I have I can briefly discuss a couple of different modes of resistance.

The rise of autochthonic political projects of belonging

This can be seen as a direct response to the insecurity engendered by the processes of neoliberal globalisation. Part of the repertoire of neoliberal governmentality is the removal from most people of any expectation – let alone guarantee – of long-term employment in the same place, or even in the same kind of work, or of having regular holidays and sufficient funds in their pension for their retirement. This is part of a wider trend towards the displacement of risk from the state and corporations to individuals. Other elements of the 'risk society' include housing and place of living, networks of friends, and even membership

in a family unit (Beck, 1992). All these new areas of uncertainty push people towards membership in what Castells (1997) has called “defensive identity movements”, whether ethnic or religious. Policy-makers often respond to such defensive movements among majoritarian members of society by attempting to take away rights from migrants and refugees as an easy way to appease these anxieties; such initiatives are seen as serving to reinforce what is perceived of as a weakening sense of national ‘cohesion’.

Since the 1980s there has been a lot of discussion on the rise of what Barker (1981) called ‘the new racism’ and Balibar (1990) ‘racisme differentialiste’ (see also Modood’s notion of ‘cultural racism’, 2003). Unlike the ‘old’ racism, these kinds of racialisation discourses focused not on notions of ‘races’ or different ethnic origins, but on different cultures, religions and traditions which were seen as threatening to ‘contaminate’ or ‘overwhelm’ the cultural ‘essence’ of ‘the nation’.

Peter Geschiere (2009) points out, however, that often the crucial element in the construction of the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and thus the focus of such political projects of belonging, is of a somewhat different kind that has gained a new impetus under globalisation and mass immigration, and which he sees as the global return to the local. The term Geschiere uses for this phenomenon is the Greek word ‘autochthony’ (to be of the soil) which is used in the Netherlands and in the Francophone world, to differentiate between the ‘autochthones’ who belong and the ‘allochthones’ who do not.

Autochthony can be seen as a new phase of ethnicity although in some senses it even surpasses ethnicity (see also Yuval-Davis, 2011a&b). While ethnicity is highly constructed, relationally and situationally circumscribed, autochthony is a much more ‘empty’ and thus elastic notion. It states no more than ‘I was here before you’ and, as such, can be applied in any situation and can be constantly redefined and applied to different groupings in different ways. It combines elements of naturalisation of belonging with vagueness as to what constitutes the essence of belonging, and thus can be pursued by groups who would not necessarily be thought to be autochthone by others.

The notion of an autochthonic politics of belonging is very important when we come to understand contemporary extreme right politics in Europe and elsewhere. The people who follow these politics always argue that they are not racist although they are very much against all those who ‘do not belong’. In some cases, such as in the case of the English Defence League (EDL), organisations include a much more diverse range of potential members than anything imaginable in the older kind of extreme right organisation. The EDL, at least formally, has both Jewish and gay sections, as well as Hindu, Sikh and Afro-

Caribbean supporters. In France, Front National leader Marine Le Pen goes to great lengths to deny that her party is racist, anti-semitic or homophobic. She claims (*Guardian*, 2012) that “the right-left divide makes no sense any more. Now the real division is between nationalism and globalisation”. In the latter context, she warns of the “dilution” and “wiping out” of the French nation and civilisation, under threat from “never-ending queues of foreigners”. In this way people’s feelings of helplessness in the face of neoliberalism and the risk-society are channelled into an anxiety about immigration. With this rhetoric she managed to get around 20% of votes in the first round of the French presidential elections in April 2012. The Greek anti-immigration extreme right Golden Dawn Party is also on the rise.

Even the BNP, a more ‘old fashioned’ extreme right party, put forward as their candidate for the London Mayoral elections of 2012 a ‘visible foreigner’, Carlos Cortiglia, (BBC, 2012) who migrated to the UK from Uruguay and is of Spanish and Italian parentage (although he is indisputably ‘white’). This was at a time when the BNP’s election campaign was calling for a search for “the indigene Londoner” whatever this may mean. No wonder that their ‘hybrid’ approach failed them, and that the rising extreme right formation in the UK is the British Freedom Party, which is working closely with the EDL.

It is important to recognise that this invocation of territorial belonging as a naturalised mode of exclusion can also characterise the politics of non-majoritarian groupings and can be seen as the basis of much gang warfare in metropolitan cities as well as in remote mountains in Africa.

The activist citizen

A very different mode of resistance is what Engin Isin (2009) describes as the emergence of ‘the activist citizens’ who are involved in new acts of citizenship, organised and spontaneous, which can be situationist, carnivalesque or focused around international courts, the social media and other forms of social networking. These ‘active citizens’ campaign for various citizenship rights which often transform the boundaries between human and civil rights, political and social rights; they campaign also for new additional kinds of rights such as ecological, indigenous and sexual. Importantly, activist citizens campaign for rights not only for themselves and their grouping, collectivity or local neighbourhood, but their focus can be national, regional or global, putting citizenship ‘in flux’ and blurring the boundaries and articulations of rights – and responsibilities – within the state and beyond it. A similar construction of citizenship, applied mostly to Latino migrants in the USA, has been called ‘cultural citizenship’ (eg Rosaldo, 1997). However, as Isin notes, the range of issues covered by activist citizenship campaigns has been much wider than that of the cultural or even

identity politics arena. The recent series of popular uprisings in various Middle Eastern countries is a good example of such activist citizenship which has been focusing on generic issues of freedom and democracy. Their heavy reliance on new communication technologies such as mobile phones, the web and social networks has also been typical. However, protesting and fighting against a system of governance can loosen it in the margins, deepen the crisis of governmentality and maybe even its governability but does not necessarily provide a viable alternative. It can also supply legitimacy to further securitisation and militarisation of the state and/or create a vacuum for autochthonic identity politics.

At the same time, being co-opted into the apolitical professionalisation and judicialisation of NGOs and community organisations which involves the transformation of grassroots movements into being dependent on a fund-raising professional elite is not the solution either. Being absorbed by the demands of the system may not leave space or a lever for alternative structures (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Whenever I become too depressed I tend to remind myself of Gramsci's call for 'pessimism of the mind, optimism of the will'. We have been trying in this conference to contribute to the development of a counter-narrative which might lead us to some sustainable insights for the way forward. So let's try and stick with good old Gramsci.

But when anomic 'hopelessness' dominates the social domain, it is only too easy for anger, injustice and hopelessness to be converted to an autochthonic 'politics of blame' which, at its most extreme, involves a figure like [Breivik](#) (Anders Breivik who carried out mass murder in Norway in 2011) trying to physically annihilate 'multiculturalism'. The loss of hope is a major threat to democracy and not just an emotional malaise. So, let us take some comfort and hope from recent victories for the left in Latin America, Europe and elsewhere, and the small but detectable cracks opening up in the overwhelming consensus on austerity. But let us also continue to search for alternative transformative structures which will not repeat the flaws of the 'old' – or the 'new' – left.

References

- Balibar, E. (1990) 'Paradoxes of Universality', in Goldberg, D.T. (ed.) *Anatomy of Racism*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Barker, M. (1981) *The New Racism*. London: Junction Books
- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage
- Bichler, S. and Nitzan, J. (2010) 'Capital as Power: Toward a New Cosmology of Capitalism', *Dissident Voice*, 6 May. Available at: <http://dissidentvoice.org/2010/05/capital-as-power/>
- Bichler, S. & Nitzan, J. (2012) 'Imperialism and Financialism: a story of a nexus', *Journal of Critical Global Studies*, 5.
- Castells, M. (1997) *The Power of Identity*. New York: Blackwell.
- Elsin, E.F. (2009) 'Citizenship in flux: The figure of the activist citizen', *Subjectivity*, 29.
- Geschiere, P. (2009) *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press
- Modood, T. (2003) 'Muslims and the Politics of Difference', *Political Quarterly*, 74.
- Murphy, R. (2011) *The Courageous State: Rethinking Economics, Society and the Role of Government*. Cambridge: Searching Finance Ltd.
- Profile: London mayoral candidate Carlos Cortiglia (2012) Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17629854>
- Raco, M. & Imrie, R. (2000) 'Governmentality and Rights and Responsibilities in Urban Policy', *Environment and Planning*, 32.
- Rosaldo, R. (1997) 'Cultural Citizenship, Inequality and Multi-culturalism' in Flores, W. V. and Benmayor, R. (eds.) *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space and Rights*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 27–38.
- Sassen, S. (2007) 'Globalisation, the state and the democratic deficit', *openDemocracy*, 20 July.
- Sassen, S. (2012) 'When the acute challenges of our epoch materialise in cities', *London: City of Paradox Conference*. University of East London, London, 3-5 April. Docklands campus.
- The Independent* (2010) 'Who Owns Britain: Watchdog launches first UK stock-take', 15 May.

Weber, Max (1905), *The Protestant Ethics*. Reprint, London: Routledge, 2005

Willsher, K. (2012) 'Marine Le Pen scores stunning result in French presidential election', *Guardian*, 22 April [Online]. Available at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/22/marine-le-pen-french-election>

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006), 'Human/Women's rights and feminist transversal politics', in Ferree, M.M. and Tripp, A.M.(eds.) *Transnational Feminisms: Women's Global Activism and Human Rights*. New York: New York University Press.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2011a) 'The dark side of democracy: autochthony and the radical right', *openDemocracy*, 21 July.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2011b) *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*. London: Sage.

Understanding the Crisis — Michael Rustin (UEL)

I should remind you that we are in the middle of a social and economic crisis which is both national and international. Furthermore it has one of its main centres here in London because of the importance of its financial sector. I shall draw a comparison between the crisis of the 1970s, which gave rise to Thatcherism, and the crisis of the 'credit crunch' of 2007-8 which, in light of the present Coalition Government, gave rise to Thatcherism mark II.

What I am going to say derives from an online symposium on the 'present conjuncture' to which Doreen Massey, Stuart Hall and I have contributed (Rutherford and Davison, 2012). This has been followed by the launch of *After Neoliberalism? The Kilburn Manifesto* which can also be found on-line (Hall, Massey and Rustin, 2013). Although this session of the conference is titled 'London and the Empire', I am not going to talk directly about those topics, as previous speakers have done, linking them to the Olympic Games.¹ However, the present economic crisis is also connected to the history of Empire, insofar as the predominance of the financial sector in Britain's economic life is a carry-over from its imperial past. Britain's continual addiction to military intervention in, for example, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya (usually as junior partners of the USA) follows from this conception of its role. Many public rituals reinforce this national self-conception: for example, there are the commemorations of servicemen who have lost their lives, and the military initiations of the royal princes. Down the road from the Docklands University campus, Britain's arms industry holds a large bi-annual trade fair at the Excel Exhibition Centre.

The crisis of the 1970s was the beginning of the end of the post-war welfare settlement. Its origins lay in the unresolved class tensions of that settlement. Governments had been unable to find a viable compromise between the claims of labour, or develop a viable plan for productive economic development. The 1970s saw severe political instability culminating in

¹ The Olympics, like other such spectacles, are a significant new mode of production of global capitalism. Themselves managed, like FIFA or like an international corporation, they assemble corporate partners, negotiate an invariably favourable deal with a national government, and descend as a caravan on the host city, which provides the necessary spatial location for what is essentially a global media event. (Rustin, 2009).

the calling-in of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1976 to restore 'economic discipline'. The climax of this crisis was the 'Winter of Discontent' of 1978-9, public sector workers' strikes which caused serious disruption and discredited the Labour Government of James Callaghan, leading to its defeat by Mrs Thatcher in the General Election of 1979.

Some will remember the petering out of the 'white heat of the technological revolution' which had been proclaimed by Harold Wilson in 1964, and the failure of the 'consensus model' of economic regulation which had been attempted under different governments by Macmillan, Heath, Wilson and Callaghan in the 1960s and 70s. That was the era of the National Economic Development Council (NEDC), the National Incomes Commission (NIC), and the National Plan instigated and then abandoned by the Wilson government of 1964. Those were also the days of that strange character, Solomon Binding: the 'solemn and binding' agreement between government and trade unions which in reality signified the failure of the Labour Government to establish a statutory basis for its industrial relations policy. Thus the crisis became defined as the 'ungovernability' of Britain. It was indeed the case that successive governments in 1969, 1974 and 1979 were defeated directly or indirectly by the resistance of trade unions to the control of wage rises or to legislation intended to constrain the trade unions' power. In essence this was a crisis rooted in class conflict and contradiction.

The title of this Conference is *London: City of Paradox*. However I am more interested in the contradictions than I am in the paradoxes: that is to say less in the surprising diversity of the urban scene and its juxtapositions and more in its underlying conflicts and tensions.

Now, as a consequence of this major crisis of the late 1970s, Margaret Thatcher came to power with a plan to bring about a major change in the balance of power in society. This was seen in terms of the fundamental balance of forces between labour and capital, but also as a broader reassertion of authority and hierarchy against the wave of dissidence which had been unleashed during the late 1960s and 1970s. Among her first steps were anti-trade union legislation and the sell-off of council housing under the 'right to buy' legislation. The purpose of the latter was to inculcate individualist attitudes and aspirations which were thought to accompany home ownership and to undermine the 'collectivist' basis of the Labour vote in working-class neighbourhoods. The government instigated a massive deflation whose effect was to weaken the bargaining power of workers. A consequence of this was further large-scale de-industrialisation from which much of Britain still suffers. The opportunity which existed during the 1980s to use North Sea oil revenues as an investment fund with which to build a new economy was not taken, as it was in Norway.

This programme was at first extremely unpopular, and but for the 'good luck' of the Falklands War in 1982 it seems likely that the Tory government would have lost the 1983 General Election. This of course takes us back to the theme of Empire and its continuing role in British society. (Barnett, 2012). However, once that election was won, the way was clear for Thatcherism to develop its (counter-) revolutionary programme in a more uncompromising spirit than in its first years of office when it had been held back by caution and by the presence in the Cabinet of several survivors of the era of 'consensus politics' and of a politics of negotiation with the working-class, which included a continuing commitment to the welfare state.

Then came the Miners' Strike of 1984-5, more carefully prepared for by the government than by the National Union of Mineworkers. The defeat of the miners was followed by the 'Big Bang' of 1985 (that is to say the end of capital controls and the deregulation of financial institutions), the privatisation of formerly publicly owned industry and utilities, like water, gas and electricity (the era of 'Sid'), and then the beginning of 'modernisation' of the public sector, to make it conform to corporate sector and market norms. This modernisation was continued by John Major's government and later by that of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Privatisation is of course going even further and faster under the present Coalition government.

The growing hegemony of neoliberalism followed the election not only of Margaret Thatcher in Britain but also of Ronald Reagan in the USA in 1980. The defeat of European Communism in 1989 further cleared the way for this radical remaking of the post-war world and for the unravelling of the post-war social compromise. For whatever one might have thought about state socialism in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe (there was no reason to think much of it), it had nevertheless functioned as a competitor to capitalism, causing market societies in the West to remember that their populations had an alternative they might turn to if they failed to deliver satisfaction to their peoples. As we know, this financialised and globalised neoliberal system encountered its own crisis in 2007-8.

This was however a different kind of crisis to that of the 1970s, and the similarities and differences between them need to be explored. Whereas the first crisis was caused by conflicts between classes, both overt and covert, the second did not come about as a consequence of working-class militancy or resistance to what capital was doing. The credit crunch occurred because the failure of 'sub-prime' mortgages led to the collapse of the banking system through various cascade effects over the western world. Householders were not refusing to meet their payments; they were not staging a mortgage strike; they were just unable to pay. The banks foreclosed on many of them, and then found themselves with

unrealisable assets, or bad debts.

There was nevertheless a 'class dimension' to this crisis, even if it was brought about by the weakness rather than the strength of the working-class in relation to the institutions of capital. The sub-prime mortgage crisis was a reflection of increasing inequality and impoverishment in the United States. Populations whose living standards needed to rise to sustain, through their consuming power, investment and production in the USA were in fact becoming poorer. This was in part a 'Keynesian' crisis of under-consumption, although this itself had as its cause the competitive failure of the productive economy of the USA in the face of overseas and especially Chinese competition. In David Lockwood's terms (Lockwood, 1964; Rustin, 2008) one could describe this as a 'system' but not a 'social' contradiction of capitalism, a social contradiction being defined as one which has become manifest in social conflict. Lockwood's definition has some parallels with Marx's distinction between a 'class in itself' and a 'class for itself.' This was a different kind of contradiction from the overt class conflicts which were seen in the 1970s, which were reflected in excess demand leading to high rates of inflation and in a 'fiscal crisis of the state' (O'Connor, 2001) which was attributable to increased social expenditures whose collectivist purpose was to mitigate and compensate for the effects of market forces.

Thus banks and other institutions which had been gambling on real estate and on speculative financial trading, in the absence of more productive kinds of investment, essentially went bust, and the whole financial system began to unravel. What has happened since then is that governments and *de facto* taxpayers have been bailing out these banks and the rest of the financial sector, 'socialising' their losses, without so far being able to persuade them to re-invest on a sufficient scale in the productive economies to restore previous levels of economic growth.

I did not anticipate the system's intransigent resistance to what seemed like the obvious adjustments needed to restore it to health. Given that there was little pressure from below to redistribute income and wealth, and so little effective pressure for a turn to collectivism, what risk to it would there be in a measure of Keynesian reflation and in some restoration of the real purchasing power of citizens? Gordon Brown's initial success in 2008 in organising an international response to the crisis rescued the banking system and suggested that such more long-term reforms might be the way things would go. But this is not what has happened. The absence of organised opposition or ideas contrary to neoliberalism has

merely empowered the establishments to brush aside criticism of their system.² They have instead argued that an even more radical pursuit of the ideology of the market is the only way to resolve the crisis: hence the obsession with deficit reductions similar, in its ideology and effects, to the deflation that was caused by the return to the Gold Standard that happened after the First World War. The neoliberal response to the crisis has taken the form of a renewal of hard-line Thatcherism, under the protection of the Coalition with the Liberal Democrats, who have been effectively trapped by the Conservatives.³

A similar neoliberal approach has prevailed in the European Union. It has been decided that the Euro zone will be maintained in the economic interests of Germany and its north European allies, with an even more radical constraint of budgets than was previously imposed by the European Central Bank. Capital holders have been protected, at the cost of the immiseration of the people and severe damage to the economies of the European periphery, such as Greece, Spain and Portugal. Their economies cannot succeed in a single currency zone which lacks systems of economic redistributions of both capital and income, such as might enable them eventually to become competitive economies.

In Britain, the Coalition government has seized the opportunity provided by the financial crisis to engineer a major rebalancing of the economy away from the public and towards the private sector. The idea was supposed to be that enhanced efficiency and new private investment would restore growth and prosperity. This has not happened; at the time of writing, Gross National Product was still lower than it was when the crisis struck. Much of the supposed rebalancing of the economy that has taken place (for example, reduced public and increased private sector employment) results not from new economic activity, but from the outsourcing to the private sector of existing activities that are in fact still funded from taxation. The British private sector has increasingly become parasitic on government and the 'licenses to print money' (franchises and contracts of many kinds) that it affords them rather than the largely separate and independent sector it used to be.

² One area where governments do at length seemed inclined to act is in regard to the evasion of taxes by globalised corporations. It seemed to me at an earlier stage that governments would be unlikely to put up with this direct challenge to the power and capacity to function.

³ A minority Tory government would have been much weaker than the Coalition has been, but for the Lib Dems this would have carried the risk of an early dissolution of Parliament and their annihilation in an early election. The course they adopted has (probably) given them five years in government. The problem has been that no one has been willing to argue forcefully against the false 'public sector deficit' account of the economic crisis. TINA ('there is no alternative') has reappeared on the scene, largely without challenge.

The marketisation or quasi-marketisation of health, education, and virtually all other public services is another aspect of the implementation of this neoliberal ideology. Colin Crouch (2012) has valuably pointed out that although such reforms are invariably carried out in the name of the superiority of markets over other forms of organisation, what has actually happened is that large corporations have become able to manipulate both markets, through their quasi-monopoly powers, and governments, through lobbying, their control of media, and the financing of political parties. 'The market' exists as much as an ideology which conceals the truth, as it does as the main economic reality.

The dominant neoliberal response to the financial crisis has another explanation beyond the sheer greed of the propertied and their reluctance to surrender any of their wealth and power. Faced with intense competition from the 'emerging economies' of Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, those in charge of the 'advanced economies' now see no means of competing with them other than by driving down wage levels, welfare expenditures and social protection within their own systems. The idea seems to be that rising wages in the emerging economies might meet falling wages in the 'advanced' at some mid-point. The earlier hope has diminished that the West could simply move its economies higher up the value-chain, concentrating on activities which require higher educational and cultural inputs than routine manufacturing, and compete with them on that basis. (This was the economic strategy implied by Tony Blair's slogan 'education, education, education'.) Some of the 'emerging economies' just seem to be more dynamic and nimble than anyone imagined they would be. They are by no means prepared to settle for the role of implementers of designs and the assemblers of parts 'made in the West.'

What these severe difficulties in competing successfully expose is that a quasi-*laissez faire* model of economic development is wholly inadequate to the modern economic environment. Just as large corporations plan their investments and activities over the long-term, so governments need to do the same for their entire economies. Neoliberalism is a disastrous ideology because it denies this now surely obvious fact of economic life. (Mazzucato, 2013)

New Labour has a significant responsibility for the programmes of public sector marketisation that have been pushed forward so aggressively by the Coalition. Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) were a means by which Gordon Brown sought to 'disguise' public investment, loading public institutions such as hospitals with unsustainable debt in the process. The PFI for London Underground was a major failure of this kind. However, Labour was divided on these issues and marketisation was also restrained while it was in office by party and trade union resistance to it. It is highly unlikely that the NHS, the school system, or local authorities,

would have been treated by Labour as they are now being by the Coalition. The fact that Blair was removed as Prime Minister signified some backtracking from New Labour's 'modernising' (i.e. marketising) agenda, even though it was provoked by the Iraq War.

The Coalition's programme now seems to proceed as far and as fast with its 'rebalancing' reforms as it can. Remaining in office is a means to an end for this ideologically-motivated government, not an end in itself. It calculates that it can make many changes almost irrevocable, if it acts with sufficient resolution even if it has only five years, for the time being, to make them.

What is so far lacking is any sign of a coherent counter-strategy from the Labour Party. The needs seem obvious enough. There must be a rebalancing of the economy away from London and the south-east. New areas for productive investment need to be identified with the much improved system of intelligence and planning necessary to make this possible. There needs to be a reform of the banking system, to make it socially accountable, and to increase its capacity and willingness to invest in economically useful ways. The military-imperial traditions which have dominated British foreign policy almost without interruption need to be challenged, as has previously happened during the campaign against the Iraq War, and by CND in its two large campaigns. There needs to be a regeneration of government, especially at local and regional levels, so that the democratic 'voice' in decision making can be enhanced. There needs to be more vigorous action to 'green' the economy and to reduce carbon consumption. There needs to be a reform of corporate governance, according to the 'stakeholder model' which has been advocated for nearly 30 years by Will Hutton (1996). There needs to be a reinvention of the European Union, to enhance the redistributive and investment functions of government within it, since it is plain that the existing model of a 'single market' ensures neither prosperity nor justice.

Yet so far, Labour remains largely silent. It seems unwilling to defend its by no means discreditable record in government. Why should it be so difficult to say the obvious, that the last Labour government brought 13 years of relative prosperity from 1997-2010, as well as considerable improvements in public services, when its Coalition successor has brought only three years of stagnation, or worse, and a savaging of public goods? It has been suggested that Labour is playing a subtle waiting game, unwilling to disclose its policy hand until close to the date of the next election. But the wait, if that is what it is, is getting to be a dangerously long one, and in the meantime the Coalition's false analysis of the economic crisis, and its projection of sacrifice and blame on the most vulnerable, holds the field largely unchallenged.

The underlying social and economic facts – worsening living standards, declining public

goods – still seem to tell in Labour's favour. But the interpretation of such 'facts' to voting publics has a decisive role in determining political outcomes too. At this point, it is the Coalition politicians who seem to have most confidence in themselves and their prospects. Need it really take two terms in opposition for a Party to recover from a fairly narrow defeat, and resume the capacity to think and talk confidently about what it intends to do when it returns to power?

One must hope not, since the consequences of another five years of the Conservatives, with or without their Liberal Democratic allies, hardly bears contemplating.

References

- Barnett, A. (2012) *Iron Britannia: Time to take the Great out of Britain*. London: Faber.
- Crouch, C. (2011) *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hall, S., Massey D., and Rustin M. (2013). *After Neoliberalism: the Kilburn Manifesto*.
Published on-line in monthly instalments by *Soundings*
<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/manifesto.html>
- Hutton, W. (1996) *The State We're In: (Revised Edition): Why Britain Is in Crisis and How to Overcome It*. London: Vintage.
- Lockwood, D. (1964) 'Social Integration and System Integration', in Zollschan, G.K. and Hirsch, W. (eds) *Explorations in Social Change*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 244 – 257.
- Mazzucato, M. (2013) *The Entrepreneurial State*. London: Anthem Press.
- O'Connor, J. (2001) *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*. New edition. London: Transaction Books.
- Rustin, M.J. (2008) 'New Labour and the Theory of Globalisation', *Critical Social Policy*, 28 (3) , pp. 273-282
- Rustin, M.J. (2009) 'Sport, Spectacle and Society: Understanding the Olympics', in Poynter, G. and Macrury, I (ed), *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Remaking of London*. London: Ashgate, pp. 3–22.
- Rutherford, J., and Davison, S. (2012) *The Neoliberal Crisis*. Lawrence and Wishart .
[Online]. Available at: <http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/ebooks/NeoliberalCrisis.html>

When Cities become Extreme Sites for our Major Challenges — Saskia Sassen (Columbia)

Urban capabilities have often been crafted out of collective efforts to go beyond the conflicts and racisms that mark an epoch. It is out of this type of dialectic that emerged the open urbanity that made European cities historically spaces for the making of expanded citizenship. One factor feeding these positives was that cities became strategic spaces also for the powerful and their need for self-representation and projection onto a larger stage. The modest middle classes and the powerful both found in the city a space for their diverse “life projects.”

It is impossible to do full justice to all the aspects of this process in such a short essay. I use two types of acute challenges facing cities to explore how urban capabilities can alter what originates as hatred and as war: one is asymmetric war and the urbanising of war it entails; the other is the hard work of making open cities and repositioning the immigrant and the citizen as, above all, urban subjects rather than essentially different subjects as much of the anti-immigrant and racist commentary does (Sassen, 2011).⁴

Cities as frontier zones

The large, complex, especially global, city is a new frontier zone. Actors from different worlds meet there, but there are no clear rules of engagement. Whereas the historic frontier was to be found in the far stretches of colonial empires, today's frontier zone is in our large cities. It is a strategic frontier zone for global corporate capital. Much of the work of forcing deregulation, privatisation, and new fiscal and monetary policies on the host governments had to do with creating the formal instruments to construct their equivalent of the old military “fort” of the historic frontier: the regulatory environment they need in city after city worldwide to ensure a global space of operations.

But it is also a strategic frontier zone for those who lack power, those who are

⁴ I have explored the notion of urban capabilities in a range of other histories, including most recently the ‘occupy’ movements in *Globalizations* (2011) and *Art Forum* (2012).

disadvantaged, outsiders, and discriminated minorities. The disadvantaged and excluded can gain presence in such cities, presence vis-à-vis power and presence vis-à-vis each other. This signals the possibility of a new type of politics, centred in new types of political actors. This is one instance of what I seek to capture with the concept of urban capabilities. It is not simply a matter of having or not having power. There are new hybrid bases from which to act. One outcome we are seeing in city after city is the making of informal politics.

Both the work of making the public and making the political in urban space become critical at a time of growing velocities, the ascendance of process and flow over artefacts and permanence, massive structures that are not on a human scale, and branding as the basic mediation between individuals and markets. The work of design since the 1980s has tended to produce narratives that add to the value of existing contexts, and at its narrowest, to the utility logics of the economic corporate world. But the city can “talk back”; for instance, there is also a kind of public-making work that can produce disruptive narratives, and make legible the local and the silenced. Here we can detect yet another instance of what I think of as urban capabilities.

These urban capabilities also signal the possibility of making new subjects and identities in the city. Often it is not so much the ethnic, religious phenotype that dominates in urban settings, but the urbanity of the subject and of the setting, even when national politics is deeply anti-immigrant. For instance, one cannot avoid noticing that when former pro-immigration mayors of large US cities become presidential candidates, they shift to an anti-immigration stance. A city’s sociality can bring out and underline the urbanity of subject and setting, and dilute more essentialist signifiers. It is often the need for new solidarities when cities confront major challenges that can bring this shift about. This might force us into joint responses and from there on to the emphasis of an urban, rather than individual or group subject and identity – such as an ethnic or religious subject and identity.

Against the background of a partial disassembling of empires and nation-states, the city emerges as a strategic site for making elements of new, perhaps even for making novel, partial orders.⁵ Where in the past national law might have been the law, today subsidiarity but also the new strategic role of cities, makes it possible for us to imagine a return to urban law. We see a resurgence of urban law-making, a subject I discuss in depth elsewhere (Sassen, 2008, ch 2 and ch 6).⁶ For instance, in the US, a growing number of cities have passed local laws (ordinances) that make their cities sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants; other

⁵ One synthesising image we might use to capture these dynamics is the movement from centripetal nation state articulation to a centrifugal multiplication of specialised assemblages.

cities have passed environmental laws that only hold for the particular cities.

In my larger project I identified a vast proliferation of such partial assemblages that remix bits of territory, authority, and rights, once ensconced in national institutional frames. In the case of Europe these novel assemblages include those resulting from the formation and ongoing development of the EU, but also those resulting from a variety of cross-city alliances around protecting the environment, fighting racism, and other worthy causes. And they result from sub-national struggles and the desire to make new regulations for self-governance at the level of the neighbourhood and the city. A final point to elaborate the strategic importance of the city for shaping new orders is that, as a space, the city can bring together multiple and diverse struggles and engender a larger, more encompassing push for a new normative order.

These are among the features that make cities a space of great complexity and diversity. But today cities confront major conflicts that can reduce that complexity to mere built-up terrain or cement jungle. The urban way of confronting extreme racisms, governmental wars on terror, the future crises of climate change, is to make these challenges occasions to further expand diverse urban capabilities and to expand the meaning of membership.

Cities and political subjectivity: When powerlessness becomes complex

Cities are one of the key sites where new norms and new identities are made. They have been such sites at various times and in various places, and under very diverse conditions. This role can become strategic in particular times and places – as is the case today in global cities – a trend that is counterintuitive but has by now been extensively documented (Sassen 1991/2001; 2012). Today a certain type of city – the global city – has proliferated across the world and emerged as a strategic site for innovations and transformations in multiple institutional domains. Several of the key components of economic globalisation and digitisation are concentrated in global cities and produce dislocations and destabilisations of existing institutional orders that go well beyond cities.⁷ Further, some of the key legal,

⁶ The emergent landscape I am describing promotes a multiplication of diverse spatio-temporal framings and diverse normative mini-orders, where once the dominant logic was toward producing grand unitary national spatial, temporal, and normative framings. See Sassen (2008).

⁷ Emphasising this multiplication of partial assemblage contrasts with much of the globalisation literature that has tended to assume the binary of the global versus the national. In this literature the national is understood as a unit. I emphasise that the global can also be constituted inside the national, i.e. the global city. Further, the focus in the globalisation literature tends to be on the powerful global institutions that have played a critical role in implementing the global corporate economy and have reduced the power of the state. In contrast, I also emphasise that particular components of the state have

regulatory and normative frames for handling urban conditions are now part of national framing; much of what is called urban development policy is national economic policy. It is the concentration of these new dynamics in these cities that forces the need to craft new types of responses and innovations on the part of both the most powerful and the most disadvantaged, albeit for very different types of survival.

In contrast, from the 1930s up until the 1970s, when mass manufacturing dominated, cities had lost strategic functions and were not sites for creative institutional innovations. The strategic sites were the large factory at the heart of the larger process of mass manufacturing and mass consumption. The factory and the government were the strategic sites where the crucial dynamics producing the major institutional innovations of the epoch were located. My own reading of the Fordist city corresponds in many ways to Weber's (1921) in the sense that the strategic scale under Fordism is the national scale: cities lose significance. But I part company from Weber in that historically the large Fordist factory and the mines emerged as key sites for the making of a modern working class and as a syndicalist project; it is not always the city that is the site for making norms and identities.

With globalisation and digitisation—and all the specific elements they entail—global cities do emerge as strategic sites for making norms and identities. Some reflect extreme power, such as the global managerial elites, and others reflect innovation under extreme duress: notably much of what happens in immigrant neighbourhoods. While the strategic transformations are sharply concentrated in global cities, many are also enacted (besides being diffused) in cities at lower orders of national urban hierarchies.

Current conditions in these cities are creating not only new structurations of power but also operational and rhetorical openings for new types of political actors which may long have been invisible or without voice. A key element of the argument here is that the localisation of strategic components of globalisation in these cities means that the disadvantaged can engage new forms of contesting globalised corporate power. Further, the growing numbers and diversity of the disadvantaged in these cities takes on a distinctive "presence."

Critical in this process is to recover some of the differences between being powerless and being invisible or impotent. The disadvantaged in global cities can gain "presence" in their engagement with power but also vis-à-vis each other. This is different from the 1950s to the 1970s in the US, for instance, when white flight and the significant departure of major

actually gained power because they have to do the work of implementing policies necessary for a global corporate economy. This is another reason for valuing the more encompassing normative order that a city can (though does not necessarily) generate.

corporate headquarters left cities hollowed out and the disadvantaged in a condition of abandonment. Today, the localisation of the most powerful global actors in these cities creates a set of objective conditions of engagement: for example the struggles against gentrification which encroaches on minority and disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which led to growing numbers of homeless in the 1980s and struggles for the rights of the homeless; or demonstrations against police brutalising minority people. Elsewhere (Sasken, 2008) I have developed the case that while these struggles are highly localised, they actually represent a form of global engagement; their globality is a horizontal, multi-sited recurrence of similar struggles in hundreds of cities worldwide. These struggles are different from the ghetto uprisings of the 1960s, which were short, intense eruptions confined to the ghettos and causing most of the damage in the neighbourhoods of the disadvantaged themselves. In these ghetto uprisings, there was no engagement with power, but rather a protest against power.

The conditions that today make some cities strategic sites are basically two, and both capture major transformations that are destabilising older systems organising territory and politics: one of these is the re-scaling of what are the strategic territories that articulate the new politico-economic system and hence at least some features of power; the other is the partial unbundling or at least weakening of the national as container of social process due to the variety of dynamics encompassed by globalisation and digitisation. The consequences for cities of these two conditions are many: what matters here is that cities emerge as strategic sites for major economic processes and for new types of political actors.

What is being engendered today in terms of political practices in the global city is quite different from what it might have been in the medieval city of Weber. In the medieval city we see a set of practices that allowed the burghers to set up systems for owning and protecting property against more powerful actors, such as the king and the church, and to implement various immunities against despots of all sorts. Today's political practices, I would argue, have to do with the production of "presence" by those without power and with a politics that claims rights to the city rather than protection of property. What the two situations share is the notion that through these practices new forms of political subjectivity, i.e. citizenship, are being constituted and that the city is a key site for this type of political work. The city is, in turn, partly constituted through these dynamics. Far more so than a peaceful and harmonious suburb, the contested city is where the civic is getting built.

But what happens to these urban capabilities when war goes asymmetric, and when racisms fester in cities where growing numbers become poor and have to struggle for survival? Here

follows a brief discussion of two cases that illustrate how cities can enable powerlessness to become complex. In this complexity lies the possibility of making the political, making history.

The urbanising of war

Today's urbanising of war differs from past histories of cities and war in modern times. In the Second World War, the city entered the war theatre not as a site for war-making but as a technology for instilling fear: Dresden and Hiroshima are iconic cases of the full destruction of cities as a way of terrorising a whole nation. Today, when a conventional army goes to war the enemy is mostly irregular combatants, who lack tanks and aircraft and hence prefer to do the fighting in cities. The countries with the most powerful conventional armies today cannot afford to repeat Dresden with firebombs, or Hiroshima with an atomic bomb—whether in Baghdad, Gaza or the Swat valley. They can engage in all kinds of activities, including violations of the law: rendition, torture, assassinations of leaders they do not like, excessive bombing of civilian areas, and so on, in a history of brutality that can no longer be hidden and seems to have escalated the violence against civilian populations (Cole, 2009 and Rajagopal, 2008). But superior military powers stop short of pulverising a city, even when they have the weapons to do so. The US could have pulverised Baghdad and Israel could have pulverised Gaza. But they did not.

It seems to me that the reason was not respect for life or the fact that killing of unarmed civilians is illegal according to international law. It has more to do with a vague constraint that remains unstated: the notion that the mass killing of people in a city is a different type of horror from allowing the deaths of massive numbers of people year after year in jungles and in villages due to a curable disease such as malaria. The mix of people and buildings—in a way, the civic—has the capacity to temper destruction. Not to stop it, but to temper it. So it is not the death of human beings as such. It is people in the context of the city.

Over and over history shows us the limits of power.⁸ It would seem that unilateral decisions by the greater power are not the only source of restraint: In an increasingly interdependent world, the most powerful countries find themselves restrained through multiple interdependencies. To this I add the city as a weak regime that can obstruct and temper the destructive capacity of a superior military power. It is one more capability for systemic survival in a world where several countries have the capacity to destroy the planet (Sassen,

⁸ A separate source for unilateral restraint is tactical: Thus theorists of war posit also that the superior military force should, for tactical reasons, signal to its enemy that it has not used its full power.

2008, ch. 8).⁹ Under these conditions the city becomes both a technology for containing conventional military powers and a technology of resistance for armed insurgencies. The physical and human features of the city are an obstacle for conventional armies—an obstacle wired into urban space itself.¹⁰

Cities as frontier spaces: the hard work of keeping them open

The preceding section signals that if the city is to survive as a space of complexity and diversity—and not become merely a built-up terrain or cement jungle—it needs capabilities to transform conflict. It will have to find a way to go beyond the fact of conflicts, whether they result from racisms, from governmental wars on terror, or from the future crises of climate change (Marcuse, 2002).

This implies the possibility of making new subjectivities and identities. For instance, often it is the urbanity of the subject and of the setting that mark a city, rather than ethnicity, religion, or phenotype. The urbanity of subject and setting often comes out of hard work and painful trajectories. One question is whether it can also come out of the need for new solidarities in cities confronted by major challenges, such as violent racisms or environmental crises. The acuteness and overwhelming character of the major challenges cities confront today can serve to create conditions where the challenges are bigger and more threatening than a city's internal conflicts and hatreds. This might force us into joint responses and from there onto the emphasis of an urban, rather than individual or group, subject and identity—such as an ethnic or religious subject and identity.

One important instance in the making of norms concerns immigration. What must be emphasised here is the hard work of making open cities and repositioning the immigrant and the citizen as urban subjects that inevitably, mostly, transcend this difference. In the daily

⁹ From a larger angle than the one that concerns me here, when great powers fail in this self-restraint we have what Mearsheimer (2003) has called the tragedy of great powers.

¹⁰ This dual process of urbanisation of war and militarisation of urban life unsettles the meaning of the urban (Graham 2010). Marcuse (2002) writes that “the War on terrorism is leading to a continued downgrading of the quality of life in US cities, visible changes in urban form, the loss of public use of public space, restriction on free movement within and to cities, particularly for members of darker skinned groups, and the decline of open popular participation in the governmental planning and decision-making process.” Second it questions the role of cities as welfare providers. The imperative of security means a shift in political priorities. It implies a cut or a relative decrease in budgets dedicated to social welfare, education, health, infrastructure development, economic regulation and planning. These two trends, in turn, challenge the very concept of citizenship (Sassen, 2008, chapter 6, Graham, 2011 and Marcuse, 2002, pp. 596-606).

routines of a city the key factors that rule are work, family, school, public transport, and so on, and this holds for both immigrants and citizens. Perhaps the sharpest marking difference in a city is between the rich and the poor, and each of these classes includes both immigrants and citizens (Smith and Favell, 2006). It is when the law and the police enter the picture that the differences of immigrant status versus citizen status become key factors. But most of daily life in the city is not ruled by this differentiation.

Here I address this issue from the perspective of the capacity of urban space to make norms and make subjects that can escape the constraints of dominant power systems such as the nation-state, the War on Terror, the growing weight of racism. The particular case of immigrant integration in Europe over the centuries, the making of the European Open City, is one window into this complex and historically variable question.

In my reading, both European and Western hemisphere history shows that the challenges of incorporating the “outsider” often became the instruments for developing the civic and, at times, for expanding the rights of the already included. Responding to the claims by the excluded has had the effect of expanding the rights of citizenship. And very often restricting the rights of immigrants has been part of a loss of rights for citizens. This was clearly the case with the Immigration Reform Act passed by the Clinton Administration in the US, which showed that a Democratic Party legislative victory for an “immigration law” had the effect of taking away rights from immigrants and from citizens (Sassen, 2008, ch. 4, 5, and 6).

Anti-immigrant sentiment has long been a critical dynamic in Europe’s history, one until recently mostly overlooked in standard European histories (Sassen, 1999 and 2007, ch. 5). Anti-immigrant sentiment and attacks occurred in each of the major immigration phases in all major European countries. No labour-receiving country has a clean record; not Switzerland, with its long admirable history of international neutrality, and not even France, the most open to immigration, refugees, and exiles. For instance, French workers killed Italian workers in the 1800s, having accused them of being the wrong types of Catholics. Critical is the fact that there were always, as is the case today, individuals, groups, organisations, and politicians who believed in making our societies more inclusive of immigrants. History suggests that those fighting for incorporation succeeded in the long run, even if only partially. Just to focus on the recent past, one quarter of the French have a foreign-born ancestor three generations up, and 34 percent of Viennese are either born abroad or have foreign parents. It took active making to transform the hatreds towards foreigners into the urban civic. But it is also the result of constraints in a large city; for instance, to have a sound public transport system means it is not feasible to check on the status of all users and also have a reasonably fast

system. A basic and thin rule needs to be met: pay your ticket and you are on. That is the making of the civic as a material condition: all those who buy a ticket can use the public bus or train, regardless of whether they are citizens or tourists, good people or not-so-good people, local residents or visitors from another city.

Europe has a barely recognised history of several centuries of internal labour migrations. This is a history that hovers in the penumbra of official European history, dominated by the image of Europe as a continent of emigration, never of immigration. At any given time there were multiple significant flows of intra-European migration. All the workers involved were seen as outsiders, as undesirables, as threats to the community. The immigrants were mostly from the same broad cultural and religious group, and phenotype. Yet they were seen as impossible to assimilate. The French hated the Belgian immigrant workers saying they were the wrong type of Catholics, and the Dutch saw the German Protestant immigrant workers as the wrong type of Protestants. This is a telling fact. It suggests that it is simply not correct to argue, as is so often done, that today it is more difficult to integrate immigrants because of their different religion, culture and phenotype. When these were similar, anti-immigrant sentiment was as strong as today, and it often led to physical violence on the immigrant. Yet all along, significant numbers of immigrants did become part of the community, even if it took two or three generations. They often maintained their distinctiveness, yet were still members of the complex, highly heterogeneous social order of any developed city.

Today the argument against immigration may be focused on questions of race, religion, and culture, and this focus might seem rational: that cultural and religious distance is the reason for the difficulty of incorporation. But in sifting through the historical and current evidence we find only new contents for an old passion: the racialising of the outsider as Other. Today the Other is stereotyped by differences of race, religion, and culture. These are equivalent arguments to those made in the past when migrants were broadly of the same religious, racial, and cultural group. Migration hinges on a move between two worlds, even if within a single region or country, such as East Germans moving to West Germany after 1989, where they were often viewed as a different ethnic group with undesirable traits. What is today's equivalent challenge, one that can force us to go beyond our differences and make what it is that corresponds to that older traditional making of the European civic?

Conclusion: Where we stand now

The major challenges that confront cities (and society in general) have increasingly strong feedback loops that contribute to a disassembling of the old civic urban order. The so-called “War on Terrorism” is perhaps one of the most acute versions of this dynamic, that is, the

dynamic whereby fighting terrorism has a strong impact on diminishing the old civic urban order. Climate change and its impacts on cities could also be the source of new types of urban conflicts and divisions.

But I would argue that these challenges do contain their own specific potential for making novel kinds of broad front platforms for urban action and joining forces with those who may be seen as too different from us. Fighting climate change may well force citizens and immigrants from many different religions, cultures and phenotypes to work together. Similarly, fighting the abuses of power of the state in the name of fighting terrorism can create similar coalitions bringing together residents who may have thought they could never collaborate with each other, but now that there is a bigger threat to civil rights that will also affect citizens, not only immigrants, novel solidarities are emerging.

The spread of asymmetric war and climate change will affect both the rich and poor, and addressing them will demand that everybody join the effort. Furthermore, while sharp economic inequalities, racisms, and religious intolerance have long existed, they are now becoming political mobilisers in a context where the centre no longer holds whether this is an imperial centre, the national state, or the city's bourgeoisie.

These developments signal the emergence of new types of socio-political orderings that can coexist with older orderings, such as the nation-state, the interstate system, and the older place of the city in a hierarchy that is dominated by the national state. Among these new types of orderings are global cities that have partly exited that national, state-dominated hierarchy and become part of multi-scalar, regional, and global networks. The last two decades have seen an increasingly urban articulation of global logics and struggles, and an escalating use of urban space to make political claims not only by the citizens but also by foreigners.

References

- Sassen, S (2011) "The Global Street: Making the Political". *Globalizations*, October 2011, Vol. 8, No. 5, pp. 565–571;
- Sassen, S "Imminent Domain: Spaces of Occupation." *Art Forum*, January 2012
- Sassen, S (2008) *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Sassen, S (2007) *A Sociology of Globalization*, New York: W. W. Norton, chapter 5.
- Sassen, S (1999) *Guests and Aliens: Europe's Immigrants, Refugees and Colonists*. New York: New Press
- Cole, J (2009) " Gaza 2008: Micro-Wars and Macro-Wars," *Informed Comment*, 4 January, <http://www.juancole.com/2009/01/gaza-2008-micro-wars-and-macro-wars.html>;
- Rajagopal, A (2008), "Violence, publicity, and sovereignty," *SSRC Blog*, 26 November, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/12/15/violence-publicity-and-sovereignty/>.
- Graham, S (2011) *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*, London: Verso.
- Marcuse, P (2002) "Urban Form and Globalization after September 11th: The View from New York", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3,
- Mearsheimer, J (2003) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Smith, M.P., and A. Favell. (2006) The Human Face of Global Mobility: International Highly Skilled Migration in Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific. Special Issue of *Comparative Urban and Community Research*, Vol. 8.

Dealing in Death: the Battle Against the UK Arms Trade — Barnaby Pace (Freelance)

David Cameron's arms-selling trip to Indonesia demonstrates the cynical realities of the weapons market. It was not long ago that the Indonesian armed forces used UK Hawk jets to [bomb civilians](#) in East Timor. There are continuing human rights abuses in West Papua and elsewhere. Meanwhile military officers are rumoured to be receiving up to 40% of the value of arms purchases in bribes. But these sales and the damage they cause can be stopped by ordinary people who make a stand. The arms trade is the only business in the world that counts its profits in pounds and its losses in lives. It thrives on conflict and corruption is routine. Its products are not only intended to maim and kill but to generate profits; profits taken from state budgets that could otherwise be used on healthcare, education or dealing with the threats of climate change or resource depletion.

Arms exports from the UK are worth around £5bn every year with the largest customers over the last ten years being Saudi Arabia, the USA and India. But the statist terms in which the arms trade is normally explained only voice part of the story. The arms trade is composed of international companies, operating not to secure a nation but to profit from insecurity. Despite the corporate status of arms companies, they still receive disproportionate state support. No other industry receives the same level of ministerial attention, with arms company executives frequently accompanying the Prime Minister on overseas trips – seemingly regardless of the local situation as long as there are sales to be made.¹¹ The UK's export promotion body, [UK Trade and Investment](#) (UKTI), has more staff devoted to arms export promotion than to all other export sectors put together.¹² Yet the economic benefits of the arms trade are vastly exaggerated. UK arms exports support around 55,000 jobs and make up 1.2% of the UK's total exports but depend on a government subsidy conservatively estimated at £700 million

¹¹ For example, David Cameron visited Tahrir Square in 2011 accompanied by Ian King, chief executive of BAE Systems as well as executives from Thales UK, Qinetiq, Rolls Royce, Cobham Group, Ultra Electronics, Babcock International Group and Atkins, several of whom were involved in arming the Egyptian regime.

¹² UKTI's arms export unit employs 160 staff, compared to approximately 130 staff to support its other 34 sectors. CAAT, 8/7/2011 Available at <http://www.caat.org.uk/issues/ukti/> Accessed 22 September 2013

per year, which works out to £12,700 per job every year. In the words of the *Financial Times*'s Alan Beattie, "You can have as many arms export jobs as you are prepared to waste public money subsidising."

The arms trade, including that of the UK, operates in something close to a legal vacuum. A South American group recently asserted, with good cause, that the international trade in bananas is more closely regulated than the trade in arms. The UK does have arms export regulations which read well on paper – with mentions of the risks to human rights, internal repression and sustainable development – but these regulations are frequently ignored when perceived national interests are at stake. This is obvious in the UK's largest arms customer, Saudi Arabia, a repressive and totalitarian state, involved in the violent repression of democratic protests both domestically and in neighbouring Bahrain, possibly using UK weaponry. Furthermore UK built Tornado jets were used by the Saudi Arabian military in 2010 to indiscriminately bomb several Yemeni villages in what may amount to war crimes. These incidents, and many others like them, are brushed off by the UK Government whenever it suits their perceived national interests: interests which sometimes overlap disconcertingly with the profit margins of major arms companies.

Of course the supposed national interests of the state are extremely changeable. In the recent Libyan conflict British-made arms could be found with the Gaddafi regime, the rebels and NATO. Indeed, at least one company, MBDA, legally supplied all three sides with bombs and missiles. Yet weapons are made to be durable and last decades. Many weapons, sold to so-called stable regimes, such as the 15,000 surface-to-air missiles currently unaccounted for in Libya, will remain a danger for generations to come.

The arms trade accounts for 40% of corruption in all global trade (Roeber, 2005): a staggering figure when the international arms trade only amounts to \$60bn each year, a relatively small sum compared with many industries. The corruption in the trade means that choices made over what arms should be purchased can be skewed towards even more expensive and unnecessary equipment, subverting any semblance of democracy in such decision making¹³ and stealing money from worthier causes. In the UK, political support and prosecutorial incompetence, best exemplified in the Al Yamamah case, has made the country a global hotspot for corruption. Arms companies, like the German Ferrostaal, have even created vehicles in London for "outsourcing commission payments" through which bribes

¹³ For a more complete insight into the reason why the arms trade is particularly given to corruption, see Feinstein, A., Holden, P. and Pace, B., 'Corruption and the arms trade: sins of commission' in SIPRI Yearbook 2011. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 13-35

often flow in order to “insulate themselves from potential tax and prosecutorial investigations” (Debevoise and Plimpton LLP, 2011).

Dealing death in the Docklands

Perhaps the most visible event in the UK’s support for the global arms trade is the London arms fair, Defence Systems & Equipment International (DSEi, pronounced ‘Dicey’ by activists), a government sponsored and subsidised event bringing together arms companies and their customers in London’s docklands every two years. Substantial protests are often heavily policed despite their non-violent nature, yet inside the fair, where repressive regimes are courted by arms dealers, it is left to campaigners, journalists and MPs to expose unethical or illegal activities such as the advertising of torture equipment or landmines.

The last fair took place in autumn 2011, with over 1,300 arms companies attending from around the world, displaying weapons ranging from rifles to tanks to fighter jets to battleships. Specially invited by the UK government to browse through the wares were fourteen authoritarian regimes, five countries identified by the Foreign Office as having “the most serious wide-ranging human rights concerns” and eight countries identified as being in a “major armed conflict”.¹⁴ All this takes place in secret behind police lines and the security fences of the Excel centre. Transparency is not the arms dealer’s friend.

Yet in recent years, journalists and campaigners, including Mark Thomas and Caroline Lucas, have made it into the fair. Every year torture equipment and cluster munitions, both illegal, are openly advertised; indeed Pakistan Ordnance factories, which were caught selling cluster munitions in 2009, returned advertising the same weaponry last year. It is incredible and indicative of the incompatibility of regulation and promotion that it took campaigners, a comedian and a Member of Parliament to find clearly illegal equipment being marketed at the UK Government’s own arms fair.

Activists in defence of humanity

Campaigners can help regulate the arms trade, stopping the most heinous deals, either through alerting the world as in the case of campaigners inside DSEi or attempting to stop

¹⁴ The 14 “authoritarian regimes” as identified by the Economist Intelligence Unit were Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Vietnam. The five countries identified by the Foreign Office as having “the most serious wide-ranging human rights concerns” were Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. The eight countries identified by SIPRI as being in a “major armed conflict” in 2010 were Colombia, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Turkey and the USA.

the trade altogether through a range of actions as diverse as the people who want the trade to end. This can take the form of educating the public about the trade, challenging the clichéd arguments in favour of arms exports through lobbying the government and with direct action. Groups such as Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) use a diversity of tactics to constantly challenge the arms trade and researchers whose names few people will ever hear and work relentlessly to expose individual deals and companies to scrutiny.

Actions taken by campaigners and public pressure have resulted in real victories. Corruption has been challenged in moves like CAAT's legal action against the Government over the Al Yamamah investigation. The arms export promotion unit inside the UK Ministry of Defence, DESO, was closed after years of effort. Arms fairs have been shut. An event similar to DSEi in Australia was successfully shut down on three occasions through a public campaign of protest. Lobbying and education are organised by a myriad of churches, unions and social justice organisations.

There has also been a proud history of non-violent direct action against the arms trade. Notable examples include the Seeds of Hope group in 1996, which broke into a British Aerospace Engineering (BAE) base and took hammers to a Hawk jet, intended for sale to Indonesia and possibly used in the conflict in East Timor. Activists in Derry damaged Raytheon's logistical network in 2006 and prevented shipments reaching the war in Lebanon. The arms company's office was eventually shut in 2010. These activists, and many others, have risked their liberty to prevent crimes against humanity.¹⁵

Anti-DSEi campaigners have tried to shut the fair. They have attempted to stop delegates arriving, including through locking themselves to the Docklands Light Railway. They have targeted the institutions that support the trade, whether financial institutions that fund the deals or the cultural and political groups that support the fair. Activists have attempted to remind the public of the consequences of the arms trade and pointed out the absurdities of the situation, most memorably with the appearance and impromptu auctioning off to the highest bidder of a real tank by the SpaceHijackers group (2007).

Anti-arms trade campaigners, particularly, have been targeted in return with a range of landmark policing and legal tactics. Both arms companies and police have sent spies deep into campaigns and spent millions trying to thwart activists. There have been prohibitions on

¹⁵ For an academic look at these cases and what they tell us about Anarchism and agents of security please see Rosedale, C. (2010) 'Anarchy is What Anarchists Make of it: Reclaiming the Concept of Agency in IR and Security Studies', *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 39(2), pp.483–501. [Online]. Available at: <http://mil.sagepub.com/content/39/2/483.full.pdf+html>, Accessed 17 April 2012

protests and even an attempted *de facto* ban on a £500 campaigning film. Luckily these bans have only drawn greater attention. In the case of the film made by the Brighton campaign, Smash EDO, *On the Verge* (2007), designed to highlight the repressive tactics used against them, made national news and ironically sparked a film tour as “the film the police tried to ban”. Given the lengths companies and the authorities go to in order to hamper resistance to the arms trade, it is a reasonable conclusion that this activism is seen as a potent threat.

When working on a book on the arms trade, the author I was working with interviewed an arms dealer who operated across the whole spectrum of legality, supplying conflicts all around the world. Asked about whether an arms deal that broke UN sanctions might be immoral, he responded that “I’m in this business for the defence of humanity” (Feinstein, 2012). But it is the people who work towards a world where death is not bought and sold who are truly defending humanity. They are the real agents of security.

The arms trade is dangerous, corrupting and amoral. It exists in a shadow world at the far edges of legality, feeding off conflict and corruption. The state has long turned a blind eye to its damage, defending it in the name of national security or publicly funded jobs. There is a plethora of effective ways to resist – research, education, lobbying, protest or direct action – all help to halt the trade of these most lethal of commodities. It is only through the actions of principled people who want real security for all that the arms trade can be controlled and eventually ended.

Dealing in Death: the Battle against the UK Arms Trade was published on openDemocracy, OurKingdom on 27 April 2012. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/barnaby-pace/dealing-in-death-battle-against-uk-arms-trade>

References

Roeber, J. (2005) 'Hard-wired for corruption: the arms trade and corruption', *Prospect*, no.113, Available at <http://tiny.cc/us6ecx>, Accessed 22 September 2013.

Part of the company's internal investigation, carried out by its US lawyers was leaked in (2011) Available at <http://tiny.cc/mm6ecx> (Accessed: 13 October 2011).

SpaceHijackers (No date) Available at: <http://www.spacehijackers.org/html/projects/dsei07/> (Accessed:22 September 2013).

Feinstein, A. (2012) *The Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Section 2

Contending Histories

City of Paradox: The Refugee Experience — Philip Marfleet (UEL)

We have an unusual mix of participants at this conference: academics, researchers, students and activists. I would like to make some introductory comments which I hope will be useful to the discussion. Our event headlines the contested character of London, focusing on the city's various and different histories and contemporary realities. These are strikingly clear in the case of migration. Local organisers of the 2012 Games have for years stressed that the London Games are based on the city's experience of 'diversity and inclusion'. Their approach has been adopted by the official Olympic movement which has endorsed the idea of a great global city embracing the cultures of the world. The chairman of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Coordination Commission, Denis Oswald, said that: 'London is ready to welcome the world this summer' (BBC, 2012). The working theme of the Olympics 2012 is in effect that London, city of inclusion, engages with the world. Yes, London is a great global city. Yes, it is diverse, 'super-diverse' culturally, as some researchers put it. And it can be highly inclusive; people come to London in part because its diversity gives real options for inclusion. But London is a city of selective inclusion.

Entry to Britain has become extraordinarily difficult and will become more so. A new report from the National Audit Office has concluded that 50,000 people each year 'abuse' the student visa system, coming to Britain in reality to work, and that they should be excluded (Bowcott, 2012). Some people will get visas for the summer Olympics but the vast majority will be those able to pay inflated visa fees (the cost goes up in April 2012 with some categories now doubling in cost). Just to get the visa they will go through elaborate checks, usually contracted out to private companies, before they are permitted to present a passport. This will often include examination of a bank statement; only then do they get the chance to pay extravagant hotel bills, let alone the cost of tickets for events at the Games. This is a process of filtering those deemed appropriate for entry. It is not about 'diversity and inclusion'; it is about selection and exclusion from a city that is now among the very least accessible in the Global North. The privileged, the comfortably off, the global elite will get access: the rest will not get anywhere near the Olympic Park.

This is the first and rather obvious issue in relation to 2012 and matters of migration. We might say *plus ça change...* so it has always been.

Refugees

But issues of migration are dense with paradox and – in a more structured way – with contradiction.

I want to examine this by looking at the circumstances of people who often most urgently seek admission – people compelled to become migrants – refugees. Historically, this is not easy: refugees are among the ‘forgotten’ of mainstream history. As the historian Tony Kushner puts it, they are victims of a form of amnesia among academics with the result that, although millions of people have travelled to Britain in modern times in search of safety and security, their circumstances and experiences have seldom been recorded (Kushner, 2006).

We do know that during the 19th century not one refugee was rejected or expelled from Britain, that successive governments endorsed their presence. An article in *The Times* (28 February 1853, cited in Porter, 1979) declared: ‘Every civilised people on the face of the earth must be fully aware that this country is the asylum of nations, and that it will defend the asylum to the last ounce of its treasure, and the last drop of its blood’. Most of the refugees were political activists associated with movements for national independence in Europe or with radical currents such as anarchism or communism which opposed governments of some of Britain’s most important rival states. Almost all lived in London; most in East London. The city was the ‘refugee capital of Europe’ accommodating a remarkable diversity of people.

The British state itself did not like them, and there were many xenophobic comments from leading politicians. Bernard Porter, a leading historian of 19th century Britain, notes that the refugees were regarded as ‘dirty, lazy, immoral, hirsute, pipe-smoking, garlic-smelling firebrands’ (Porter, 2003). Successive governments nonetheless accepted them on the basis that accommodating their enemies’ enemies was a wise strategic approach, and one which also embellished domestic political agendas on which the nation-state was viewed as a home of specific ‘British liberties’. This helps to explain the attitudes of some politicians today when they want to assert British credentials in this area. David Cameron, for example, asserts that: ‘The **British** tradition of **welcoming** genuine **refugees** to this country is a great one’ (Refugee Council, 2006).

While there is some commitment to the idea of inclusion, there’s also contradiction because these attitudes were double-edged. By the 1880s, with the onset of the ‘Great Depression’, official attitudes towards refugees became more hostile. In 1905 they changed radically with

the Aliens Act, the first piece of modern legislation which both named the refugee and provided for certain sorts of refugees to be excluded. In the early 20th century, people escaping persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe who were on their way to Britain as 'the asylum of nations' found themselves rejected. Encouraged to find sanctuary by an earlier record of accommodation, they were refused because they were the wrong sort of migrants. The Aliens Act was an anti-Semitic law: the refugees were rejected because most were Jews.

Change

This example reflects a strong tendency in migration law and policy which has had a big impact in London: the imposition of abrupt, even apparently capricious, changes of policy upon people on the move. There was earlier evidence as early as the late 17th and early 18th centuries. We see this in the case of the very first people formally categorised as refugees: the Huguenots. During the 1680s there was a fascinating episode during which Parliament – through the king – invited the persecuted Protestants of France (usually known as the Huguenots) to seek sanctuary in England. King Charles II of England sent a well-publicised message to King Louis XIV of France. He wrote:

I conjure you in the name of the great [King] Henry [VIII], whose precious blood circulates in both our veins, to respect the Protestants who he looked upon as his children. If, as is reported, you wish to compel them to renounce their religion under pain of banishment from your Kingdom I offer them an Asylum in that of England (Lee, 1936)

When large numbers of Huguenots escaped France and travelled to England – most settling in London – the English state secured a huge prize. They welcomed migrants who were among the most dynamic elements in industry and commerce in France, who had played a key role in the French army and navy, and whose loss to France was viewed as a windfall for the English state.

A few years later another group of Calvinists from Europe attempted to follow the Huguenots. The Palatines of the Rhineland, unlike the French refugees, were not wealthy merchants, skilled artisans or cadres of a rival state's armed forces. Rather, they were largely poor, illiterate, landless peasants. Most were forced into camps in South London sometimes described as the first refugee camps of the modern era. Most were shortly expelled from British territory. A historian of these events explains:

Unlike earlier [Huguenot] refugee groups, who had carefully been kept away from an initially fearful people or else displayed at their best, as dressed for church on parade, the Palatines were put up in open campsites in the parks so crowds of London strollers

could see awesomely large encampments of them on the mundane rounds of daily life, eating, washing, disciplining children. English spectators came to stare at them with distaste for their slovenly appearance, and fights broke out between English and Palatines (Olson, 2001).

The Huguenots have entered the mainstream of British history as 'definitive refugees'; the Palatines have largely been forgotten. After an abrupt change of policy they were expelled and soon removed from history and from memory.

Belgians

There have been other significant examples of this practice. In 1914 the largest-ever short-term movement of migrants to Britain took place when some 250,000 Belgians entered southern England in efforts to escape the early German military offensives of the First World War. The British Government was at first unwilling to accept them but a mood of public enthusiasm for the migrants (despite the impact of the earlier Aliens Act) compelled a change in policy and Belgian refugees were accommodated across the country. The Government nonetheless remained determined to intern or to remove all 'aliens' and by 1919 almost every single Belgian had been repatriated; only a handful remained and few were recalled at all in mainstream history or in popular memory.

Inclusion and exclusion today

I want to draw some conclusions for today. Migration of people in need has for centuries been a key factor in shaping the character of London: its demography; its culture; and its daily life. But inclusion can rapidly change to exclusion.

Take the relatively recent example of refugees from Kosovo, encouraged by Tony Blair in 1999 to seek protection in Britain. Large numbers of people in Kosovo started long, risky journeys to escape the impact of conflict. Many were soon rejected; while some had reached Britain and others were still en route they were informed that developments in the Balkans meant that their problems were officially over and that they should return or turn back. One academic study shows that the official picture in Britain of 'poor Kosovar refugees' soon faded, replaced by images promoted by the media of illegal migrants being smuggled into Western Europe, so that Kosovans became 'illegal, scrounging immigrant[s]' (Van Selm, 2006).

It is the state itself which produces these abrupt changes, treating migrants instrumentally, and selecting and rejecting as circumstances suggest. Here the state itself is an immensely powerful institution, especially a state structure such as that in Britain, with more than 350

years of history at the centre of domestic political life. There is a huge disproportion between the resources of the state and those of vulnerable migrants (especially those who have been displaced from their places of origin) perhaps more asymmetry here than between any other institution and informal group in the modern world. For governments, policy making vis-à-vis such people is perceived as cost-free: refugees have become almost irresistibly attractive as people upon whom policy can be practised and political agendas exercised without a collective response.

Paradox

So historically we see inclusion (at least inclusion of sorts) and exclusion. In the case of forced migrants, the official narrative celebrates 'genuine' refugees, rejecting those deemed unsuitable or 'alien', and today that means that most very vulnerable people seeking sanctuary cannot find safety and security in London. Today unprecedented numbers of people worldwide seek sanctuary in the relatively stable cities of the Global North. Their journeys are long and extraordinarily dangerous. A fraction of them succeed, and a fraction of these reach London, a city said to be ready 'to welcome the world' but in which those with political authority find many reasons for exclusion. We know from London's multiple and contested histories, and from today's realities, that it remains less a place of inclusion than a city of paradox.

References

- BBC (2012) 'London 2012: Olympic city ready to welcome the world, says IOC', 30 March
- Bowcott (2012) 'Students visas abused as 50,000 enter UK for employment not studies', *Guardian*, 27 March
- Kushner, T. (2006) *Remembering Refugees: Then and Now* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
- Lee, G. L. (1936) *The Huguenot Settlements in Ireland* (London: Longmans Green), pp11-12.
- Olson, A. G. (2001) 'Huguenots and Palatines', *The Historian*, Vol 63, p275.
- Porter, B. (1979) *The Refugee Question in mid-Victorian Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Porter, B (2003) 'The asylum of nations: Britain and the refugees of 1848', in Freitag, S. (ed) *Exiles from European revolutions* (Oxford: Berghahn) p 48.
- Refugee Council (2006) ' 'Different pasts, shared future' - unique collaboration as party leaders praise the contribution of refugees', available online at: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/940_different_pasts_shared_future_-_unique_collaboration_as_party_leaders_praise_the_contribution_of_refugees; accessed 1 September 2013.
- Van Selm, J., 'Conclusion', in Van Selm, J. (ed.), *Kosovo's Refugees in the European Union*, Pinter, London, 2000, p206.

A Snapshot of the Jewish Community in London — Alex Goldberg (Surrey)

To avoid overlapping with Ben Gidley's paper, I will start with a few statistics to provide a snapshot of the present state of the Jewish community in the UK. In the last Census (2011), two-thirds of Jews lived in Greater London and that does not include those living in contiguous parts of the capital, with a large presence in south Hertfordshire, south Essex and north Surrey. In 2001, 23% of the Jews in Britain lived in the borough of Barnet and Redbridge; probably with the new Census data coming in we will see the population in Redbridge declining whilst Barnet, Stanmore and Hertsmere have become Jewish centres. Redbridge once boasted the most densely populated Jewish community in Europe (until the early 1980s). In 2001 the village of Radlett had a 25% Jewish population. The Jewish community is now a largely suburban phenomenon. This is an interesting phenomenon of counter-urbanisation where people who came from villages in Eastern Europe and lived in urban centres less than 20 years ago are now going back to live in a village in Hertfordshire.

However, at the same time, there is still a natural population growth in the inner city areas of north Hackney, Seven Sisters and Haringey, mainly due to the strictly Orthodox Jewish community. There has been a massive increase in the size of the strictly Orthodox or Haredi community: 48% of Jewish births in the UK, and probably over half of Jewish births in London, are strictly Orthodox. The strictly Orthodox community in London probably numbered only 6-8,000 in 1980. Today this community is nearly 40,000 strong. There has been a revolution in Jewish schooling. In 1990, 25% of Jewish children attended Jewish state schools. Today this figure is 63%. There are around 120 Jewish schools in the UK, of which about 100 are probably in London. All Haredi children attend Jewish schools and the trend amongst non-Haredi children is moving towards Jewish schooling (43% of the non-Haredi community attend Jewish schools).

The Jewish community is diverse in London, coming from different diasporic, denominational and cultural communities. The community in London is growing for the first time since the 1950s and this is an important new trend. Most demographers now predict it will grow further following five decades of natural population decline (due to low-birth movements). Jewish

migration in London traditionally went along tube lines with a slow migration north-west along the Northern Line and north-east along the Central Line. This still exists and the Thameslink is now another extension to this route into the Hertfordshire countryside. There also appears to be some evidence of a counter-counter-urbanisation trend and a return to the inner cities. In reality this is to do with the fast growth rate in Hackney/Haringey with the strictly Orthodox community now doubling every 15-20 years. In turn, there appears to be Haredi migration to centres such as Golders Green and Edgware (whilst reportedly several hundred young families have left London for the other Haredi centre of Salford, Greater Manchester, where housing is more affordable). The Jewish population worldwide is extremely urban. Most Jews live in ten cities around the world. London is no longer considered one of those cities as there are only 150–200,000 Jews living in London. The only city in Europe that has a sizeable Jewish population and competes in population terms with the large urban Jewish populations in the United States and Israel is Paris with about 350,000 Jews.

Economically, we are looking at a much more diverse, even polarised, community, and we need to tread carefully away from stereotypes: in the non-Haredi (strictly Orthodox) population the community is largely professional, university educated, with high numbers having postgraduate qualifications. This is a community that believes it is well integrated and has advanced in socio-economic terms in the five generations (now, perhaps six) since the era of Jewish mass migration, circa 1880-1916. But it is not the only story. Whilst in London we do have a mobile Jewish population, largely in the suburban areas of Barnet, we also have the growth of the Jewish population in Hackney and Haringey that I have mentioned before where many of the children are below the poverty line and live in large families averaging five to seven children. With one in two Jewish births in the UK being Haredi Londoners there is increasingly a socio-economic divide in the London Jewish population.

I also want to pose the question of Jewish culture. Philosophically, how does Jewish culture become British? In France alone, in the past ten years, some 15 major French feature films have a Jewish theme in them, including a film called *La vérité si je mens!* (Would I lie to you?). The third in the series of this popular comedy feature film, based on the lives of Sephardi Jewish families working in the clothing industry in France, was released in 2012. There is no comparable phenomenon here.

Comparative surveys show that Jews in Eastern and Western Europe have polarising sets of concerns. Eastern European Jews today are concerned about their future and as a result of that tend to value interfaith activity, interactions with other communities being a top priority; they also freely express concerns about their security situation. The Jewish community in

Western Europe has concerns about security but less so; they are more concerned with ensuring the continued task of community building: schools and education. The surveys also reveal that there is greater introspection in Western Europe concerning their relationship with the state of Israel and North American Jewish communities. The Eastern European communities (post-Soviet, declining populations and increasing levels of anti-Semitic rhetoric) feel they need the support of other Jewish communities around the world. Western European communities feel self-reliant and independent.

There are different schools of thoughts within Jewish London: Minhag Anglia/Centrists/Communitarian is one such school. This school probably now represents half the Jews in London. It belongs nationally to the mainstream Orthodox synagogues which are led by the chief Rabbi. The Jews belonging to this organisation see their identity as being very British but see their private life as being Jewish at the same time. As such this group has traditionally portrayed itself as doing a balancing act by embracing secular learning and modernity whilst maintaining Jewish traditions at home and in the synagogue. This sector of the community is still the largest but has faced a large decline in numbers. In 1993, three-quarters of Jews were affiliated to the United Synagogue and other centrist affiliates. Today it is only 50%.

Progressive Religious models are similar to communitarian but with some key religious differences and like to portray themselves institutionally as more outward looking. Again, as synagogue affiliates there are different denominations which claim to be progressive: reformist and liberal. Whilst these movements and the Masorti (conservative movement which is non-Orthodox) have theological differences with the United Synagogue, the outlook of their members on society and their identity tend to be the same. This community represents about 20-25% of synagogue attendees.

Secular Jewish groups are largely ethnicists: secular Jews reject the Jewish religion but identify ethnically or culturally as Jewish. There are some formal structures within this section of the community around art, music and Yiddish revivalism but unlike the United States and parts of the Benelux there are no formally established secular Jewish communities. The new Jewish Community Centre for London tends to attract those from a variety of different groups mentioned here so does not mirror secular Jewish centres such as the one in Brussels.

The strictly Orthodox/Haredi communities are religious. They are divided into different sects but have common education and welfare structures. They are conservative and traditionalist with large population growth.

There is still a kernel of the Jewish socialist tradition but it is nothing like it was in the 1930s;

Cable St is far away from here. Alternative expressions of Judaism are growing. We have institutional houses in London where young people live together and form communes made up of people in mainly arts and drama. There are also alternative Jews who join various campaigns on the environment, human rights and development. Some of these movements consist of coalitions with the other models.

The Haredi community forms practical coalitions in local neighbourhoods to push for better faith-specific provision for welfare, education, housing and hospital services. In London, a coalition with the Muslim community, based in Hackney and called the Jewish Muslim Forum is one such example. It has had successes on welfare services, housing, planning, disability care and tackling social deprivation. There are also examples of co-operation between these two communities working together and with the police on security and anti-racism. The issue of security mirrors some of the mainstream community's reason for engagement which was originally the reason that interfaith dialogue was established formally by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbi in 1942: namely to tackle the root causes of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic sentiments at a time when Jews were being persecuted and killed in Europe. There are many groups which engage in interfaith dialogue: some are elite and academic or theological (Council of Christians and Jews); some are more intercultural. Some of the newer groups increasingly look towards common action or social action projects to set up a formal channel of interaction. The Three Faiths Forum is one of the leaders in this area.

Coalitions have also been formed on the basis of ideological social action, mainly by progressive movements such as the Jewish Action Social Forum, occasionally London Citizens and other civic groups. To a certain extent the central orthodox movement, communitarian movement and alternative Judaism have also got involved. There is a growth in the number of groups in the Jewish community that have been established to campaign on issues relating to human rights (René Cassin); development (Tzedek); environment (Big Green Jewish project; Noah) and anti-racism (JCORE). There is a growing Jewish Social Hub in West Hampstead that houses and supports many of these groups.

This is a practically based reason for interaction and engagement and is one used by a new generation of more open orthodox Jewish leaders from the mainstream Orthodox community. This is looking at ways in which the community can best work with and serve the city and local neighbourhoods.

In 1950 the Jewish community was the largest non-Christian minority in the city, in this country, probably in Europe. Today we are probably fourth or fifth. We believe in civic engagement and turn to Jewish values to achieve this. Jewish teaching encourages civic

engagement, service and a duty to the local community in which you reside.

There are some who are looking at what the Jewish community can do in terms of developing its collective role in civic life and how best to engage given the new demographic situation. Despite being 'a smaller community, and no longer the largest non-Christian population, we have to find a new role and whilst we are no longer the “other” or the “only other” we can make a valuable contribution to civic participation, community development and working with new and newer communities, as well as the more established ones, in building new civic structures and assisting in building social capital in London, drawing on our strengths, values and experiences in building communities and developing interaction.

After the Kettle, the Cordon — Dan Hancox (Freelance)

The two million-strong public sector strike on 30 November 2011 was accompanied by a march of 30,000 through central London against pension reforms, and against government austerity; along the way many marchers, myself included, were surprised to see a ten-foot high steel fence erected across Trafalgar Square. ‘Met unveil revolutionary police barrier’ read the *Daily Mail* (2011) headline; they were the only newspaper to realise its importance. This is what counts as revolutionary in 2011 Britain: a revolution against free assembly, against freedom of movement, against the commons, and further towards a [state of exception](#). The *Daily Mail* continued:

The police cordon was erected at the north end of Whitehall near Trafalgar Square yesterday afternoon in an attempt to stop anti-cuts protesters heading towards Parliament. The Metropolitan Police said the barrier of steel structure is put in place when a potential public order situation is likely to develop and they need a physical barrier to block cars and people. (2011)

After the TUC march peacefully dispersed on the Victoria Embankment, I tracked back towards Trafalgar Square. There, at the edge of the steel cordon, two uniformed officers were acting like bouncers, admitting tourists and office workers into the square in single file; admitting everyone, in fact, except the four women aged around 35-55 in front of me, carrying modest union-issue placards about teachers’ pensions. The cops were clear about the policy: if you discard your placard at the entrance to the square, you can come in. “That’s ridiculous”, the women objected. “We’re trying to prevent any potential protest from re-forming in the square”, the police explained. The women objected a bit more, and eventually, shaking their heads as tourists filed past us, they dropped their placards at the gate, and walked in as well.

While all this was going on, one young man who’d walked ahead of us, and had already passed the cops, reached back and sneakily took a placard off the top of the pile – it was just a quick, cheeky kick against the cops. One of the cops spotted him out of the corner of his eye, yelled “Oi!”, grabbed him aggressively by the shoulder, dragged him back and, with great force, yanked the placard out of his hand, then shoved him back into ‘the sterile zone’. Whether there was any suggestion that protest might “re-form in the square” is neither here

nor there, but I had not heard any rumours to that effect. Heaven forbid someone should put a sticker on the Olympic clock again: an event which induced riot police to pretty much truncheon everyone on sight on the evening of 26 March 2012.

The new ring of steel

The revolutionary new steel cordon ‘unveiled’ on 30th November in Trafalgar Square is not, in fact, new. From police blogs and various other sources, this is what I’ve gathered (quotes are from anonymous police blog comments):

- The portable steel cordons were designed to be used not for public order situations like political protests but for dealing with CBRN incidents, “where they can obviously very effectively direct the crowd” .* 200 of them were purchased by the Home Office in 2008 for CBRN preparedness, but they’re now available for any police force in the country to use for any purpose at all.
- From the small van-capsule, the cordons open out like Transformers. Beyond what can be seen in the pictures that I have found, they also have “a large screen which can be raised up above the top of the barrier to provide textual directions/instructions to people and a (very) powerful PA system with remote management and syncing. A fantastic bit of kit all in all. They’re very robust and effective, even at their full extension (which is very wide)”.
- While they’re portable, and that seems particularly alarming – the prospect of something as mobile as a group of Territorial Support Group (TSG) officers but literally made of steel – they’re not that responsive: “They are extremely heavy and can just about be towed by a standard 4x4. They are very unforgiving and too much speed when towing one will destabilise the towing vehicle. I think the maximum speed for them is 30mph, therefore not easy to deploy in quick developing situations... but [in] planned ones like the student protest they could have been used more effectively.”
- Prior to the Met ‘unveiling’ them on 30th November, they had already been used by Leicestershire Police for separating the EDL and anti-fascist protesters, by South Wales Police to separate Cardiff and Swansea football fans, by Greater Manchester Police at the Conservative conference and in south Yorkshire at a Sheffield derby.

I deliberately avoided spelling out what CBRN means above because I think it is pretty astonishing and worth emphasising here: CBRN stands for Chemical, Biological,

Radiological, and Nuclear. These steel cordons were designed not for protesters, or football fans, but for the Britain of *28 Days Later*. The reason they look so terrifying is they were designed to be used in genuinely terrifying situations.

Here is your state of exception, already in place: steel cordons which were purchased to deal with the unthinkable, to deal with a nuclear holocaust or an (erm), zombie apocalypse, are now being used to prevent middle-aged teachers from strolling into Trafalgar Square, because they're carrying a political placard.

The (ahem) performativity of the neoliberal balistraria

I used the word 'unveiling' above, and put it in inverted commas: as we have seen, these cordons are not new at all but their ostentatious display in Trafalgar Square was, I would argue, even more important than their stated practical function, "to prevent protest re-forming" after the dispersal of the TUC march. I was recently sent an excellent geography paper (2011) entitled [Rethinking Enclosure: Space, Subjectivity and the Commons](#) about enclosure in the neoliberal age, about the way capitalism requires that "privatised, secessionary enclaves of infrastructure and services splinter from the city", and about the way that inequality and freedom are manifested in a battle for space, a dialectic of enclosure and the commons. Here's the key passage about capital's very physical need to bare its teeth to the public:

Neoliberal globalisation has undoubtedly prompted a shift in the way in which sovereignty is spatialised. The exercise of sovereignty increasingly depends on a more complicated geography of transnational assemblages, flows and enclaves. Walling is an anxious, sometimes desperate icon of this new predicament... what interests us with respect to walling-as-enclosure is its insistent performativity. Walls are often not particularly effective. If anything, they can serve as important theatrical devices.

This relates directly to some of the key emerging, post-Millbank themes I wrote about in *Kettled Youth* (2011): the physicality of protest is itself politically transformative and radicalising, and its tactical antagonist, the kettle, provokes it further precisely through its demonstrative act of oppression. Kettling is designed to boil the blood, and walling is designed to make you feel trapped. Walling, of course, is not new but has seen a marked resurgence across the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The new walls have risen in tandem with their political economic analogue: neoliberalism. Like neoliberalism, which will soon return British wealth inequalities to those of the Victorian era, walls are erected to support inequality. The paper (Jeffery et al, 2011) quotes Davis and Monk:

...modern wealth and luxury consumption are more enwalled and socially enclaved than at any time since the 1890s... the spatial logic of neoliberalism revives the most extreme colonial patterns of residential segregation and zoned consumption.

Gated communities are little more than the geographical reconstruction of medieval city states, the paper continues; in fact, the word medieval crops up on numerous occasions to describe the processes of enclosure now being used. And in quite a profound way, this links back to the police cordons. Responding sarcastically to the *Daily Mail* story about the 'revolutionary new wall', one cop from a rival police force said: "Excellent, I am pleased that the Met have finally caught onto the tactical advantages of the medieval balistraria." Except, instead of firing arrows through the holes, the cordon serves as a panopticon for surveying the protesters (as if it was not enough that we are already the most CCTV heavy country in Europe).

One aspect of the performativity of the 'unveiling' of the 30th November wall stands out: its timing. It marks the end of a year of unrest, in which the Met have been accused by the right in slacking in their response to the student and 26 March protests, and accused by the liberal left of slacking in their response to the riots. More importantly, it marks an authoritarian escalation ahead of a 2012 which promises more poverty, more inequality, more unemployment and more unrest: and with it, a state of exception of truly Olympian proportions.

London 2012, the Olympics

I took a picture of a kettle line of Wenlocks: Wenlock, the London Olympic mascot, dressed as a police officer in the Official 2012 Store in Heathrow Airport last month (on my way to a conference about protest music and freedom of speech). Here, for only £10.25 (not including shipping), is a FUN! toy version of your instrument of discipline, already equipped with a single panopticon eye. Water cannon and steel cordon sold separately. Baton rounds may be unsuitable for small children. A more perfect visual metaphor for 2012, I cannot imagine. Think this is hyperbole? Here's how Westminster is planning to defend your much-lauded democratic right to protest during the Olympics, [from The Independent](#):

Ministers are planning legal action to restrict public protests during the Olympics... [plan] includes identifying "exclusion zones" around key locations, and fast-tracking the removal of protests that do not have the blessing of the authorities... Police have been given enhanced powers to act against protests at the Olympics since the Games were awarded to London six years ago, including the right to enter private homes and seize political posters.

And here's what the Olympics will bring to London at large, from a [stunning piece in the](#)

[Financial Times](#) by Philip Stephens (2011):

London is promised an exercise in authoritarian elitism to rival Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union. The people's games have been turned into the apparatchiks' Olympics. The stadiums and arenas will overflow with politicians, bureaucrats and corporate sponsors. More than 1m ordinary families have failed to secure a single ticket even to the opening stages of the most obscure Olympic sports.

Civil liberties are to be suspended for the duration of the games. David Cameron's government is promising draconian penalties for anyone who dares jeopardise the exclusive rights of commercial partners such as McDonald's and Coca-Cola. Advertising sponsors have been promised what is chillingly called a "clean city", handing them ownership of everything within camera distance of the games. Wear a T-shirt expressing a preference for Burger King and Pepsi and you may be thrown into the Tower. The crackdown extends to what the Olympic Stasi call "advertising on the human body".

All this is to one purpose: to make life comfortable for the 40,000 Olympic bigwigs, national bureaucrats, commercial sponsors, hangers-on and politicians who are preparing to slip into all the best seats at all the best events. These oligarchs of sport will whizz from their Park Lane suites to the Olympic venues along 100 miles of dedicated [Zil](#) lanes carved from an already congested road network. Traffic lights will be programmed to turn green as the limousines approach and red again as they pass. Ordinary folk who inadvertently stray into the reserved lanes will face draconian fines.

The march of the dead: the *wanderkessel*

The 9 November student march in 2011 further demonstrates the same pre-2012 escalation. It was supposed to see a rebirth of the spirit of Millbank ("Another Millbank is Possible" said one superb placard). Instead, it saw such a heavy deployment of police, relative to the student marches of November and December 2010, that the entire day felt less like a civic swarm and more like a slow-step trudge to the gallows; with riot cops all around us, literally herding us to the end location, it felt like we were being marched, not marching. Indeed, 9th November was essentially what is known in German as a *wanderkessel* (kettling).

The Olympic State of Exception.

Let's go back to the day of the strike, to 30 November, and the shocking story of the 40 odd people kettled, "beaten up" and violently arrested by riot cops with dogs, on a picket in Dalston. A full account is [here](#), and well worth reading - but it is this witness statement in the *Daily Mail* (2011) from the owner of a nearby cafe, which perfectly articulates the logic of the Olympic state of exception: "It seemed quite heavy handed but it contained them well. People were upset because they didn't think they had done anything wrong, but it did stop things escalating." It stopped things escalating in the immediate short-term, anyway.

Originally published here: <http://dan-hancox.blogspot.com.es/2011/12/kettling-20-olympic-state-of-exception.html>]

References

Brady, B. (2011) 'Demonstrations "to be banned during Olympics"', *The Independent*, 20 November

Hancox, D. (2011) *Kettled Youth: The Battle Against the Neoliberal Endgame*. Amazon.com. Available at: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Summer-Unrest-Kettled-Neoliberal-ebook/dp/B005E87HA4>

Jeffrey, A., McFarlane, C. and Vasudevan, A. (2011) 'Rethinking Enclosure: Space, Subjectivity and the Commons', *Antipode*, 44: 1247–1267. Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00954.x/full>

Slack, C. (2011) 'The tin blue line: Met unveils revolutionary police barrier to prevent anti-cuts demonstrators marching on the Houses of Parliament', *Mail Online*. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2068180/Public-sector-strikes-Incredible-police-barrier-used-anti-cuts-demonstrators.html>

Stephens, P. (2012) 'Welcome to London 2012: The apparatchiks' games', *Financial Times*, 31 October [Online] Available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c3c577fc-03b7-11e1-bbc5-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2fKrYTly2>

London, Liberalism, and the Chinese Labour Question — David Glover (Southampton)

The modern politics of migration in Britain basically begins at the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th. It's then that we see organised campaigns to change the ways in which governments responded to the movement of people across territorial boundaries, much of it centred upon London as a point of arrival. That these campaigns had very local roots is shown by names like the Londoners' League but even when these groups tried to evoke the solidarity of male nationals by calling themselves the British Brothers' League they had no real impact outside the capital. Similarly, as a state practice, modern immigration control also dates from the *fin de siècle*. However one evaluates its significance, the 1905 Aliens Act introduced a new kind of public official – the immigration officer – and a new bureaucratic machine for monitoring and controlling the majority, if not all, of those non-nationals attempting to gain entry and settle within its borders. Largely neglected and ignored by historians and social scientists until fresh cohorts of migrants began arriving after the Second World War, accounts of the 1905 Act can now be numbered among Britain's cherished island stories, with their characteristic emphasis upon how the nation changed in spite of such exclusionary legislation.

In this talk, I want to argue that the first decade of the 20th century witnessed two moral panics around the question of immigration, only one of which was concerned with domestic politics. Or rather, the agitation for restricting the numbers of East European Jews entering Britain – the target of the 1905 Aliens Act – interacted with, and was re-defined in relation to, a controversy about the meaning and future of Britain's empire. The Chinese Labour Question, as it was then known, is not well-remembered today. But at the time it was hotly debated within Britain and arguably played a more important role in electoral politics than did the so-called Alien Question. In his book *Human Nature in Politics* (1908), the liberal socialist political theorist and activist Graham Wallas recalled that during the 1906 election period 'pictures of Chinamen on the hoardings aroused among very many of the voters an immediate hatred of the Mongolian racial type'. As further evidence he conjured up another menacing face and gave it a voice:

An hour before the close of the poll I saw, with the unnatural clearness of polling-day fatigue, a large white face at the window of the ward committee-room, while a hoarse voice roared: "Where's your bloody pigtail? We cut it off last time: and now we'll put it round your bloody neck and strangle you." (Wallas, 1920, p. 107)

Wallas was referring to an election that the Liberals very decisively won, though the story he tells was obviously deeply unsettling because the slogan seems to slide quickly into the threat of racialised violence. Later studies have tended to confirm the importance of Wallas's observation. According to A.K. Russell's detailed study (1973) of the 1906 election, the Chinese Labour Question 'did as much as any other single issue to erode the electoral fortunes of the Tories'; and it did so by providing much of the political glue that held the pact between the Liberals and their Labour allies together. So what was the issue? What was at stake here and why did it raise the political temperature on the hustings to fever pitch?

The nub of the question belongs to the fallout from the Anglo-Boer War and the extraordinarily manic mood of jingoism which Britain's oscillation between defeat and victory in that conflict produced. Once the roller-coaster had ended in 1901, the building of a new South Africa was urgently on the agenda and its changing fortunes were closely watched at home. Given the scale of South Africa's mineral wealth – the discovery of diamonds there in 1867 had played a major role in intensifying the European scramble for Africa – the output of the colony's mining fields was always going to be of central concern. Yet the disruption caused by the war, and the economic downturn that followed, led to pressure from the mine owners to secure a cheap and malleable supply of unskilled labour. The two existing alternatives before them were seen as deeply problematic. On the one hand, indigenous African workers, so-called "native labour" were said to be unreliable, led by fluctuations in the local agricultural economy and lacking the appropriate labour discipline required in the mines. On the other, unskilled white workers were also regarded with disfavour since they were relatively scarce and therefore expensive. Moreover, they too were seen as potentially posing problems of labour discipline, albeit of a radically different kind. Indeed, the sort of work that white workers should undertake was a very vexed issue. Should white men be expected – or even allowed – to do unskilled jobs at all? For some commentators part of the point of imperial conquest was that it created a world in which the least desirable forms of labour would be done by other races. Any white man who was prepared to take unskilled work might be a troublemaker and was not to be trusted: unregenerate, racially dubious, the scum of the earth. It was in this context that importing workers from China seemed to offer a solution and in February 1903 the Chamber of Mines in the Transvaal sent a deputation to California, British Columbia, the East Indies and China to investigate its feasibility. In May

1904 Chinese workers began to arrive in South Africa where they were received at a former British concentration camp, examined by a doctor, fingerprinted, and given a brass badge inscribed with their individual number and the name of their employer.

1904 was therefore a watershed year both in South Africa and in the UK. In the first few months of that year the Liberals in Britain led a movement against the Labour Importation Ordinance which had brought Chinese indentured labour to the Cape; and, on 26 March 1904, they were joined by a large TUC demonstration in London in which some 80,000 people, largely men, marched on Hyde Park via the Houses of Parliament (*Manchester Guardian*, 1904, p. 5). Among the speakers taking part were the sort of heavyweights that one would expect to front this sort of event – men like the labour leader Ben Tillett and the fiery Radical Liberal MP for Battersea, John Burns – alongside representatives of organisations like the National Democratic League, the Liberal Labour League, and the Metropolitan Radical Federation. This diversity of support was also evidenced by the 14 speakers' booths in the Park. There one could listen to at least 100 orators including local non-conformist leaders -- Dr Clifford of the Baptist Union received the most enthusiastic ovation -- and a variety of speakers from the white settler territories, ranging from the explorer and colonial administrator Sir Harry Johnston (then in search of a parliamentary seat) to a member of the New Zealand legislature.

What were the terms in which the issue of Chinese labour was raised by this broad coalition against the Conservative government's policy? Marches and demonstrations rely on rousing speeches rather than forensic political analysis, but they are also placeholders for more considered modes of opinion formation. Popular demonstrations signal the direction that political arguments are taking and here several points stand out. First of all, there was a strong sense of payback for the Liberal defeat in the so-called "khaki election" of 1900 when support for the South African War had been the major vote-winner for Conservatives and Unionists. In Ben Tillett's near-doggerel: 'Once the people of this country were khaki mad, but now they were khaki sad as they contemplated the results of their madness.' (*The Times*, 1904, p. 7) Unfortunately, the political return of South Africa brought with it the worst excesses of the 1900 campaign. John Burns had shown no qualms about attacking what he called 'Ikey Mo ... in Pretoria' (1900, cited in Schneer, 1999, p.258) in that election and in Hyde Park he asserted that 'the British Government was the handmaid of the Jewish plutocracy' and 'the Mother of Parliaments had become the mistress of monopoly'(1999, p.258). He was not alone. A representative of the London County Council insisted that South Africa had ceased to belong to the Englishman. Instead 'our legislators were permitting slavery to be introduced to benefit the Jew magnates' while 'white men were walking the

streets of Johannesburg with nothing to do and starvation before them.’ Against a background of relatively high unemployment in the UK, the complaint that ‘Mr Chamberlain had said that the South African war was a miners’ war, but they now saw plainly how the British miner was being treated’ carried some clout.

The second point to note is the use of the defining image of slavery. Not only did some of the speeches invoke the names of Wilberforce and Lincoln, but the iconography of the rally relied heavily on visualisations of the figure of the slave. On one banner, for example, ‘the ghosts of dead soldiers’ watched ‘strings of Chinamen in chains proceeding under armed escort to gold mines’. But the tableau could easily be reversed. In a leaflet handed out on the march ‘a one-armed but bemedalled Briton [is] brushing the boots of a supercilious and opium-smoking Chineese.’ When an MP who was present described the issue of Chinese labour as ‘particularly a working man’s question’, part of his argument was that the substitution of British miners would have necessitated a widening of the franchise which the mine owners did not want. To ‘loud cheers’ he concluded that ‘the Chinese whom they proposed to introduce would be slaves, but “Britishers” never would be.’ Again and again, there’s an uncertainty as to who is the true object of sympathy: the Chinese labourer or the British miner. Ben Tillett forecast a race war in which ‘the whites and blacks combined to fight the yellow man and his employer.’ The secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, comparing South Africa with Australia, reminded his audience that other white settler colonies had steadfastly ‘refused to import yellow labour.’

What of the arguments that were in play away from the febrile atmosphere of the political meeting or the hustings? Perhaps the best and most revealing example of the intellectual case against the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa from within the upper echelons of the Liberal Party is that advanced by Herbert Samuel (1904, pp. 457-67). Samuel came from a political family, and would later become the first practising Jew to be a member of a British cabinet and, later still, he was the first High Commissioner of Palestine during the British mandate. But at the time he wrote on ‘The Chinese Labour Question’ he was still a fairly new Liberal MP, who had nevertheless already established a reputation as an impressively well-informed and meticulous parliamentarian and a theorist of the New Liberalism. How did he see the Chinese Labour Question in this period?

Taking a long-term view of the present, Samuel insisted that a new era had begun. The militaristic days of ‘conquest, loot and territory’ (1904, p. 457) were over and, in their place, economic migration was changing the internal composition of countries across the globe, including the bulk of the British Empire. ‘India has overflowed into Mauritius, Natal, East

Africa and the West Indies. Many parts of the Malay Peninsula are becoming more Chinese than Malay. Polynesians have filled the sugar plantations of Queensland.' (1904, p. 457) Closer to home, Samuel noted that 'Russia, Poland and Germany have annexed large districts in East London' (1904, p. 457). He called these 'race movements' and emphasised that 'race boundaries' were no longer 'fixed', although I think it's clear that in this part of the essay 'race' is primarily a synonym for 'nation.' On the very first page he refers to 'a gradual transformation or mingling of nationality.' But, as we will see, the emphasis quickly undergoes a decisive shift, for ultimately he believed that migration raised 'grave questions of what may be termed Race Policy' (1904, p. 457).

As international travel was becoming safer and cheaper, managing these population flows was now among 'the most difficult problems' faced by statesmen in the Empire and at home. He returned to this theme the following year in an essay for *The Economic Journal* on 'Immigration', a piece that should be read in tandem with his paper on Chinese labour. Who was allowed to go where and what principles were to be invoked in making such decisions was key; and there's no suggestion that a *laissez-faire* defence of the free movement of labour would do. This, then, is how Samuel summarises what he calls 'the leading issue': 'The leading issue ... is whether the influence of the British State should be used so as to secure that the temperate regions of the Empire shall be the homes of the white races or be largely inhabited by Mongolians' (1904, p. 459). There are really two questions at stake in this quotation: that of the proper role of the state, and that of the problem of race. The answer to the first question, regarding the function of the British state, is: yes, it should be the state and not, say, the mineowners, who decide questions of migration and settlement. As a New Liberal and a believer in state intervention, Samuel had no reservations about this. Indeed, the Liberal critique of the state at this time was not that state intervention was a problem, quite the reverse: under the Tories or Unionists it had been captured by the mine owners or, rather, that was the claim that Radicals like John Burns were making. And not just demagogues like John Burns; at a 'crowded' Liberal 'demonstration against Chinese slavery in South Africa' held in Sheffield on 30 March 1904, one of the speakers had 'urged that this country was not prepared to allow South Africa to be handed over to a company of German Jews' (*Manchester Guardian*, 1904, p. 5). At a moment when the Liberals were accusing the Tories of promoting an anti-Semitic domestic immigration policy this was a very inconvenient, not to say downright embarrassing, argument to uphold.

The answer to the second question (that is, which race should be permitted to occupy the more hospitable imperial climes?) was much more complicated. The answer could not be the Chinese (or Mongolians) for two rather different reasons. Firstly, the Chinese were simply too

competitive. In Samuel's words, they were able to 'flourish' anywhere (1904, p. 458); for the 'classes of Chinese who are accustomed to emigrate' work tirelessly and will endure an 'excessively low standard of living' (1904, p. 458). Samuel knew this argument well. For it was exactly the same argument – though not applied to the Chinese – that featured heavily in the Immigration Bill that the Conservatives had been trying to push through Parliament between February and July 1904. Secondly, and more seriously, Samuel accepted the view of the Chinese as a degraded or uncivilised population that was a staple of anti-Chinese campaigns in the USA and Australia – that they were unclean, addicted to gambling, belonged to dangerous secret societies, and 'where they live in celibate communities, the peculiarly degrading vices which, unquestionably, they often carry with them, make them ... highly undesirable as immigrants' (1904, p. 458). In other words, they were sexually undesirable too.

There's a very familiar fear of numbers lurking around this essay: 'the Chinese number a fourth of mankind', Samuel noted and, while the Conservative case is that 'the importation into South Africa will be small in volume' (1904, p. 458) and temporary in duration, Samuel thought it highly likely that 'a great Chinese community will be established in permanence in the midst of the white population' and will expand across the whole of Africa (1904, p. 459). Incidentally, this Orientalist racial fantasy of unendingly 'hyperbolic numbers', 'a monstrous aggregation of human beings' swelling continuously, goes back at least as far as Thomas De Quincey's opium-soaked meditations on 'Chinese treachery'; those are his phrases that I've just quoted (1841, cited in Barrell, 1991, p.6). In Samuel's brisk and more sober analysis, the argument slides into a different fantasy – in some ways the obverse of Ben Tillett's imagined race war – in which Chinese labour not only 'undersell the white population' but 'inter-marry with the black' (1904, p. 467). This alternative he regarded as 'intolerable', as 'intolerable' as the introduction of the Chinese under conditions of near-slavery. Interestingly, Samuel's preferred solution would have been to draw upon white workers but to employ much smaller numbers than had usually been thought to be possible. His main argument was that the mine-owners had under-invested in new labour-saving machinery. Samuel tacitly seems to accept the worries expressed by the owners that any large-scale importation of British workers into the Transvaal would lead to problems of labour discipline. This anxiety clearly reflects the growth and militancy of trade unionism at home and particularly in Australia. There's a phrase in Samuel's essay that he uses to paraphrase the mine-owners' fears: 'this dread of a second Australian democracy' (1904, p. 463) which positions Australia as a sort of rogue democracy, a dangerously un-deferential culture at the margins of the Empire.

Ironically, after the 1906 election it was Liberals like Herbert Samuel who found themselves

obliged to administer the new Aliens Act and to find a remedy for the Chinese Labour problem in South Africa. Wallas argued that the Chinese face on such anti-Tory posters 'tended slowly to identify itself, in the minds of the Conservatives, with the Liberals who had used them.' In Wallas's memory it is a Liberal who is being threateningly asked 'Where's your bloody pigtail?' and it is a Liberal who risks being strangled with the pigtail he has conjured up.

Wallas's anecdote was echoed by his friend H. G. Wells in a novel (1911) from the same period which charts the rise and fall of a Liberal MP. When the protagonist wins his seat in Parliament his acceptance speech is interrupted by the cry "Votes for Women!" which is then quickly drowned out by the shout "Chinese labour ... and across the square swept a wildfire of hooting and bawling." Here too the slogan is a kind of war cry, matched by the iconography of the election, in which "one of the most effective posters on our side displayed a hideous yellow face, just that and nothing more." (1911, pp. 221-222)

References

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 50, (1841) 'Canton expedition and conventions', pp. 682, 688. Although published anonymously, this essay is attributed to De Quincey by John Barrell (1991) in *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale UP.

Manchester Guardian (1904) 'Chinese Labour Question. Great Hyde Park Demonstration', 28 March, p. 5.

Manchester Guardian (1904) 'Chinese Labour. Demonstration at Sheffield', 31 March, p. 5.

Russell, A.K. (1973) *The Liberal Landslide: The General Election of 1906*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

Samuel, H. (1904) 'The Chinese Labour Question', *The Contemporary Review*, 85, pp. 457-67.

Schneer, J. (1999) *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*. New Haven: Yale UP, p. 258.

The Times (1904) 'The Anti-Chinese Labour Demonstration', 28 March, p. 7. This account gives a fuller picture of the content of the speeches than did the more positive report in the Guardian and, unless otherwise indicated, the quotations derive from the former.

Wallas, G. (1908) *Human Nature in Politics*. 3rd edn. London: Constable.

Wells, H.G. (1911) *The New Machiavelli*. Reprint, London: Penguin, 2005.

Section 3

East

London

Can Real Critique be Faith-based? The Role of Religion as Electoral Opposition — Sukhwant Dhaliwal (Bedfordshire)

The Newham story

Newham Council has been a Labour-controlled borough for the best part of 40 years. Labour councillors have enjoyed an easy dominance occupying upwards of 54 of the council's 60 seats since 1982. In 2010 there was an unusually high turnout ushering in a full house of 60 Labour councillors as well as a directly elected mayor from the Labour Party. Moreover, Newham has been a safe Labour seat in parliamentary terms with Labour MPs enjoying large margins over other candidates for almost two decades.

Unfortunately, this strong mandate for the local Labour Group appears to have made it complacent and undemocratic. Several Newham interviewees (Dhaliwal, 2011) noted redundant Labour Party branches, the lack of agency in selecting candidates and determining local priorities, a lack of grassroots activism, voter apathy and high levels of frustration over the absence of an effective Opposition. This lack of local Party democracy was thought to extend outwards to a lack of autonomy, indeed decimation, of a potentially plural community and voluntary sector. The borough's directly elected Labour mayor, Robin Wales, has been criticised (2010) for awarding himself a significant pay rise whilst simultaneously announcing job cuts and reduced salaries for local authority employees. Importantly, within the last decade, the Newham Labour Party's electoral monopoly has only been interrupted by two political parties – the Christian Peoples Alliance and Respect. Both relied upon religious identities as vote banks potentially bringing religion to the fore as a feature of electoral opposition and democratic critique.

The onward march of Christianity?

In 2002, Alan Craig of the Christian Peoples Alliance (CPA) broke through eight years of Labour Party monopoly by winning one council seat in Canning Town South. In 2006, they stood 20 candidates at the local council elections and managed to win another two seats, capturing an entire ward in the south of the borough. By 2010, however, all three CPA

councillors had lost their seats. The CPA website suggested that the losses were more about the entrenchment of Labour Party support against a Conservative threat than about the unpopularity of CPA's politics amongst the electorate. Interestingly, Alan Craig started out in electoral politics as a Conservative Party candidate and was predictably unsuccessful in a borough where the political landscape has been shaped by a united stand against the Conservative Party (Smith, 2002, p.162). So the Christian Peoples Alliance possibly constitutes a small dent for Labour Party dominance in the borough but I think that their story provides an interesting focus for the question of what constitutes critique or marginality.

The CPA emerged in 1999 out of the Movement for Christian Democracy established in 1991 by three cross-party Christian MPs including David Alton who is best known for his opposition to abortion and euthanasia. The CPA's ideological framework is set out in its aims which include the following statements:

- Recognition of Christ's sovereignty over the nations and in politics.
- Respect of God's law as the basis for constitutional government and a stable society.
- Respect for human life given by God.
- Careful economic stewardship of God's creation.
- Commitment to the fairness of markets and patterns of exchange.
- Open, transparent government, which subjects itself to debate and critique.

(<http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/>, no date)

It is important to distinguish between religion as a motivating force for political engagement and the imposition of beliefs that carries parallels with Clara Connolly's distinction between 'Christian in form' and 'Christian in fact' (1990, p.3). The interpretation of some of these CPA objectives leaves little to the imagination but their founding document, the Mayflower Declaration, offers the following detail: CPA is opposed to the "destruction of the unborn" and this is given as one example of the ways in which "our nation has failed to live as God requires"; and science and technology are included in the "mistaken beliefs to which we have succumbed and idols before which we have bowed". (<http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/>, no date)

Interestingly, Craig recognised the proximity between the CPA political project and Cameron's 'compassionate conservatism', a peculiar mix of libertarian and communitarian conceptions of the state where religion is charged with providing a strong moral framework.

Newspaper reports (Doward, 2010 and Cook, 2010) about the influence of the Christian Right on the current Conservative Party (through key figures in the Conservative Christian Fellowship and the Centre for Social Justice) suggest that, like the CPA, they also draw a great deal of support from growing Evangelical and Pentecostal networks which are expressly concerned to usurp local secular candidates.

The local chronicler of faith in politics, Greg Smith (2002), noted that Alan Craig's activism emerged from his involvement in a local tenants' and residents' association and his critique of estate renewal schemes. In my own interviews (Dhaliwal, 2011) Alan Craig guarded against describing his interventions on local issues as underpinned by a literalist commitment to Christianity where each political position might be referenced against the Bible. Rather, he emphasised the Party's commitment to generic principles such as social justice and protecting the poor. Indeed it is this focus that seemed to appeal to Newham activists yet it is undeniable that CPA do not forego their agenda on reproductive rights. Craig's contribution to local politics was referenced against four particular issues: opposition to the redevelopment of the Queen's Market in Upton Park; opposition to proposals to establish a large Casino in East Ham; a campaign against the construction of a Tablighi Jamaat mosque complex at the Temple Mills site in West Ham; and attempts to initiate a council debate on sexual orientation and reproductive rights. The first two issues won the CPA a great deal of recognition amongst local civil society actors, placing the CPA at the forefront of a critical voice opposing the hegemonic implementation of New Labour policies and the weight of corporations in an area where local people suffer multiple forms of deprivation.

Class as a category is important here because the CPA carried the upper hand over the local (New) Labour Group. At an instinctive level, the CPA were positioned on the side of valuing local people over the interests of big business. When it came to the vote on the casino, the Christian Socialists within the Newham Labour Group abstained (on the basis of conscience) rather than voice their objections, least of all vote against their political party, reinforcing the undemocratic character of the Labour leadership. On the Queen's Market issue, a sustained campaign by the Friends of Queen's Market highlighted the intersection of multicultural and working-class heritage, and was eventually vindicated through the intervention of Conservative mayor, Boris Johnson. Indeed the CPA applauded their own role in the Queen's Market victory and brought this together with a critique of rational bureaucracy and exploitative capital. The following extract reflects Craig's reproduction of a widespread counter-positioning of 'values free' secular politics against 'strong values' faith-based politics:

The value-free managerialism that Sir Robin offers is selfish, dry-as-dust and takes no account of local and vulnerable people - as we have seen at Queen's market and the

Canning Town housing regeneration project. CPA on the other hand stands with the marginalised and speaks up for community - and family-oriented values. Unlike the Mayor, we would never bulldoze an invaluable diverse community asset like Queen's market in favour of a bog-standard ruthless grasping WalMart Asda. (Christian Peoples Alliance, 2006)

However, the CPA's perspective on the construction of a Tablighi Jamaat mosque and on sexual freedoms lost them potential allies. Interviewees raised concerns about the CPA's views on Islam far more frequently than concerns about their stance on sexual orientation and reproductive rights. Moreover, CPA's dual interests in the Tablighi Jamaat mosque and sexuality presented obvious contradictions. Questions of women's rights, segregation, dissent and rule of law were central to the CPA's critique of the Tablighi Jamaat and the council's decision to back Tablighi Jamaat's proposals. Yet CPA simultaneously stood against sexual freedoms and invoked a strong gendered morality as part of their own Christian political identity. Interestingly, their cutting edge critique of the impact of regeneration on poverty amongst local people recently collapsed into an assault on women's reproductive rights. In November 2011, Alan Craig joined a multifaith picket outside the Newham offices of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) in Stratford. His statement levelled the following accusations:

BPAS has become a large money spinning business. This centre is commercial opportunism to take advantage of Westfield Stratford City and the Olympics. BPAS have an interest in doing as many abortions as possible. (Stott, 2011)

The way in which 'race', gender and a critique of regeneration came together to form the CPA's discursive terrain could be understood as the enfolding of a contemporary nationalist rhetoric (Britishness, civilisational discourse and human rights) with an emphasis on marriage and family and a peculiarly localised variant of communitarian nostalgia.

Moreover, although Alan Craig described the CPA as "a response to the corrosive and aggressive secularisation of society and especially of public life" (Dhaliwal, 2011), Christianity and other religious commitments also live comfortably within the Newham Labour Group. In 2009, my own research (Dhaliwal 2011) found that 17 Newham councillors listed an affiliation to or membership of a religious organisation in their declaration of interests. By October 2011 this number had fallen significantly to five partly because the Respect Party, Independent and Christian Peoples Alliance councillors were voted out in May 2010. Still, the interviews suggested that at least another ten councillors from this list had active links with one religious organisation or more in the borough. The point is that these affiliations do not manifest in the manner that Alan Craig would like to see them.

One important element of Newham's history is the presence of the Christian Socialist Movement (CSM). Both the Newham MPs and three local councillors with Cabinet positions are involved in the Newham branch of CSM. Interviewees who were involved with the CSM made clear distinctions between themselves and the Christian Peoples Alliance noting three particular points of discord: a preference for mainstream rather than religious identity politics; positions on sexuality and abortion; and racism. In fact it was CSM members of the Newham Labour Group that spoke out against CPA's views on sexuality. Councillor Revd. Quintin Peppiatt, a Cabinet member who holds the portfolio for Children and Young People, but is also a member of the CSM, Watch (the Campaign for Women Bishops) and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement highlighted shared interests on regeneration and poverty (he and Craig were equally opposed to the construction of a casino in Newham) but significantly divergent views on same sex relationships and abortion.

It was more common for Newham interviewees to distance themselves from the CPA on the grounds of racism. In fact, Alan Craig was very aware that the Muslim Respect Party was unwilling to associate with the CPA because of their campaign against what they refer to as the 'Olympic Mega Mosque'. There is some level of irony here. Whilst other Christian mobilisations in the borough – the Faith Sector Forum, Faithful Friends, Transform and the CSM – are white-led, the CPA has had a significant number of black faces at its helm. Its previous leader was the South Asian millionaire businessman Ram Gidoomal. One of the elected candidates for Canning Town Ward was the African Simeon Ademolake. Indeed several interviewees noted that the CPA base depended upon the particularly conservative African churches in the borough. The CPA discourse is not about ethnic minorities per se but rather hones in on Islam.

The Iraq War and the Respect Party

In spite of this lack of unity amongst the opposition, the 2006 local election did create a fissure in Labour Party dominance in the area. Both the Respect Party and the CPA made gains from a significant anti-war mobilisation. There was a sense that the anti-war mobilisation carried with it the prospect of breaking a local Labour Party monopoly and of giving rise to a viable Left opposition. In 2006, the Respect Party stood a councillor in every single ward of Newham as well as a mayoral candidate. A number of people rescinded their membership of the Labour Party and a few became actively involved in the Newham branch of the Respect Party (Grzincic, 2003).

For all intents and purposes the Respect Party in Newham relied on a Muslim vote bank around the Green Street and Forest Gate area. By the time of the local elections in 2006,

three Muslim councillors defected from the Labour Group to run for Respect and managed to capture the Green Street West ward, the heart of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim population in the borough. However, a closer look at the political trajectory of one of the defectors, AK Sheikh, reveals that in the context of contemporary electoral politics, religion has been welded to existing resentments or has become an important means for articulating political ambitions.

AK Sheikh was first elected as a Labour Party councillor alongside three other Muslim candidates in 1990. It would be fair to suggest that the timing was no mere coincidence: ethnic minority political activism was applying pressure on the Labour Party through the Labour Party Black Sections but also as Muslim identity politics, with the latter being shaped by Islamist mobilisations against Salman Rushdie in 1989 and the first Gulf War in 1991. AK Sheikh founded the Alliance of Newham Muslim Associations (ANMA), which is affiliated to the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). Until very recently the MCB was the main platform for New Labour's engagement with Muslims but then derided for its connections with the Islamic Right political party, the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Even after he was voted out as a local councillor, Sheikh continued both inside the state and also in opposition through various consultation processes and networks that recognise religious leaders as a kind of second tier policing in the local area. However, in an interview before he lost his seat in May 2010, he spoke of a confluence of issues as the steer for his personal path (Dhaliwal, 2011). He certainly was interested to represent his anti-Iraq war constituents but this was only part of the reason for his defection. The Iraq invasion shone a spotlight on the lack of internal Labour Party democracy. At that moment in particular, the Blairite leadership style and command structure at the heart of the New Labour project became over-determined at the local level. The New Labour-led faith agenda that distributed funding for local faith forums enabled a space for developing a critique of the local Newham Labour Group. As the lifelong General Secretary of the ANMA, Sheikh became very involved in the Faith Sector Forum during the same period as his defection from Labour to Respect. However, beyond a pre-election concern with Iraq and a request to support a motion against the nikab ban in France, the Respect councillors were muted and did little to challenge the shifting ideological ground of the Labour Party, which should also have given many Labour Party supporters cause to change their affiliation.

Even Stephen Timms MP for East Ham recognised the impact of the Iraq war on local Muslim voters and suggested that in 2006, around two-thirds of Muslim voters voted Respect whilst one-third voted for him. As many people have already noted, a number of processes

coalesced around the question of Iraq including: the reconfiguration of Islam in Britain as a source of political critique; the mainstreaming of Islamist projections of the invasion of Iraq as a Muslim issue¹⁶; and the local impact on politicians who sided with Tony Blair.

The impact on Stephen Timms's electoral margin, however, was much smaller than expected given the correlation between the size of Muslim populations and the Respect Party support base. Part of Timms's ability to surpass this electoral threat was no doubt connected to the dominant view of him as a politician with integrity. It is also possible that his faith background and his gender were contributory factors. Timms noted that the Respect Party's mobilisation in the mosques was not "universally" successful' and his own political career had been encouraged by some local mosques so his established links with religious groups in the borough could have served him well during this period. He was also the Labour Party vice chair on Faith. Moreover, in neighbouring Tower Hamlets, a whispering campaign about the 'loose' and 'immoral' character of the Labour Party MP Oona King was an integral part of the particularly dirty fight for the Bethnal Green and Bow seat. Timms seems to have been protected from such tactics also because of the absence of a centralised fundamentalist body in Newham like the Jamaat-e-Islami groupings in Tower Hamlets, a significant element of the Respect Party campaign.

Nevertheless, 21-year-old Roshonara Choudhry, a young Bangladeshi woman from East Ham, ensured that even after a change of government, the spectre of Iraq and international Islamist mobilisations continue to cast a shadow over local politics. In November 2010, Choudhry was convicted of attempting to murder Stephen Timms. She admitted to carrying out the attack as her way of avenging the murder of Iraqis. She would have been just 14 years old when Timms cast his vote in support of Tony Blair's decision to invade Iraq.

Even though Choudhry is being projected by some as a troubled and vulnerable young woman acting alone, the disquiet that her actions have caused local politicians was

¹⁶ The situation is rife with contradictions and certainly not as simplistic as that projected within Islamist claims about the occupation of 'Muslim lands'. Firstly, the object of Blair's vilification, Saddam Hussein, was a staunch secularist and part of a generation of postcolonial rulers (including the Egyptian Hosni Mubarak and the Libyan Mu'ammar Gaddafi) who opposed Islamist movements. Moreover, Hussein perpetuated a violent confrontational relationship with the neighbouring Shia theocracy in Iran. It was the head of the Iranian government, Ayatollah Khomeini who incited international mobilisation against Salman Rushdie in turn fuelling a new wave of Muslim political identities in Britain. Ironically, the British and US invasion of Iraq in 2003 actually increased the space for Islamist factions to garner power and define the geographical region as a Muslim territory. Importantly, the cost of such political machinations is particularly borne by women who were claimed by Blair as his subjects of liberation and yet whose rights were traded away in post-invasion negotiations for the introduction of religious laws.

summarised in the following report:

Choudhry didn't just plunge the knife; she shattered the consensus that existed between the MP and his Muslim constituents. For all the rancor evoked by the war, they had reached an equilibrium. (Muir, 2010)

Conclusion

In concluding, I want to draw upon Michael Keith's (2005) assertion that it is necessary to make a distinction between the conditions of possibility on the one hand and the modalities of identity on the other. In fact, I think this distinction is missing in the general willingness to embrace anything and everything that claims itself as 'Opposition' or 'Critique'. In this paper I have attempted to highlight the reasons why electoral opposition is welcomed in Newham but then to look more closely at the substance of that critique.

In particular, religion is welded to a critique of party structures, transparency and accountability. The issues that were raised became inextricable from questions of democratic process and participation. At some level this is a continuation of a discourse that positions religion as the counterweight to formations where 'secular' is added to criticisms about rigid hierarchal Party structures and support for large corporations or privatisation. Without belittling the actual content of the complaints or the religious belief dimension of that content, it is clear that, in the current climate at least, some strands of political opposition find it easiest to reach for religion as a source of discontent and as an alternative voice.

In Newham the thrust of the critique was about the centralised command structure and lack of dissent within a Labour Group modelled on Blair's New Labour. In Newham, a reluctance to engage with the local (centrally funded) Faith Forum, for instance, gave rise to a metonymic association between the undemocratic practices of the local Labour Group, its overt secular commitments (including amongst many of its CSM activists) and the Labour Group's decisions to redevelop the Queen's Market and give the go ahead to the Newham Casino.

The second factor that comes into play is the unfinished business of ethnic minority recruitment to the Labour Party. Conservative (with a small 'c') ethnic minority politicians have been sitting comfortably within local Labour Party branches for a long time. In the current moment, religion gives vent to grievances and also provides the form through which divergent political leanings and views, once sitting comfortably within a 'sovereign Labour Party', are released and find expression.

The third factor is the viability of alternative political parties. The political landscape in

Newham has been shaped by a united front against the Conservative Party, in turn making other avenues more viable, namely Christian Right/Democratic politics (especially for African evangelists) and the (Muslim) Respect Party.

Importantly, these religious critics are united in their social conservatism. Members of the CPA in Newham may share some concerns with the Christians within the Labour Party, namely poverty and the impact of regeneration on local people, but are simply not interested to align with Labour's equality agenda and so have never been inside the Labour camp.

References

Alan Craig and CPA Councillors Lose Seats in Newham Labour Tsunami (2010) Available at: <http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/?page=news&id=348>

Brown, A. (2010) 'Tories and the New Evangelical Right' 10 May, *The Guardian* [Online]. Available at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/andrewbrown/2010/may/10/evangelical-religion-toryconservatives>

Christian Peoples Alliance. Available at: http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/?page=about_us (no date)

Christian Peoples Alliance (2006) 'Newham mayor's attack on Christian Peoples Alliance success: "He is lashing out blindly at something"', 15 May. Available at:

<http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/index.php?page=news&id=208&highlight=queens%20market>

Cook, C. (2010) 'Christian Tories Rewrite Party Doctrine', 12 February, *Financial Times*. Available at:

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/12400596-16ac-11df-aa09-00144feab49a.html#axzz1AJyjO0UY>

Dhaliwal, S. (2011) *Religion, Moral Hegemony and Local Cartographies of Power: Feminist Reflections on Religion in Local Politics*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of London.

Doward, J. (2010) 'Secret Christian Donors Bankroll the Tories', 2 May, *The Observer*, Available at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/02/secret-christian-donors-bankroll-tories>

Grzincic, N. (2003). 'Weapons for Blair's Destruction', *Red Pepper* magazine, April [Online]

Available at: <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/Weapons-for-Blair-s-destruction/>

Jeory, T. (2010) 'Olympic Mayor Gives Himself Inflation-Busting Rise', 27 June, *The Daily Express* [Online]. Available at <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/183369/Olympic-mayor-gives-himself-inflation-busting-pay-rise>

Keith M. (2005) *After the Cosmopolitan? Multicultural Cities and the Future of Racism*. Oxford: Routledge.

Muir, H. (2010) 'Hideously diverse Britain? How many other Roshonara Chaudhrys are there out there?' 9 November, *The Guardian* [Online] Available at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/nov/09/how-many-more-roshonara-choudhrys>

Smith G (2002) 'Religion, and the Rise of Social Capitalism: The Faith Communities in Community Development and Urban Regeneration in England', *Community Development Journal*, 37(2), p. 167.

Stott, P. (2011) 'Drawing All Faiths Together - Against Sexual Freedom', 8 November.
Available at:

http://paulstott.typepad.com/i_intend_to_escape_and_co/2011/11/drawing-all-faiths-together-against-sexual-freedom.html

‘Cleaning Up’: The Living Wage Campaign at the University of East London — Ana Lopes and Tim Hall (UEL)

Introduction

What opportunities present themselves, today, for organising migrant workers around issues of pay and working conditions? What forms should this organisation take and what prospects of success do such campaigns have? Migrant workers represent some of the most vulnerable and least protected groups of workers in the UK. According to the report of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment (2008, p.12) migrant workers are disproportionately represented in vulnerable employment: more likely to suffer problems at work and summary dismissal; less likely to be members of trade unions and, therefore, not in a position to have their rights and conditions covered by collective bargaining; less likely to know their employment rights; and more likely to be subject to routine bullying in the workplace. In addition, recent studies have shown that these problems are compounded by recent cuts in public spending in the UK (Rogers et al., 2009). All of this would suggest that the circumstances could hardly be less promising for organising migrant workers. All the more striking, then, that we should see a proliferation of living wage campaigns led by citizens’ organisations, trade unions and political parties. At present there are living wage campaigns up and running throughout the UK, led by community organisations like Citizens UK; trade unions such as Unison and Unite; and movements of political parties like the Movement for Change in the Labour party.

Our aim in this paper is to explore these questions by drawing on our experience as participants in the campaign to implement the London living wage at the University of East London (UEL) and original empirical work carried out subsequently with cleaning workers at the University. The campaign to introduce the London living wage at UEL commenced in the April 2010. It was led by London Citizens and formed part of their broader campaign to target the Higher Education sector in London for living wage campaigns. This campaign achieved striking gains in a relatively short period of time with Queen Mary, The University of London (QMUL), The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), The London School of Economics (LSE), Birkbeck College, the Institute of Education and Goldsmiths College all

agreeing to implement the living wage between 2006 and 2010. It is estimated that £4,692,661 has been redistributed to externally contracted workers in these campaigns between 2005 and 2011 in the higher education sector alone (Wills et al., 2009a).

While the campaign to introduce the living wage at UEL certainly benefited from being part of a broader and increasingly high profile campaign, those involved were still surprised by its speed and success. We try to account for this success by examining the organisational model adopted.

We also analyse the motivations and experience of the cleaning workers that participated in the campaign. As participants what struck us during the campaign was how readily the cleaning workers were organised. At the time we speculated that we were tapping into a rich vein of organisational experience acquired through political experience in their countries of origin. This led us to the view that formed one of the principal hypotheses of our research: the belief that these workers already possessed considerable political and organisational capital accumulated in their country of origin. However, our research found little evidence of this. While leaders from the cleaning staff emerged in the course of the campaign, for the most part they had no strong backgrounds in union activism – indeed quite the opposite in some cases. We compare and contrast the campaign in UEL with other campaigns in the higher education sector and provide further support for the adoption of broad-based, or community-based, approaches to organising migrant workers.

Research context

The living wage campaign at UEL commenced in April 2010 when community organisers from London Citizens made contact with academic staff at the University. Having ascertained that cleaning staff ¹⁷ were paid just above the national minimum wage, there followed separate meetings with staff (some of whom were trade union branch officers) and students to try to kick-start a living wage campaign. A key addition to the campaign team was the involvement of the UEL branch of Unison in the summer of 2010. This afforded cleaning workers some protection in the actions that they took but also gave them access to branch

¹⁷ The cleaning staff at UEL is composed, predominantly, of two groups: a Spanish speaking Colombian group and a Portuguese speaking group, mostly from African Portuguese speaking countries. Indeed, 46% of our questionnaire respondents originate from the African continent and 30% from Latin America. The majority of workers who responded to our questionnaire are female, although the male respondents are a significantly large minority (41%). The age of our respondents varies between 18 and 61 with an average of 39. Among the respondents of our questionnaire, the average time spent in the UK is seven years. Forty nine per cent of the respondents had been in the UK for less than five years and 27% between 11 and 20 years.

officers that undertook casework on their behalf. In the view of those involved in the campaign, if the campaign was to produce lasting benefits beyond an increase in pay it was vital that cleaning workers had the opportunity to join an established trade union.

Continued pressure from the campaign team for a meeting led to an announcement by the Vice Chancellor in November 2010 that UEL would implement the living wage. The campaign then entered a new phase. After an initial meeting in December 2010 with members of the Vice Chancellors Group (VCG), the campaign team conducted a report into the existing contract which found widespread evidence of mismanagement of the contract; of late and missing payments leaving cleaning staff with insufficient money to live on. While the campaign was unsuccessful in persuading the VCG to take the cleaning service back in-house it had succeeded in getting the ethical track record of the company pushed up the criteria of selection in the tendering process. After the commencement of the new contract in August 2011, the UEL branch of Unison, supported by the [Hidden Workforce Unit](#) at Unison ran a training course for new members and began the process of identifying and training representatives to enable cleaning staff to address issues themselves as they arise. While this development is still in process the signs are positive that the gains of the campaign can be consolidated in the form of a unionised workforce capable of resolving its own issues and shaping, to some extent, its working practices.

Existing research on living wage campaigns

Research on living wage campaigns has generally focused on two questions: the first is whether living wage campaigns have actually succeeded in lifting low paid workers out of poverty; the second tries to account for the relative success of these campaigns with reference to their organisational model, specifically, the broad-based character of their approach. The first question has generated an extensive literature on the economic case for the living wage (Weldon and Targ, 2004 and Grover, 2008) while the second has tended to focus on the political and organisational forms of living wage campaigns. Our focus in this paper will be on the second question. This is not to deny that increased wages form a crucial part of the success of a living wage campaign. However their success cannot simply be judged in these terms. There is also the empowerment that follows from a successful campaign and the formation of a trade union (Nissen, 2000).

UK-based research has tended to focus on what is new and distinctive about them as political and organisational forms. Living wage campaigns are perhaps the best known examples of broad-based organising in the UK. The latter is not restricted to campaigning for a living wage but can more or less be applied to any attempt to address an identified social

problem. In the hands of citizens' organisations, one typically finds these organisational approaches applied to a range of social issues like the lack of affordable housing; unemployment; youth violence, personal debt etc.

The fundamental characteristics of broad-based organising are that it tends to be citizen-initiated and aimed at realising a general good. It seeks to do this by bringing individuals – as members of civil institutions – together to organise around what they hold in common rather than what they disagree about. Solidarity between individuals, within and across institutions, is engendered through the fostering of public relationships – or political friendships – such that individuals know sufficient about each other (their background and motivations) to enable effective organising. For this reason broad-based organising is sometimes referred to as 'relational' organising because its principal *modus operandi* is the one-to-one meeting between individuals who are also members of associations/ institutions.

Living wage campaigns led by citizens' organisations tend to be different in character to those led by trade unions or political parties. For example, while both employ tactics designed to increase tension between campaign group and power-holder, for the former this is always related to a very definite end: typically a meeting with the power-holder. Where trade union-led campaigns typically take the form of a class struggle for a share of the collective product, the focus of citizen-led campaigns tends to be on employers and contractors coming to recognise the common good and 'doing the right thing'.

A number of authors including Wills (2008), Holgate (2005) and Heery et al. (2012) have acknowledged what might be termed a paradigm shift in organising models. Where traditional models of organising centre on the workplace and the ongoing struggle of workers and management, broad-based organising, it is suggested, centres on a particular space or locale. For example, the living wage campaign launched by London Citizens in 2002 was directed at a particular zone – Canary Wharf in the City – rather than any particular sector. The purpose of this was to strengthen communal relations within the worksite and across worksites.

This is not to suggest that broad-based organising represents a complete break with more orthodox forms of class politics. Jane Wills, for example, views living wage campaigns as evidence of the rise of a 'new urban vanguard' (Wills, 2008, p. 455; also quoted by Hearn and Bergos, 2011, p.79). In an important article from 2008 Jane Wills has analysed the role of class in living wage campaigns. Living wage campaigns, she suggests, demand that we dispense with essentialist conceptions of class. What distinguishes the class politics we find in living wage campaigns from 'essentialist' accounts is an emphasis on contingency and a

move beyond the restricted site of the workplace to broader considerations of how the surplus is divided in taxation and public spending and the world of investment - property, pensions, insurance and financial speculation:

[t]he experience of cleaners in London suggests how class interests can be mobilised beyond any fixity in the social structure (class is not just about employment relations at the point of production or service) and beyond any dependence on shared interests or common identities arising from work. As such, London's cleaners and their supporters raise challenging questions for those on the Left who remain stuck with a traditional model of class and its potential politicisation. (Wills, 2008, p.26)

According to Warren (2009), Jamoul and Wills (2008) and Wills et al. (2009) this approach accounts for the success of citizens' groups like London Citizens in organising faith communities. Jamoul and Wills (2008) contrast the progressive engagement of faith-based groups by London Citizens with the standard co-option of these groups by the state. Whereas the former, they suggest, enables faith communities to retain their radical edge by campaigning on issues of social justice – such as affordable housing, a living wage and the regularisation of migrant workers – the latter serves to de-radicalise and co-opt them in community cohesion projects (Jamoul and Wills, 2008, p. 2036 and Defilippis et al., 2010). This is particularly the case in the UK where the government introduced a raft of such projects targeted principally at the Muslim community in response to the London bombings in 2005. The successful engagement of faith groups, they suggest, also accounts for the success of the London living wage campaign led by London Citizens. For not only is this campaign able to draw on the public support and involvement of different faith communities but it was also able to reach migrant workers that are disproportionately members of such communities.

As will be seen from the findings of our own research, Jamoul and Wills' argument is at least partially borne out. Seventy per cent of the cleaning workers who responded to our questionnaire said they regularly attended a place of worship in contrast to just 15% who said they were previously members of trade unions. It further transpired in the interviews with key leaders that a number attended the same church in East London that specifically catered for the Latin American community in the area. While this church itself was not an affiliate of London Citizens, it became clear that the developments at UEL were widely known amongst the congregation. It also became apparent that religious values were a key motivation for some of the leaders amongst the cleaning staff.

Questions of class, community and faith also arise in debates about the future of trade unions. Despite trade union involvement in living wage campaigns in Canary Wharf and the

City of London, relations between community organisations and trade unions are often strained. Jane Holgate (2009) has argued that trade unions often find it difficult to connect with broad-based organising groups (especially the religious elements within them) and are critical of their decision-making structures. Additionally she points to territorial issues between trade unionists and citizens' organisations. Trade union activists and leaders feel that community groups should not operate in an area that they perceive as their 'territory' (such as wages, or the creation of workers' associations). Conversely, citizens' organisations like London Citizens find it difficult to understand and adapt to the democratic processes and timetables of unions. However, Holgate suggests that there is very little in the aims and objectives of these two types of organisations that should prevent them from working together and that locally, the relationship between unions and London Citizens has improved.¹⁸

The experience at UEL tends to bear this out. Unison was a crucial addition to the campaign at UEL. This was a significant moment in the campaign because the campaign group was augmented by local Unison activists who were able to convince their membership of the importance of reaching out to externally contracted staff. It also enabled the campaign team to go on a recruitment drive resulting in over half of the workforce (approximately 70 across three sites) joining Unison. Unionisation also enabled cleaning workers to better resist any attempt on the part of the company or client to offset the increased cost of wages with reduced contracts and intensified workloads. While some tensions were evident at a central level, local organisers and activists from Unison and London Citizens worked closely with one another. The local branch of Unison even went on to affiliate with London Citizens.

The campaign for the introduction of the London living wage at UEL is of interest to current research on living wage campaigns because it utilised broad-based approaches and was led by a coalition of community organisers and trade union activists. We turn now to an analysis of our empirical data.

Findings

Our initial hunch that, as organisers, we were tapping into some significant existing political and organisational capital was not confirmed by our research. Cleaning workers at UEL who were involved in the living wage campaign emerged as a group of migrant workers with little political experience, but with significant associations with faith-based groups. Indeed, religion

¹⁸ In this regard see Holgate and Simms (2010) where trade unions are criticised for treating broad-based organising as a technique and ignoring its implicit political content.

seems to be a key source of bonding social capital. Religion may also be a source of the staff's pride in their work (Snarr, 2007), as verbalised in some of our interviews despite stigmatisation and low pay.

The literature points to tensions between trades unions and community groups (Holgate, 2009). The living wage campaign at UEL, however, is a good example of community organisations and trade unions working together effectively. In this case Unison activists and London Citizens organisers were able to come together and utilise each other's strengths to pursue a successful campaign. This confirms Holgate's finding that, locally, the relations between these two groups are improving.

Moreover, unionisation of the cleaning force at UEL and the activities that followed (such as union training course, ESOL) have meant that the cleaning staff are in a better position to represent themselves and address other problems they may face in the workplace. This concurs with McBride and Greenwood's (2009) claim that union involvement is crucial if living wage campaigns are to lead to lasting benefits.

Lastly, it is apparent from our interviews that those who took part in the campaign acknowledged and valued the impact of the campaign at several levels. Interviewees pointed to increased visibility in the workplace as one of the positive outcomes of the campaign. Being more aware of rights at work and feeling connected to other communities at the University, such as students and lecturers were other valued outcomes. Thus, even though it is necessary to take cautiously claims of the success of living wage campaigns, it is also important to acknowledge that such success is not limited to wage increment.

Conclusion

Our research provides further evidence for a number of claims that have been advanced about the significance of living wage campaigns in the literature thus far. The first of these is that broad-based campaigns are particularly good at engaging migrant workers with high levels of social capital from membership of faith groups, but limited levels of political experience narrowly defined. The second is that community and union organisers can and do work successfully together at grass roots level. Both findings augur well for future living wage campaigns. The first implies that there are significant sections of the migrant workforce that can be engaged in living wage campaigns if the right approach is adopted. This may well differ depending on the composition, background and skills of the workforce as Hearn and Bergos's study shows (2011). Overall, however, this implies an increase in the total reach of living wage campaigns for migrant workers provided the approach is carefully considered.

The second finding that community and trade union organisers work well at a grass roots level may come as no surprise given the scarcity of resources each face. But this generates a range of issues for both organisations which need to be addressed if future campaigns are to be successful. Trade Unions in the UK have for some time now been experimenting with community-based organising in the face of declining traditional membership. For example, Unison, the largest trade union in the UK, have a community organising co-ordinator while Unite have created a separate branch for community-based campaigns (Unite Community). This should dispose trade unions to working more closely with citizens' organisations. However a range of factors impede effective collaboration from disputes over territory to political infighting. In our experience, however, both citizens' organisations and trade unions have a vital role to play: the first in engaging migrant workers and the second in consolidating the gains accruing from the living wage. It would be a mistake however to ignore substantive philosophical differences between community organising and trade union organising and reduce each approach to a difference of technique as Holgate and Simms have argued (2010). For this reason there is, in our view, an urgent need to rethink the assumptions – class-based for the one and communitarian for the other – underlying each practice.

References

- DeFilippis, J, R. Fisher and E. Shragge (2010) *Contesting Community: the Limits and Potential of Local Organising* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press).
- Grover, C. (2008) 'A Living Wage for London?' *Benefits: The Journal of Poverty & Social Justice* 16 (1), pp.71-9.
- Hearn, J. and M. Bergos (2011) 'Latin American cleaners fight for survival: lessons for migrant activism'. *Race & Class* 53 (1), pp.65-82.
- Heery, E, S. Williams and B. Abbott (2012) 'Civil society organisations and trade unions: cooperation, conflict and indifference' *Work, Employment and Society* 26 (1), pp.145-160.
- Holgate, J (2005) 'Organising migrant workers: a case study of working conditions and unionisation in a London sandwich factory' *Work, Employment and Society*. 19 (3), pp.463-479.
- Holgate, J. (2009) 'Contested Terrain: London's Living Wage campaign and the tensions between community and union organising'. In McBride, J. and Greenwood, I. (eds.) *Community Unionism – a comparative analysis of concepts and contexts*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).
- Holgate, J. and Simms, M. (2010) Organising for what?: Where is the debate on the politics of organising?. *Work, Employment and Society* 24 (1), pp.157-168.
- Jamoul, L. and J. Wills (2008) 'Faith in Politics'. *Urban Studies*, 45(10), 2035-2056.
- Nissen, B. (2000) Living Wage Campaigns From a "Social Movement" Perspective: *The Miami Case Labour Studies Journal* 25, pp29-50.
- Rogers, A.; B. Anderson and N. Clark (2009) *Recession, vulnerable workers and immigration: background report*. COMPAS, University of Oxford: Oxford.
- Trade Union Council Commission on Vulnerable Employment (2008) *Hard Work, Hidden Lives: The Full Report of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment*. Available online: www.vulnerableworkers.org.uk/2008/05/full...commission.../index.htm
- Snarr, C. M. (2007) 'Oh Mary, Don't You Weep': progressive religion in the Living Wage movement. *Political Theology*, 8(3), pp. 269-279.
- Warren, M.R. (2009) *Community Organising in Britain: The Political Engagement of Faith-*

Based Social Capital. *City & Community* 8:2 pp.99-127.

Wills, J. (2008) 'Making class politics possible: organising contract cleaners in London', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 2008, 32, 2, 305-24

Wills, J.; N. Kakpo and R. Begum (2009a) *The business case for the living wage: the story of the cleaning service at Queen Mary, The University of London*. Available at:

<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/livingwagereportQM.pdf> (accessed 2/4/2012)

Wills, J.; K. Datta, Y. Evans, J. Herbert and C. McIlwaine (2009b) Religion at work: The role of faith-based organisations in living wage campaigns for immigrant workers in London. *The Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2009, 2,3, 443-62.

Weldon, L. and H. Targ (2004) 'From living wages to family wages? *New Political Science*, 26(1), pp. 71-98.

The Jewish Community in Multicultural London — Ben Gidley (Oxford)

This chapter explores the nature of multiculturalism, and in particular London's specific form of urban multiculturalism, through the perspective of the Jewish presence within it. As captured in the concept of "the Jewish question", Jews have figured in modern Europe as exemplars of otherness, as a non-national people in a world of nation states. In modernity, although originally often excluded from the city and dwelling outside the city walls, Jews have been associated with urbanity, and with the city as a site that is in some sense non-national, even cosmopolitan, in a world of nations. Nowhere is this truer than London, a city that has been, to a greater or lesser extent, alien to the English nation, always populated by migrants and foreigners. Arguably, today's Jewish question is the migrant question, and the historical experience of London's Jews can help us think about London as a city of migration.

I want to start from the idea of Jews having a particular iconic place in the history of London as a city – and particularly East London as a site – of diversity and tolerance. Les Back's term "the metropolitan paradox" (1996) captures the simultaneous presence of the most brutal forms of exclusion and conflict alongside the most profound forms of conviviality and co-existence in a city such as London. The metropolitan paradox, the co-existence of conflict and cohesion, is a structural feature of the modern city, intensified in the age of globalisation and austerity. It is in cities where diversity is experienced most intensely, to which the majority of migrants move, and where mobilisations against diversity are symbolically rooted. And it is also at the local level where the possibility for new forms of identification and belonging emerge. This tension is embodied in the two sides to London's migrant narrative discussed by Phil Marfleet in this volume: a narrative of London as a place of arrival, welcome, tolerance and integration and another more subterranean story of exclusion and intolerance.

No part of London has been the focus of these stories more than the East End. The iconic image of the Brick Lane mosque – built as a Protestant chapel, used as a synagogue, and now a mosque – is so often used to illustrate London as a place of arrival. In the mainstream narrative, successive waves of emigration, from the Huguenots onwards, have shaped the

area. Migrants assimilate, fit in, move up and move on and other people take their place. My aim in this chapter is to complicate that story a little, and thus complicate our understanding of London's diversity.

Jewish London

Jewish London history in the modern period begins in Oliver Cromwell's time. In the two centuries that followed, London saw the slow growth of an ethnically, denominationally and linguistically diverse Jewish population from Spain and Portugal, via the Netherlands, and later from the Rhineland and Central Europe, from the Ottoman Empire and many other places. But a significant shift came in the late nineteenth century with a mass arrival of mostly Yiddish-speaking East and Central European Jews, mainly settling in the inner East End of London. They were arriving into an already existing Jewish London with a strong institutional infrastructure and communal leadership, dominated by a handful of interrelated families who had been in Britain for some time and who had acculturated very much into English culture.

David Feldman (2012) has spoken about a model of "conservative pluralism" which regulated the state's relationships with minorities in this period. This conservative pluralist model did not recognise cultural differences, did not recognise Britain as a place of multiple cultures, but rather recognised Britain as a place of multiple faiths, Britain as a place where different denominations could exist side by side.

The Anglo-Jewish leadership could fit very well into this agenda by asserting the Jewish community as a community of faith and Jews as English people of Jewish faith, and so not ethnically but rather religiously different from the English mainstream. Jewish people in London, along with Catholics, Methodists and other Protestants, had a very particular kind of settlement with the British state, which delegated significant authority to communal bodies to define and regulate religious practices in the spheres of marriage, education, births and deaths, and other key life events. In the logic of the communal fostered by conservative pluralism, communal leadership of the community had the right to speak for and to represent the community in general (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010).

I would argue that the Yiddish speaking Jews who arrived at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century had a very different conception of their identity which would be better captured by the term 'diasporic belonging', a sense of their kinship with Jews in other lands. Rather than seeing themselves as Englishmen of Jewish faith, they saw themselves as Jews who were located in England with a kind of profound kinship with Jews in other

lands (Gidley, 2013). Such kinship was problematic for the Jewish communal leadership who wanted to demonstrate that Jews were nothing more or less than loyal British citizens. But at the same time, the migrant Jews also recognised differences within the Jewish community, differences and divisions papered over by the communal leadership, in particular, differences of class, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when radical movements (socialist, communist and anarchist) were very strong within the Jewish community in East London.

Trauma and the call to identity

I want to briefly give examples of this sort of diasporic belonging and its tension with the logic of the communal and conservative pluralism of the Anglo-Jewish leadership. The first of these is the London response to the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, a wave of violence in a town in the Russian Empire in what is now Moldova, in which 49 Jews were killed. It was not the first pogrom in the Russian Empire, but there was a level of violence which had not been experienced in the 19th century and it sent shock waves around the Jewish world, and has been described by historians as a turning point in Jewish history. The trauma became a kind of iconic moment in modern Jewish history which has over time come to find a place in a series of traumatic experiences culminating in the Holocaust, whose retrospective lens refracts our understanding of past Jewish traumas.

However, while it would later accumulate this iconic quality, in Britain, as I have described in more detail elsewhere (Gidley, 2009; Gidley 2013) the initial official Jewish response to the pogrom was very slow and very quiet. The Board of Deputies, which is the official representative body of British Jews, discussed the issue and decided that there was no reason for them to take action. In the East End where the immigrants lived there was a wave of protests culminating in a march of 25,000 people from Mile End to Hyde Park to protest at the massacre. It was led by trade unions, anarchist organisations, and also hometown organisations of Jewish immigrants. The Board of Deputies was unhappy with this because they were worried that people would shout anti-tsarist slogans and they urged quietness and caution and not making a fuss. When they did finally act, it was to write a letter to *The Times* complaining about the Russian treatment of what they called their 'co-religionists'. 'Co-religionists' is a key word here: communal leaders understood the Jews in Russia as people of the same faith rather than as their kin whereas in the East End marches people spoke about victims as their brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, their flesh and blood: a different type of identification.

Class struggle

However, the migrant Jews in the East End were not solely involved in movements of solidarity with their co-ethnics back home. If class differences were reflected in challenges to communal authority in providing long-distance solidarity, they were directly expressed in social struggles within London. Class cut across community: workers could become masters with a little capital; your boss might also be your cousin or a hometown acquaintance.

Migrant workers formed unions and went on strike in the garment industry, the furniture trade and in the bakery business, in battles that often pitted immigrant workers against both immigrant and non-immigrant Jewish bosses. In some of these struggles, they formed alliances with non-Jewish workers, most significantly with the mainly Catholic dockers who lived in adjacent neighbourhoods. Acting both as Jews and, in such alliances, East End migrants and their children also resisted 'anti-alien' violence in this period, and fascism later.

Orthodoxy as dissent

There were also theological disputes within the community, again reflecting class antagonism. The synagogue was an arena in which the Anglo-Jewish communal leadership sought to impose their conception of Anglo-Jewry as a community of faith and to mould the migrant Jews of the East End into English citizens of the Jewish faith. It was therefore an arena in which this project was actively resisted by a significant portion of the migrants.

The Victorian and Edwardian communal leadership built "model synagogues" in the style of theatres which would foster a hushed audience-like congregation with its attention focused on the rabbi who stood at the front, facing forward, like a Christian priest or an actor on a stage. In these spaces, migrants were made into English subjects. On the opening of the New Road Synagogue in 1892, the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote:

It was a happy thought to have fixed the consecration of the [Synagogue] on the Queen's birthday; a still happier thought to have made reference to that auspicious anniversary... The members... are all foreigners, mostly Poles, and it was touching to hear 'God save the Queen' heartily sung in Hebrew by the Congregation. Fittingly, the Chief Rabbi has made loyalty the subject of his impressive discourse on the occasion.

This sort of spatiality contrasted sharply to the *shtiblekh*, the attic congregations that filled the inner East End, where members of a *minyan* (prayer quorum) would be positioned in a rainbow configuration facing the Ark (where the Torah scroll is kept), around the *bima* (the platform where the Torah scroll is read) to which members of the *minyan* would be called one by one.

The Machzikei Hadas synagogue on the corner of Brick Lane and Fournier Street was a schismatic institution set up in explicit opposition to and rebellion against official Orthodoxy. The original schism was over who had the right to authorise kosher butchers. This was partly a theological issue and also an economic issue – the (East End migrant) consumers of kosher meat effectively subsidised the (West End English) authorities. But these issues opened up wider issues of legitimacy, patronage, enforced dependence and communal democracy which were, in turn, entwined with class and cultural antagonisms, and these antagonisms can be seen in the very shape and substance of the synagogue space. We can see this also in the rules of the Machzikei Hadas. The rules insisted that the synagogue be kept open all day as a place of learning and prayer, and not simply be the site of big, formal, Anglican-style Sabbath services. They insisted that the Torah should be read in the centre of the space, not at the front, and that the preacher must not dress like a Christian priest.

At the time, a worker at the Toynbee Hall settlement house perceptively recognised the schism as a refusal of assimilation and Anglo-Jewish authority, writing that it “testifies to a deep-seated spirit of revolt. The same spirit is shown in the constant suspicion and jealousy of West End interference... The secession of the Mahazike Haddath has important bearings on the question of assimilation”. These examples from the peak of Jewish London give a glimpse into the multiple loyalties, belongings and identifications of its migrant Jews. These stories cut against the grain of celebratory narratives of ethnic succession in which each group of migrants assimilate into British society leaving space for the next wave of newcomers, and also challenge the myth of Jews as model migrants against which the integration of later communities is judged. Some migrants, whether subtly or spectacularly, refuse to assimilate or refuse to move on, and this was no less the case with London’s Jews.

From multifaith to multicultural and back again

The conservative pluralist settlement between the British state and religious minorities persisted well into the period of mass post-colonial migration, and the political strategy pursued by the Jewish communal leadership shaped in the period of conservative pluralism persisted too. However, from the 1960s, black Londoners began to challenge the assimilationist assumption that accompanied this settlement. Anti-racist social movements rooted in the black working class communities of the metropolis began to stake a claim to recognition and inclusion on their own terms.

These social movements gained a foothold within the municipal state in London, reflected for example in the explicitly multiculturalist funding streams of the Greater London Council (GLC) under its leader Ken Livingstone in the 1980s. My final example is from this period: the

Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project (JCARP). JCARP received funding from the GLC to promote Jewish culture within the context of multiculturalism: Yiddish language classes, cultural activities as well as anti-racist activities. The Board of Deputies was again unhappy with this because they believed that Jews were not an ethnic community within the context of multiculturalism but rather a faith community.

More recently, there has been renewed controversy about Ken Livingstone and London's Jews. Significantly, one of the complaints against Ken Livingstone within the community has been that he does not recognise Jews as a people and sees them only as a religion; this reversal since the 1980s marks the belated acceptance from the Jewish communal leadership that Jews are an ethnic group and not just a faith community. But meanwhile the multicultural settlement in Britain has moved on; there has been a striking return to the conservative pluralism of the 1900s. Britain is increasingly seen by politicians as David Cameron, Eric Pickles or Sayeeda Warsi not as a multicultural society but as a multifaith society, with considerable government-supported work in civil society and cohesion channelled through established faith groups.

This return brings a number of advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it opens up possibilities of interfaith alliances: for example, inspiring alliances around Islamophobia and anti-semitism (such as the support of the Jewish Community Safety Trust for the Tell MAMA initiative on anti-Muslim hate crime) or grassroots side-by-side initiatives (such as the Muslim-Jewish Forum bringing together some of the most religious communities in East London) around the practical issues they both face.

But the multifaith paradigm closes down other possibilities. It reinforces the particular voices within communities which claim to represent them: often the most patriarchal voices. It obscures differences within religious communities, and also obscures some of the secular cultural heritage which runs against the religious identities of Jews. It does not deal well with multiple identities, and can encourage a *de facto* segregation, for instance, through faith schooling. It squeezes the secular common ground for dialogue built by earlier anti-racist movements.

In conclusion, this has wider implications for a future urban politics of cohesion and cosmopolitanism which must recognise the faith dimension of many of our identities in what has been termed the “post-secular city”, but also accommodate multiple forms of belonging, including secular identities. This means we need to attend carefully to which histories of diversity are hidden or celebrated. We need to recall the contentious, schismatic nature of earlier migrant histories (embodied in the story of the Brick Lane *shul* or the tailors’ strike).

The East End exemplifies these subterranean histories as well as reassuring moments of unity and comfortable narratives of ethnic succession.

References

- Back, L. (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Feldman, D. (2012) 'Conservative Pluralism and the Politics of Multiculturalism', in Yuval-Davis, N. and Marfleet, P. (eds.) *Secularism, Racism and the Politics of Belonging*, London: Runnymede Trust, pp.10-12
- Gidley, B. (2006) 'Ghosts of Kishinev in the East End', in Valman, N. and Bar-Yosef, E. (eds.) *The 'Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, London: Palgrave, pp.98-112
- Gidley, B. (2013) 'Diasporic Memory and the Call to Identity: Yiddish migrants in early twentieth century East London', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, pp.1-15 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07256868.2012.746171> Print edition forthcoming
- Kahn-Harris, K. and Gidley, B. (2010) *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today*, London: Continuum.

Section 4

Race, Racism and the City

The Tropes of 'Diversity': a Significant Face of Contemporary Racisms — Floya Anthias (Roehampton)

My thoughts today are going to be about diversity and the governance of diversity. We hear continuously that diversity is everywhere. Sometimes it is regarded as a bad thing, for example, in the *Daily Mail* and some contributions in *Prospect* magazine, sometimes it is regarded as a good thing, as for example in the framing of the London Olympics. However in whatever way we use it, I think it is a very problematic notion. It is highly normative and differently interpreted. It is, however, a necessary feature of the social world and its use is clearly socially constructed, as we know. As a boundary maker, it functions as undermining the very intent it seems to activate. If its intent is to demarcate or to include then it registers the difference that can be bridged. On the other hand, if its intent is to exclude then it constructs the demarcation and difference as alien or 'other', occupying a terrain that cannot be crossed. Simmel (1908), to some extent illustrates the conundrum, the contradiction or paradox that I have been referring to. He refers to the bridge as both connecting spaces but also demarcating a boundary. So I think diversity functions a bit like the notion of the bridge. The metaphor of the bridge demarcates boundaries from edge to edge. So in this paper I am going to maintain that contemporary discourses of diversity are boundary and hierarchy making, and constitute a significant phase of contemporary racisms. Diversity identifies those differences that are regarded as salient and ignores others. Indeed, we cannot use the term 'diversity' without first denoting and marking difference from something or someone.

Racisms, like diversity, are also boundary and hierarchy making, marking the boundaries in particularly violent and dehumanising ways. And the tropes underlying racisms can be seen as those of danger, deviance and deficit. We could, if you like add another D, which we might call disgust, but I think that functions very much at the individual level, so I have not included it. The 'other' that is racialised can be one or all of these, through discourses and practices of exclusion – at times forms of physical extermination – but also assimilation which is an extermination or an attempted extermination of difference. The contemporary figuration of the 'diverse' does not appear quite as violent. On the other hand, it also focuses on the "other" as a social collective, marked by ways of life, alien, frightening, deficient, or in some cases

exotic. Some of this diversity can be assimilable as long as the diverse jump ship, i.e. they abandon some of the aspects that make them so but some are regarded as incapable because the space between the ships is far too wide. Some of the diversity as long as it is not too wide and different becomes a matter of praise and embracement. However, the acceptable phase of diversity is that which is regarded as a less dangerous and objectionable expression of cultural difference. So when the term diversity is used in policy documents – I have in front of me the latest document from the Department of Communities and Local Government – the form it takes is to construct the diverse in neutral ways and as not really different apart from diversity being used in a rhetorical way. When diversity is treated as acceptable it erases difference, it constructs sameness out of difference if you like.

Two elements underpin discussions of diversity: one is a culturalisation of social relations and the other is the construction of what I call the 'hierarchical difference'. In terms of culturalisation, there is a dominance of the cultural in the construction of identity and difference. This culturalisation is also found in the ways minorities themselves use the discursive element of the cultural in order to make claims. Culturalisation is found, therefore, both in dominant discourse but also in minority discourse. I would argue that where it is found in the discourse of contestation by minorities, it actually acts as a signifier of other modes also, i.e. it acts as a vehicle for resource driven and material struggles. Whilst I do not want to erase completely the cultural intent, I would argue that cultural difference and claims around this by minorities act also in claiming resources, space, opportunities and so on.

Another aspect of diversity talk in the current period is found in that of diversity management. Many discussions of diversity management show that it functions to sideline issues of equality. It can be seen as part of a business orientation, being used to foster better business management. Hierarchical difference can be found in the current 'diversity agenda' in the UK. I think we need to see this agenda in the context of debates and policies about migration, about policing and strengthening borders. Although social diversity is sometimes regarded as a social good in many of the relevant documents, it constructs 'society' as a kind of community of shared values. Such a notion of society hails from some mythical age where purportedly order was possible on the basis of similarities and commonalities around 'origin', 'culture', 'identity' or 'language'. However, such a view of society is actually quite problematic in the contemporary and global era but it also constructs the figure of what I call the 'perverse diverse'. I would say that there are two ways in which the 'perverse diverse' are constructed both within migration policy and discourse but also in terms of the discourse of diversity. The first, denoting the unacceptable face of diversity, I would say is found in the trope of 'unwilling to integrate'. The concern here is for those who are deviant or deficit in some way and who

are unwilling to integrate, to be forced to do so, by trying to extract from them a show of loyalty, a demonstration that in fact they are willing to integrate in a range of ways (including passing the UK citizenship test). The second trope we find is that of those who are 'unable to integrate' and the impossibility of some undesirable differences actually being eliminated: these are seen as a threat to western values. And here the elements of deviance, deficit and danger which I argued characterise racisms come into play in demarcating the categories of the 'desirable' versus the 'perverse diverse': the former are constructed as having deficits that can be corrected whilst the latter become constructed as dangerous and deviant. And here, debates on the body covering of Muslim women as well as a securitisation discourse come into focus.

I want to illustrate this a little bit more by arguing that integration is seen as requiring a demonstration of a 'willingness to integrate', so that citizenship, for example, becomes conditional on knowledge of life in the UK and of the English language, even before migration through pre-entry tests. A deficit approach to minorities and newcomers is found in the fact that there is no validation of their own language; there is a concern to incorporate them but in assimilationist ways. A lot of the other aspects of who they are, or of their social position, of their class and their gender, are ruled out of court. The 'unable to integrate', are signposted also through the securitisation discourse which focuses particularly on Muslims as potential terrorists. They are the epitome of the perverse diverse, and here we have anxiety about the dangers they pose eliciting forms of state violence and control, from strengthening laws, changing laws, giving integration and policing roles to religious leaders in policing their own categories or groups.

As well as securitization, we find a highly gendered discourse on the female body: the unwillingness of Muslims to integrate as embodied in the use of the body covering of women. Although in the UK there is no prohibition, there is a concern with this and how terrorists can hide behind the *chador*, and again the danger here of the use of these body coverings. And there occurs a culturalisation and stigmatisation of the whole group, being personified as the oppressor of women (forced marriages, violent control of women), of the killer of women (through debates on honour-killings), sometimes framed within the agenda of equality discourse which again is another paradox that we find in here. More examples and a development of these points can be found in my article (Anthias, 2013).

Moving on very quickly, I want to try and point to some ways in which we can build on any positive aspects of the recognition of diversity but at the same time getting rid of the other underpinnings that make the use of 'diversity' very problematic in both analytical and political

discourse. I think there are a number of ways we can do it. Firstly, we need a more intersectional approach which does not treat people purely in ethnic, migrant or racial terms but considers the different facets of people's social locations; of their identities. We can do this at a number of different levels: the structural, the discursive and the identificational.

Secondly, we also need a more transnational lens because both diversity discourse and the accompanying integration discourse that is current in most European societies do not actually take on board the kind of transnational links people have, the flows of communication between different spaces, including places of residence, countries of origin, local and translocal links as well as translocational positionalities (noting not only the crisscrossing connections in peoples' lives but also some of the contradictions this creates at a number of different levels). This means that people might occupy different and contradictory positions globally. For example, someone who works as a cleaner in Britain, and therefore occupies a subordinate position, might be able to improve their social position in their own homeland through being able to save and display relative wealth on their visits or return. I remember the woman who used to look after my aunt when she had Alzheimer's, who was a Turkish Cypriot, very poorly paid, but she was able to build a house in the north of Cyprus and went to live there eventually. I am not saying that this takes away the stratification of inequality and its experience in Britain but using a transnational lens enables us to see that fixity of positions in terms of stratification is not adequate. A translocational lens, which attends to the intersectional, the transnational and the recognition of different localities and spaces can help us to deal with some of the problems of a 'diversity' which assumes and essentialises categories, which defines the boundaries, which asks for bridges. But those bridges at the same time construct boundaries themselves, construct the 'perverse diverse' versus the 'good diverse'. A diversity that does this uses the tropes of danger, deviance and deficit, and in my view, constitutes a significant face of racism.

References

Simmel, G. (1908) 'The Bridge and the Door', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 11, pp.5-11.

Anthias, F. (2013) 'Moving beyond the Janus Face of Integration and Diversity Discourses: Towards an Intersectional Framing', *Sociological Review*, 61(2), pp. 323-343

Migrant London — David Feldman (Birkbeck)

Immigration, as others have said at the conference, is a long-standing phenomenon in London's history. Without going back too far, we can trace the phenomenon from the Germans, Italians and Eastern Europeans of the 19th century, to the lascars and other seamen in the 1930s, before the more familiar post-war immigration. However, what this long view of continuity misses and what I want to underline is the novel scale of recent immigration to London. And by this I mean what has happened in the last 25 years. The foreign-born population in London doubled between 1986 and 2006 from one million to two million. It now comprises, as a modest estimate, one third of the total population in the capital and this is an immigration which reverses the previous population decline of London. It's not just that there are more people; the population is also more diverse. In 1986, 50% of immigrants came from six countries: Ireland, India, Kenya, Jamaica, Cyprus and Bangladesh. In 2006 you have to go through 15 countries to reach the same percentage.

This presents historians with a challenge because the narrative of the capital constantly being made and re-made by immigrants does not seem adequate to the transformations of the present. Is there instead a history of rupture and discontinuity that we must tell? I think to an extent there is but not entirely. In what follows, I want to talk about two things: first of all I will talk about the relation between immigration and welfare over this long period of time and secondly I want to talk about the origin of the politics of multiculturalism, and in doing so I want to present some thoughts about issues of continuity and change.

A number of people who talk and write about the relationship between immigration and welfare in the present argue that diversity and immigration is bad for welfare. The American political scientist, Garry Freeman, (1986) argued that there was a progressive dilemma between diversity and welfare, that increasing immigration in Europe would lead to an Americanisation of European welfare. And this view was reinforced by Dench, Gavron and Young (2006) when they argued that in Tower Hamlets the British welfare system marginalised the white working class and fuelled years of racial conflicts in the borough. They write that white families were disadvantaged through the priority given to Bangladeshi housing needs in a preoccupation with the most vulnerable. This occurred as housing was

allocated on the basis of needs rather than on the basis of a long-standing connection to the borough. The book was applauded among others by Trevor Philips. So this is an argument that suggests that welfare chauvinism is inevitable.

What can history say about this? I think history can say something useful about it but, in order to do so, we have to take account of the lower volume of immigration in previous centuries, when we compare those periods to the present, and look instead at the impact of local migration. Although immigration was important, it was not central to the history of London before the late 20th century but internal migration has been absolutely essential to the growth of London. In 1500, although London was a European capital with some 50,000 inhabitants, it was not in the same league as Paris, Milan, Venice and Naples, which had more than 100,000 each. A century later, London was a European city with a population of 100,000. By the middle of the 17th century, only Paris was larger than London. Yet the death rate in London exceeded the birth rate in this period. So London only grew through its capacity to attract migrants. Most Londoners were born outside the capital. A sample population drawn from the East End, between 1580 and 1640 found that just 13% had been born in London. In the 18th century that figure varied between 70 and 80 % born outside London. As the health conditions improved and the death rate ceased to soar, by the middle of the 19th century a greater portion of the population had been born in London. But even in 1851, in the age group above 20, a minority, only 46%, had been born in London.

What is the connection between this internal migration and immigration in the present? First of all, these internal migrants provoked a torrent of complaints, and a law was introduced in 1593 aimed at restricting building within three miles from the city gates in an attempt to prevent immigration by restricting the supply of housing. In the late 16th and 17th century, a number of parishes embarked on campaigns against householders who took in migrants. In one London parish, the hostility to strangers was so great that in October 1658 the vestry decided that no one could be buried in the graveyard without the consent of the church wardens and five parishioners; even in death, the migrant was discriminated against. At the heart of this antagonism against migrants, I want to suggest, there was a welfare system; namely the Poor Law. The Poor Law was organised on a parochial basis: people had an entitlement to welfare from a particular parish. However, people could move much more easily than their entitlement to welfare could. It is not that people were not able to get a new entitlement to welfare, but it was extremely difficult, especially if you were poor. In a society in which you had so much migration, in a city such as London, probably the majority of the population lived away from the parish where they had their welfare entitlement. The main effect of this was the dis-entitlement of the migrant poor. Migrants were less likely to receive

welfare as a result of this. In a certain way this might support a welfare chauvinist argument. The circle of solidarity was drawn tightly. As early as 1669, we find parishes trying to shift poor migrants the length of 5-6 houses into another parish. These practices were commonplace and continued for nearly 200 years. Patrick Colquhoun highlighted the problems encountered by migrants in his account of the casual poor in London at the end of the 18th century:

Their parochial settlements are either at a great distance, or perhaps they are even without this resource. The expense of removing, as the law directs, is too serious a charge to be incurred by the parish where accident has fixed them. Under such circumstances their applications are too frequently treated with neglect and contumely by the parochial officers; and from the disappointment they thus experience they are not seldom driven to despair. Willing to labour, but bereft of any channel or medium through which the means of subsistence might be procured, their distress becomes exceedingly severe. (1799, p.6)

The Irish were often victims of this system of neglect and there is a nice exchange we have from 1850. James Taylor Ingham, who was a magistrate in the Thames police court, recounted the following as a regular occurrence in his court:

...many persons come to ask for the advice of the police magistrate, poor Irish people among others. They say "we have been to the parish officers to ask for a relief. He would not give it". "Then you must go before the border guardians", says the police magistrate. "Oh yes, we have been before the border guardians". "Would they not give you relief?" "Why would the board say they will send us back to Ireland?" "That is to say your case maybe being brought to a magistrate and enquired into, whether you come from Ireland we will send you back there". And those poor persons genuinely speaking saying "Oh if that is the case we would go without relief". (1854-5)

In other words, poor migrants from Ireland or from other parts of England subsisted, to a great extent, without support from the Poor Law. There was systematic discrimination against migrants under the Poor Law and, as I said, at one level this seems to confirm the existence of welfare chauvinism. It seems to suggest that there are limits to social solidarity. At the same time we should see there was no ethnic or racial basis to this. The English, Irish and Scot poor all suffered. But I think we need to be careful about this idea of absence of social solidarity or to ascribe it to a natural reaction, which is what often occurs in the literature, because it actually had an institutional and financial foundation. Its basis was the local foundation of the Poor Law. This meant that the burden of poor relief fell on those areas where the poor were most heavily concentrated and so least able to bear that burden. In the face of these intractable circumstances, Poor Law guardians tried to restrict relief as much as possible, especially through the disentitlement of migrants. Interestingly and importantly, this

was brought to an end by national legislation. By 1865, paupers only had to be in a Poor Law district for a year before they became eligible for relief on the spot. At that point the discriminatory treatment between migrants and the indigenous poor largely went away. Of course, the conditions of the workhouse were a scarcely desirable form of welfare provision, but it is important to stress that for migrants and the Irish it was a safety net of sorts where beforehand there had been none whatever.

This suggests that rather than look for some elemental and natural notion of social solidarity we need to look at institutional and financial arrangements for the capacity to include migrants and immigrants from different welfare systems. Likewise in the present, local authorities find it difficult to cope with the demands created by immigration because of the rigid formulas used for allocating funds from central government to local spending. As a result, neither the Greater London Authority (GLA) nor the London boroughs have the financial resources proportionate to the increasing size and diversity of their population. In this context of underfunding, conflicts between newcomers and the existing population easily arise. Social solidarity is strained because the benefits of migration accrue nationally and the costs are concentrated locally, and the funding and legal mechanisms have not caught up with this. The argument I want to make is that this long history can point to the importance of institutions and financial mechanisms in shaping entitlements and discrimination in welfare rather than naturalised conceptions of social solidarity.

Lastly, I want to talk about what this long view can tell us about the politics of multiculturalism in London. Multiculturalism is a political term which emerged in the 70s and 80s, driven by anxieties and debates about urban crisis and its connections with young black men in particular. It addressed questions of employment and economic disadvantage. Things changed though from the late 1980s. The appearance of politicised Muslim voices addressing domestic issues such as faith schools, a campaign for a law against religious discrimination, as well as opposition to wars in overseas lands populated by Muslims, and of course the publication of Satanic Verses, are all factors that have given religion a new prominence. In London in 2007, for example, GLA commissioned a report on responding to the needs of faith communities, something which I think was inconceivable in the 1980s. At the beginning of the 21st century, religion has become central to the politics of multiculturalism in Britain and we are likely to be said to live in a multifaith rather than multicultural society.

Is this new? From one perspective, this is new. It is certainly a long way away from strategies of assimilation which dominated policy towards migrants in the 1960s and implemented in

London with 'bussing' schoolchildren in Southall to other areas to keep the proportion of immigrant children in schools below 30%. But there is a different story to be told where my first comments on welfare were saying 'let's not look at immigration, let's look at internal migration'. I think the history of immigration can tell us something about the emergence of multiculturalism, because there was a sort of politics of diversity that emerged in the 19th century, particularly to cater for the educational needs of Jews, Irish and Catholics. The first state grant for education was issued in 1833 by Parliament; within 20 years, state money was funding not only the Church of England (CoE) but Roman Catholic and Jewish voluntary schools too. From the 1902 Education Act onwards, Jewish and Catholic schools would be funded on the rates and, in the case of Jewish schools in London, the majority of their funding came from the rates after 1902.

Now, extremely briefly, what I want to argue here is that this was a double conservative strategy. The Conservative Government did this in 1902 not because they had any particular goodwill towards Jewish or Catholic schools but because it was the only way to preserve the privileged position of the CoE in a plural society in which the majority of people did not attend church. This 'conservative pluralism', as I call it, was a strategy to a) preserve the privilege of the CoE and b) it gave funds, authority and prestige to religious hierarchies in minority communities which boosted their position. We can see a similar dynamic with the emergence of religious multiculturalism in the early 21st century. For example, Dr Fatma Amer, director of education and interfaith relations for the London mosque in 2001, stated 'the religious establishment makes possible a recognition of a person's right to put into actions what he most sincerely believes in' (2005, 25). So there is this alliance between a religious hierarchy within minority communities and the established church that, I think, has its origins in the Anglican responses to Jewish and Catholic minorities. British multiculturalism reveals a practice of collaboration, one that is structured by relations of power and inequality along two axes. First, the politics of multiculturalism, as it is practiced in Britain, bolsters the position of an otherwise beleaguered Anglican establishment and, second, at the same time, it shores up the positions of religious hierarchies within minority communities.

References

Colquhoun, P (1799) *The State of Indigence in the Metropolis, 1799*, London: H. Baldwin and Son.

Dench, G., Gavron, K. and Young, M. (2006) *The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict*. London: Profile Books.

Fetzer, J and Soper, J. Christopher. (2005) *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parliamentary Papers, 1854-5, XIII, Select Committee on Poor Removal, q.2162

Visible and Invisible Migrants — Rahila Gupta (SBS)

I want to look at the relationship between visible and invisible migrants, the documented and the undocumented. I also want to explore how the interests of these two populations have been posited as antagonistic by the state which complicates matters for activists trying to open up immigration controls so that migrants have space to live and breathe. As London remains the main destination for migrants with 40% of the total migrant population, and an estimated 750,000 undocumented migrants in London alone, the paradoxes and contradictions that I will highlight are at their sharpest in London.

I am using the term 'visible' not only in its more commonly understood sense of skin colour but also in terms of being visible to the state i.e. being documented. At the same time, there is no necessary correlation between the invisible and the undocumented because paradoxically the undocumented are both visible and invisible. Judith Shklar, the American political theorist, (cited in Grayson, 2012) described the divide as "a symbolic glass floor – citizens exist above the floor and can look down on those beneath who are excluded from citizenship and are thus the most deprived in society". If only it were as clear cut as that: if you take a walk on a Sunday in Hyde Park, you will spot many a family with a domestic worker in tow, someone of a Filipina or South Asian background, poorly dressed and lagging behind with a sense of deference. She may be a domestic worker on a work visa with satisfactory working conditions. But her passport may be in the hands of her employer, her visa may have run out and she may be an overstayer, technically undocumented and very vulnerable to exploitation such as working a 14 hour, 7 day week with minimal wages (Gupta, 2007, p.5). However some migrants are truly invisible: African children imprisoned by families who depend on their domestic labour; Vietnamese children smuggled in to grow hashish; women kept in flats to service men or brought here as wives who are beaten, raped and imprisoned.

Being invisible is paradoxically both safe and dangerous: 'safe' from the state, the police, the UK Border agency and therefore, safe from deportation to the horrors they hoped they had left behind. But that safety may come at a high price – starvation, violence, slavery and lack of access to beneficial services provided by the state like health (although this is highly

circumscribed, often it is only emergency healthcare available to the undocumented) or the support that could be provided by unions or migrants' organisations. We really need to set up alternative neighbourhood watches: not to criminalise non-conformists/outsideers but to sniff out those in need of support. The policing of 'illegals' does not stop at the borders; it continues at the GP's reception, the welfare office, the employer and the marriage registrar.

We are faced with the paradox of having to surmise the existence of the 'invisible' populations of London from the 'visible', those who have crossed over the dividing line and come to the attention of state and civil society organisations. Denise Marshall of the POPPY project tells a horrific story of a Chinese woman who had been sold by Chinese men to other Chinese men and had lived undetected in a flat for some years until her trafficker tried to murder her and she was found on the pavement below the flat with several broken bones where she was left for dead. It was only when she ended up in hospital on a life-support system that the POPPY project found her and was able to help her (Marshall, 2007).

Modern slavery seems to be an inevitable and essential attribute of 'invisibility'; this makes it particularly hard to tackle unlike the transatlantic slave trade when slaves were a visible 'badge' of the success, pride and prosperity of the slaveowners. The social cohesion and inclusion debate, what we are doing today, meeting and agonising, does not even begin to touch the lives of those who toil all hours of the day working out ways of pleasing their employers/ traffickers/ husbands and trying to avoid a beating. It is the existence of this population, more than any other, which exposes the myth of democratic universalism. This brings me to the central paradox faced by organisations working for the benefit of migrants: that the advocacy for greater rights for migrants does very little to improve the conditions of the 'invisible' populations. By definition, they are out of reach. It is not possible for benefits to trickle down to them. And sometimes, the liberalisation of controls can have the unintended consequence of invisibilising migrants.

In fact, the way in which the immigration system has been constructed by the state leaves very little room for liberalisation, except where dictated by the needs of the economy. A persuasive ideology has grown up around it that makes it very difficult to challenge. The interests of the 'visible' population are pitted against the interests of the invisible on the basis of minimising race, gender and class inequalities. Let me explain.

I will focus on gender and give you a couple of examples from the work of Southall Black Sisters, an advice and advocacy group for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women escaping violence, of which I am a member. We have been campaigning around the issue of forced marriage for at least the last decade. We demanded the protection of the state for women in

this position because it was certainly not a protection available from the community. We demanded the provision of adequately resourced specialist women's services and refuges. We demanded better implementation of guidelines on how to deal with forced marriages so that all the agencies which come into contact with young women, such as schools, health services, police and social services, are trained to recognise the signs and deal with them sensitively.

What did we get? BME refuges being shut down at an alarming rate and fine sounding words from the likes of David Cameron comparing forced marriage to slavery accompanied by a further turn of the immigration screw. The government raised the age limit for those marrying overseas spouses from 18 to 21 with the rationale that it will protect women by giving them time to reach maturity and independence while the legal age for marriage within Britain remains 16. This solved nothing and was recently challenged successfully in the Quila and Bibi case in which two couples fell foul of the age restriction and were not able to sponsor their non-British spouses to join them in the UK although there was no suggestion of the marriages being forced. SBS had intervened in the case and argued that the age policy was a disproportionate and discriminatory way of dealing with forced marriage. Those families hell-bent on this course would simply have taken their daughters abroad on some pretext, got them married off, made sure they became pregnant before being brought back to this country at the right age. They would have become invisibilised. The Home Office has now backed off and announced a reduction in the age to 18. There were some BME women's organisations, however, which supported the new age restriction because it might reduce the incidence of forced marriage – advancing gender justice through a discriminatory, racist law.

Paradoxically, it is the relaxation of immigration controls which will reduce the likelihood of forced marriage, since marriage will not be seen as a route to gaining entry to the UK. However, any argument advocating liberalisation of immigration laws, no matter how reasonable, is unlikely to succeed.

Similarly, the story of the one year rule (OYR) demonstrates not just how the interests of the visible are pitted against the invisible but how the visible are invisibilised. The OYR was the probationary period for all marriages to non-British spouses. If the marriage broke down within that period, the woman would be deported. In 1992, SBS launched a campaign against the OYR because it found that many of the women they were seeing were faced with a stark choice between domestic violence and deportation. This needed a change to the rule rather than a case by case fight which was time consuming. In 1999, as a result of successful campaigning by SBS, the Domestic Violence concession was introduced whereby

a woman who could provide evidence of violence could apply for leave to remain but would have no recourse to public funds, that is, no access to benefits or refuges, even if it took months for her application to be decided. Women were now faced with destitution or domestic violence. To balance this 'concession', the government increased the probationary period from one to two years which lengthened the period in which the non-British spouse would be tied to the British spouse, would have no status in her own right and therefore become invisible. While the husbands hold their passports, they are able to exert total control over the women. Those women who become visible by applying under the domestic violence rule for leave to remain condemn the 'invisible', possibly hundreds of other women to violent marriages for longer periods. They are not to blame. It is the way the system is set up.

Furthermore, approximately 40,000 marriage visas were issued in 2010 compared to approximately 500 women who escape violent marriages every year. To enable 500 women to exercise their human right to live free from violence, 40,000 couples have to make sure that their marriages last for two years before they can make an application to regularise the status of the non-British spouse. How do you square that circle? What do you do when winning the battle against one injustice gives rise to another? Which injustice is greater? And why should we have to deal with a hierarchy of injustices?

Meanwhile, women continue to turn up at the door of SBS, destitute and homeless while they are waiting for a decision on their future. No refuge can afford to take women who cannot pay rent. This forces women into further unsavoury and exploitative relationships in order to find a roof over their heads. Although SBS fundraised successfully for a pot of money to put women up in B&Bs, this was sticking plaster that did not cover the wound. In such a situation the responsible thing for SBS was to continue to campaign against the No Recourse to Public Funds. Since 2007, SBS along with a coalition of 27 women and human rights groups including Amnesty, Women's Aid, Eaves Housing and Women's Resource Centre, have been fighting this battle. And happily, I can report to you that just recently, from 1 April 2012, the Destitute Domestic Violence (DDV) concession came into force. It will allow women to apply for three months' leave, giving them access to benefits while they apply for indefinite leave to remain.

BUT, and it's a very big but, this victory is soured by the current proposal to extend the probationary period for marriages to non-British spouses from two to five years! The reasoning behind these extensions is that they are a test of genuine marriages. But are they really? When one in seven genuine marriages breakdown between two and six years anyway? The British state has long been concerned with the institution of marriage within its

migrant communities as the Trojan horse through which further migrants may be smuggled into the country.

I do not have time to go into detail about how documented migrants were drawn into antagonism against the undocumented on class and race grounds. The idea that unskilled migrants will damage the prospects of the local working class has infected all points of the political spectrum from left to right although there is no conclusive evidence that this is true. Despite the history of trade union nervousness about migrants and fears for the rights of their members, a Trades Union Congress (TUC) report (2007) concluded that there was no long term impact on wages or availability of employment.

The idea that tough immigration laws are good for race relations is another one that has been doing the rounds since the mid-70s at least: that the fewer new migrants that 'darken' our doorstep, the better it will be for those already here, an argument bought by large chunks of the settled immigrant communities themselves, the 'lifting the drawbridge behind us' syndrome. But it is a non-sequitur, probably why we hear much less of it now. The very existence of controls, selectively applied, suggests that immigrants are not welcome, the call for toughness suggests (as does the media coverage and national conversation) that immigrants are slippery, that the controls need to be tougher, none of which can possibly foster good race relations.

A consensus has grown around the notion of a 'managed' migration policy with those on the left emphasising fairness and justice while the government's emphasis falls on the 'robustness' and 'integrity' of the system. However, the government's attempt to maintain its integrity sets up contradictions and divisions, time and again, as I have attempted to show. A 'fair immigration policy' is a contradiction in terms. The holy grail of trying to tease out fairness from a system designed to exclude and control entry to this country which has so engaged our energies is doomed to failure. We claim little victories which smooth out the sharp edges. But the massive, unyielding block of injustice cannot be shifted. Since the introduction of the first immigration law, the Aliens Act 1905, what we have seen is an ongoing entrenchment of draconian laws which makes it near impossible to enter this country unless you bring investment or certain skills.

Campaigners believe that the success of our campaign relies on appearing reasonable in our demands. This is how we hope to have a monopoly on the government's ear. The campaign against the two year rule, formerly the one year rule, and possibly the five year rule in the not so distant future, had started off with the demand for the abolition of the rule itself. While we have succeeded in getting important concessions on domestic violence, what about those

women whose relationships simply break down and there is no evidence of violence. They too face the same cultural pressures of having brought shame to their families if they have to return to them, of being isolated and unsupported by them. What about those women who are not on spousal visas? Or those who became overstayers because, unknown to them, their visa ran out? If there was no rule, there would be no artificial divisions between these women, all of whom face domestic violence. Surely our human rights commitments oblige us to protect all women from violence. The demand for the abolition of the rule, an eminently reasonable demand, has fallen off the edge over the years; it was deemed too unlikely to succeed as a demand.

For a time, in the middle part of the last decade, there was a head of steam building up under demands for regularising undocumented workers in Britain. There were the Strangers into Citizens campaigns; Boris Johnson has famously supported it on the basis that the London economy will benefit from the increase in taxes. All these calls are conditional on the number of years that migrants have been here, employment history and so on which is problematic. Despite London's position as a global city and its strategic importance to the British economy, the Mayor's campaign for regularisation fell on deaf ears in central government.

Unconditional regularisation of all migrants, allowing the invisible to become visible, is the only rational way to remove the divide at the heart of the migrant community.

A version of this paper was published as 'UK Migration: A Hierarchy of Injustices' on OpenDemocracy 5050

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/rahila-gupta/uk-migration-hierarchy-of-injustices>

References

Marshall, D. (2005). Interviewed by Rahila Gupta, 9 March.

Grayson, J. (2012) 'First they came for the Asylum Seeker...'. Available at:
<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/first-they-came-for-the-asylum-seeker/> (Accessed: 28 March 2012).

Gupta, R. (2008) *Enslaved: The New British Slavery*. London: Portobello Books.

The Economics of Migration (2007) London: Trades Union Congress

London and Riot — Jerry White (Birkbeck)

Riot and London: at first sight, the words sit uneasily together, for traditionally London is a city known best for its order, civility and tolerance. Yet in a long history there is space for more than one tradition, and from time to time, rioting in London has challenged the forces of order and stretched them to breaking point. At times, too, London has seemed on the brink of a civil war. The summer riots in 2011 left Londoners astonished: if any proof was needed that this is a city of paradox, it was provided on the evenings of 6th to 9th August. The riots left commentators groping for an explanation, and for historical parallels. Some even looked back to the Gordon Riots of June 1780 but it seems to me that the most relevant comparison are the Brixton disorders, some call it the Brixton uprising, of April 1981. I want to focus on those Brixton events while giving a nod of recognition to the Gordon riots of the 18th century and the Sunday trading riots of the 19th century.

First, though, I wanted to reflect on the enduring structural unfairness of London and the sense of injustice this unfairness generates. The central paradox of London is that it promises the world to its citizens while delivering far less. It flaunts daily what the richest among the Londoners can expect, but what in reality few can obtain, and from which many are excluded altogether. Just who is excluded has changed to some degree over time. The experience of social exclusion during an earlier period has not been better described than by Francis Place (1841) the radical tailor of Charing Cross:

A great mass of our unskilled... labourers are in poverty, if not in actual misery. A large portion of them have been in a state of poverty and great privation all their lives, they are neither ignorant of their condition nor reconciled to it, they live amongst others who are better off than themselves, with whom they compare themselves and they cannot understand why there should be so great a difference... To escape from this state is with them of paramount importance, among a vast multitude of these people, not a day, scarcely an hour can be said to pass without some circumstance, some matter exciting reflection occurring to remind them of their condition which notwithstanding they have been poor and distressed from their infancy and however much they may at times be cheerful they scarcely ever cease ... to feel and to acknowledge to themselves with deep sensations of anguish their deplorable condition. (cited in Rowe, 1970, pp. 148-9)

Place's London is very different from ours but I see no reason why this consciousness of social exclusion should not be as true in 2012 as it was in 1841. If we replace 'anguish' with anger, we might detect some continuities between Place's London and the riots of summer 2011. In 2012, the Home Office (HO) released figures which showed that half of those implicated in the riots were under-21, two-thirds had needed special educational help, one-third had been excluded from school in the previous year, and four in ten were claiming benefits.

There are other continuities too: this festering inequality is sustained by a system of justice which always favours those who have over those who have not. Again, because people – even the socially excluded – are not fools, they are entirely aware 'of their condition' and the inequalities of the justice system. The superstructure of that justice system might change: the police offices and debtors' prisons of 18th century London; the 'Crushers' or the still New Police of the 1850s; the 'pigs' of the 1970s and 1980s. But whatever the manifestation, from time to time, this designedly unfair system of justice does indeed become repugnant, occasionally intolerable, to some Londoners who erupt with fury against it.

We can see this in the Gordon riots of June 1780. They began as an expression of anti-Catholic feeling stoked up and let loose by the mad, bad and dangerous Lord George Gordon. But within days, the riots turned into an uprising of the London poor, whose fury vented itself against the institutions of the corrupt and malicious justice system of police offices and prisons. Newgate, the Fleet, the King's Bench, the Clink, the Houses of Correction in Clerkenwell and Southwark, the police offices in Bow Street and Worship Street, scores of private bailiffs' prisons called sponging houses, were sacked or put to the torch, with hundreds of prisoners set free. After the burning of Newgate, an interesting conversation took place among the drinkers at the Bell public house where Thomas Haycock, a tavern waiter by calling, boasted how he had been active in the destruction:

I asked him what could induce him to do all this? He said the cause. I said, do you mean a religious cause? He said no; for he was of no religion. He said, there should not be a prison standing on the morrow in London. (1780)

It was with a jolt of recognition that I read last week in the newspapers of the trial of Laura Johnson, the so-called millionaire's daughter caught up in the August riots that at least some of the rioters also spoke of "the Cause" (2012) when justifying looting to one another.

There are many other possible examples from the 19th century of anger boiling over against an unfair system of justice: the Sunday Trading Riots of June and July 1855. These were sparked by another younger son of the peerage who had swallowed too much neat religion

to be good for him, Lord Robert Grosvenor. He introduced a Bill in Parliament to close shops and beer houses and to shut down public transport, all in the name of Sabbath observance. No more naked attack on the living standards of the London poor, already suffering from unemployment and high prices, could be imagined because Sunday was their main day for shopping and the only day for pleasure. There were furious demonstrations against the Bill on successive Sundays in Hyde Park. For Henry Beal, a domestic servant, who was in the crowd, it was clear why many had come:

There seemed to be a general feeling of abhorrence about the [Bill]; that it was a measure to crush the poor; levelled exclusively against the poor, while the rich had their privileges unmolested ... Tattersall's would be open, where horse-racing and betting could go on all day – that I heard stated – and the clubs, where a gentleman would have any refreshment that he pleased, where he could have his cards or anything he liked, and yet that it was a sin for a man to buy a newspaper or get shaved, and that it was a great piece of hypocrisy – that was the general observation which I heard applied. (1856)

There was much stone-throwing against the carriage folk taking the air – driven of course by their servants – that Sunday. But it was resentment against the Metropolitan Police, trying to protect the silk-hatted classes, which provoked the greatest violence. 'Down with the Crushers!' was the popular cry, and for six hours or so, there were running skirmishes between police and people. Bystanders, promenaders, peaceful demonstrators and ruffians were all swept indiscriminately into the melee. For a time, some young guardsmen joined the tumult against 'the crushers.' There was much violence on both sides. Forty-nine policemen were injured. Eventually Grosvenor withdrew his troublesome bill. In both these instances, the forces of law and order were seen as the active agents of injustice and themselves became the object of the Londoners' fury, even though the site of oppression lay elsewhere: desperate poverty and hopelessness in 1780s London and class oppression in the 1850s.

In the 1980s, the police again were the object of wrath. But in these years and for some time before, the police had themselves become the agent of oppression against Londoners. Not all Londoners, of course, but black Londoners, and young black Londoners, in particular. Police and public relations had been dominated by questions of race almost since the Notting Hill riots of 1958. There had been incidents of racial abuse and victimisation of black people by the police before the Second World War. But it was the post-war Commonwealth migrations from the late 1940s that put the issue of race and the Metropolitan Police (Met) in sharp focus. The Notting Hill riots exposed some policemen as sharing the prejudices of anti-black rioters: some black men went to prison for appearing merely to be defending themselves; and black people complained that offensive weapons had been planted on them. The murder of Kelso Cochrane in May 1959, the refusal of the police to accept it as

racially motivated in case there were reprisals and their failure to find the assailant (not necessarily blameworthy in the case of a random murder by a stranger in the street) fuelled mistrust of a force which, in the experience of many black Londoners, was by now largely hostile to them.

The main elements in the black Londoners' case against the Met were all in place by the early 1960s. They were articulated by Joe Hunte (1966) from Brixton in a pamphlet which he titled, *Nigger Hunting in England?* after hearing local police officers discussing their night's work. He catalogued racial abuse, physical assault, failure to protect blacks against whites, police suspecting all blacks of being criminals (then pimping or drugs, later street robbery) and harassment of black social life by raiding drinking clubs. Other details soon emerged, such as beatings in police stations, and complaints of abuse of the laws of "suspected persons". Some of these factors were evident in police-public relations with white working-class Londoners before black people ever came to London in large numbers and continue to this day. But racial abuse and the stereotyping which meant that black people were objects of suspicion just going about their daily business – walking a street, driving a car, carrying a suitcase – gave a personal edge to relations between police and black Londoners.

By the late 1960s, in the year or two following Enoch Powell's 'river of blood' speech (1968) and the East African Asian crises, tensions between black people and the police in London were running very high. Police raids on the Mangrove restaurant, All Saints Rd in 1969 – to check contraventions of the licensing laws and search for drugs – and the case of Roland Ifill, a 14-year-old steward at Queen's Park Rangers football club, assaulted by whites but then arrested and charged, raised the temperature in Notting Hill. In 1972, the 'black muggers' moral panic broke. The House of Commons Select Committee on race relations had been told in 1972 by the West Indian Standing Conference of 'blood on the streets of this country' unless police relations with the black community were improved. That this was no scaremongering was shown sensationally by the Notting Hill Carnival in August 1976. Some 400 police and 200 civilians were hurt in the worst London rioting of the century so far. This was a ferocious anti-police riot, pure and simple, with some opportunistic looting and street crime in the confusion. It would set a pattern for collective recrimination in London for the next 15 years.

By the late 70s, a campaign against the 'sus' laws, sections of the Vagrancy Act of 1824, designed to deal with persons suspected of being about to commit a crime, focussed on the way in which they impacted unequally on black youth. The law was most used (and abused) in London. The Met brought 55% of the nation's suspected person charges in 1976 when

London had just 15% of the nation's population; and 42% of 'sus' arrests were made of black people compared to 12% of all arrests. The campaign was successful and the old law was repealed in 1981. The scrapping of the sus laws was seen as a defeat for the Met that rendered the daily policing of black people on the streets of London only more pugnacious. For the Met's blue serge was deeply dyed in prejudice.

A remarkable sociological investigation into the force conducted around this time (1983) by a team led by David Smith, shone a lurid light on the Met canteen culture: irremediably racist and sexist and cheerfully condoned by every senior officer who came into contact with it. "There can be few other groups," the report concluded, "in which it is normal, automatic, habitual to refer to black people as 'coons', 'niggers', 'monkeys', 'spooks', 'spades', and so on". These attitudes, as Smith and his colleagues rightly stressed, did not always betray themselves on the streets. But they did so frequently enough, and every unjust act of petty oppression was told and retold in the black community, making far more enemies than victims, and fanning flames the police had long set smouldering. Perhaps the case of Mark Bravo might stand as one small example of how miserably unjust policing could be to black Londoners: one black boy in North London whose mother gave him a motorbike for his 16th birthday. During the first week he was stopped by the police on seven occasions, and this began a pattern which continued for several months. Mr Bravo eventually received 18 summonses as a result of countless stops between January and the summer; he was acquitted of ten and those for which he was found guilty included a 'defective registration plate' which contained a crack, (£2 fine) and careless driving, (endorsements).

Unsurprisingly, things in Brixton had long been tense. The Met's Special Patrol Group (SPG), a mobile troubleshooting force which some described as 'paramilitary' became operational in Lambeth from 1978, targeting street crime. The wholesale 'stop and search' of youth could only make matters worse. A Lambeth Borough Council Inquiry (1981) into local policing received 275 representations from organisations and individuals, except the Met, who refused to take part. Its report was predictably 'highly critical' of the police and unhelpfully used inflammatory language to say so, but it catalogued a long list of alleged abuses. That same month saw the dreadful 'Deptford fire' at a party in the Ruddock family's home in New Cross, in which 13 black youngsters died. The cause was almost certainly arson. The motive was unlikely to have been racism but many black people believed it was and the perpetrators once more were never caught. David Smith's team was asked by one of the police officers (1983): "how many of these niggers actually died in this barbecue of Deptford then?" Anger at the Deptford fire culminated in a march on the 'Black People's Day of Action' in March 1981.

When the SPG conducted yet another street-crime foray in Lambeth, the following month – the notorious Swamp 81 – Brixton ignited. The ‘Brixton Disorders’ of 10-12 April 1981 were the most sustained and serious riots of the 20th century in London. The very beginning of these terrible events showed how tinder-dry were police and public relations in Brixton. A police constable (PC) noticed a black man being chased by “two or three other black youths”. According to the Scarman Report (1981) into the riots the man had been stabbed and badly wounded and even though police officers tried to render first-aid, an angry crowd gathered and assumed that the police had set about him. They pushed the policemen aside, ‘rescued’ the youth and took him to hospital. Rumours of the police ‘assault’ spread and brought others onto the streets. Within 25 minutes, a riot had begun and police came under fierce attack. Things were quiet by 10.30 but blood had been tasted.

The following day, the SPG forces returned to Brixton to continue Swamp 81, certainly the biggest error of judgment the Met were guilty of, in the whole of the 20th century. Three hours later the most serious rioting on the British mainland had begun. Many police officers were injured, some seriously. One in three of those arrested was white and all commentators noted the large part played by white youths as well as by black in the attacks on police. Extensive looting was a distinctive feature of the Brixton events. Booze, cigarettes, shoes, clothes, jewellery and the electrical goods were favourite targets. According to *The Times* (1981), a young black man, calling himself Mr. T, said, “something should have been done about this place a long time ago. Maybe now it will happen”.

To read the newspaper reports of April 1981 reveals many similarities with August 2011. Despite the strides made in the Met since 1981 in adjusting to the realities of a multicultural London, it was police action that once more provided the spark. For no matter how well policing operates – and it is never perfect – it will always seem oppressive to the property-less and the excluded. However we interpret the events of August 2011, they surely tell us that this age-old predilection, to riot against property and those institutions established to protect it, is likely to maintain its vigour in London life for the foreseeable future.

References

Hunt, J. (1966) *Nigger Hunting in England*. London: West Indian Standing Conference.

Francis Place is cited in Rowe, D.J. (ed), *London Radicalism 1830-1843*, 1970, pp148-9.

Old Bailey Proceedings, t17800628-34, *Trial of Thomas Haycock*.

Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Alleged Disturbances of the Public Peace in Hyde Park on Sunday, July 1st, 1855; and the Conduct of the Metropolitan Police in Connexion with the Same. Together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index, 1856, qq. 1324-5, evidence of Henry Beal.

For the Lambeth inquiry and the Brixton Riots see *The Brixton Disorders: Report of an Inquiry* by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Scarman, OBE, Cd. 8427, 1981;

Keith, Michael Race, *Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-racist Society*, 1993.

Smith, D. J. et al, *Police and People in London*, 4 Vols., 1983, Vol. IV, pp113, 116.

The Times, 'Only way, says jobless Mr T' 13 April 1981.

England's Riots of 2011: uprisings or avarice? — Rob Berkeley (Runnymede Trust)

Introduction

The civil unrest that took place across England's cities and towns in August 2011 was unprecedented; an experience not felt for at least a generation. Mark Duggan's death is widely seen to be the spark that ignited those furious days of destruction and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death continues. Five people are known to have been killed during the course of the civil disturbance. The impact of the lives lost and the families traumatised as the civil unrest spread across London and the rest of England will take some time to heal.

The level of destruction and looting on the streets of England was exceptional. The claims for loss and damage stand between £200-300 million in London alone. When the cost of police overtime and the drafting in of officer reinforcements are included, some reports indicate a total cost of more than £370 million. The streets that were so marked by devastation in August 2011 have largely been refurbished but many shop owners still await their insurance awards and some local business will sadly not reopen.

In the aftermath of the civil disturbance, there was quite rightly a condemnation of the violent and destructive activities but there was also a reluctance to understand why it had happened. The disturbances witnessed in Tottenham following the death of Mark Duggan bore a close resemblance to violent unrest that arose from injustices felt by the African Caribbean community in the 1980s. However, as the disturbances spread across London and further, the events unfolded into something less recognisable. In the absence of a full government inquiry, the Runnymede Trust was concerned that ethnic inequality and racial injustice, as potential factors in the civil unrest, were too quickly dismissed and marginalised from public discussions and brought together key local decision-makers, professionals, young people and members of the community to find out what happened during the riots and what can be done to prevent similar riots happening again. Most significantly the project aimed to find out if race played a role in the riots. (Runnymede, 2012)

Researchers of the Runnymede project went to four areas where civil disturbances were

recorded; Birmingham, Coventry, Croydon (London) and Lewisham (London). The areas were selected on the basis of their particular demographic profile and also their particular history of community relations and civil disturbances. In the course of our research, we heard many voices and possible explanations as to why the civil disturbances erupted. The discussions were, therefore, diverse and wide ranging. The most important issues discussed are listed below:

Criminal injustices

Since Sir Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan police force in 1829, the UK has operated with the recognition that the British Police Service can only act with the consent of the policed. There is a delicate line that the police force must tread to ensure that it receives cooperation and trust from the community. The relationship between black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and the police has been at times troubled and agitated to say the least. Since the MacPherson Report (1999), participants in our research project recognised that there have been positive developments in terms of the recruitment of BME police officers, but felt that stop and search, deaths in custody and injustices in the criminal justice system continue to undermine the relationship between the police service and BME people.

Death at the hands of the police

When we asked about the role of race in the civil disturbance in August 2011, participants at all roundtables referred to the death of Mark Duggan and the miscommunication around his death as the 'trigger' or 'catalyst' for the riots. They also made references to Smiley Culture, Cynthia Jarrett, Roger Sylvester and Joy Gardner, who were all members of the African-Caribbean community who died in suspicious circumstances at the hands of the police. The death of Mark Duggan appeared to trigger a deep and real memory of historical injustices and grievances that BME communities have had with the police and the criminal justice system.

Stop and search

The proportion of stop and searches leading to arrest, let alone conviction, is incredibly small. Academics have critiqued the use of stop and search in the Brixton riots 1981, noting that the police activity only led to increased tensions with the local community (Rollock, 2009; Sveinsson, 2012; StopWatch, 2011). A recent study, which interviewed people directly involved in the riots, found that 73% of those interviewed had been stopped and searched in the last 12 months (The *Guardian*, 2012). It is a mistake to draw overly simplistic causal links

to the riots; however, the research participants repeatedly cited the police's use of stop and search as a significant factor in the outbreak of the riots.

Government data on race and the criminal justice system shows that if you are black you are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than if you are white (MOJ, 2010). Increases in stop and search are evident for Asian groups, most notably under the Terrorism Act legislation employed in the wake of the London bombings (Rollock, 2009). Counter-terrorism legislation such as Schedule 7 has been linked to widespread feelings of persecution and harassment among Muslims, yet less than 1% of Schedule 7 stops result in an arrest (StopWatch, 2011) and not one arrest for terrorism-related offences (Sveinsson, 2012). It is important to acknowledge that the feelings of harassment, frustration, and anger in relation to stop and search are not the domain of young BME men alone.

In January 2012 the Metropolitan Police Service announced a new approach to stop and search to increase public confidence and trust in the police tactic. As part of the new approach, Section 60 of the Public Order and Criminal Justice act 1994 will now be used in a more intelligence-led and targeted way. The approach aims to reduce the number of Section 60 authorisations whilst ensuring that more arrests arise from searches. The announcement followed a review of stop and search and was approved by Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe (www.met.police.uk).

In the rush to condemn the riots, political and media elites were quick to conclude that these riots 'were not about race' (Cameron, 2011a) and nor were they 'race riots'. Although it has been widely claimed that the 2011 disturbances were not 'race riots' dominated by one ethnic group (Sveinsson, 2012) or clashes between ethnic communities, it is important to investigate the role race relations played in the riots of 2011.

The events surrounding the death of Mark Duggan clearly echoed similarities to the outbreaks of civil unrest in the 1980s. The government inquiries following the riots of the 1980s explored the role race and race inequalities played in those disturbances. There has been no official government inquiry into the 2011 riots; instead the current Government's preference has been to focus forensically on the criminal and acquisitive nature of the events. When we spoke to participants in the project, many stated that race was a factor in the disturbances.

Precarious community relations: Birmingham

Civil disturbances between ethnic communities are not new to Birmingham. Handsworth, an inner city area of Birmingham, was devastated by two days of violent rioting in September

1985 and the riots in 2005 were seen to derive from racial tensions between black and Asian communities.

As evidenced by the participants in the project, there is an element of hypersensitivity around the relationship between black and Asian communities in Birmingham. Certain members of the community highlighted how they worked together to dampen down any further disturbances, whereas others were more inclined to discuss the divisions in the community. There appeared to be an anxiety in stating that there were tensions for fear of driving a further wedge between the communities.

On 10 August 2011, in Winson Green, Birmingham, three men – Haroon Jahan, 21 and brothers Shahzad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31 were killed in a hit-and-run incident while attempting to protect their neighbourhood. It was widely reported at the time that the driver of the car was a black man. After pleas from the father of the two brothers who died, no further violence ensued in retaliation. However, abusive messages and emails did circulate following their deaths. It is difficult to know from our Birmingham roundtable whether the hit-and-run incident was racially motivated, but what we can see is that there were very real fears that the tensions between black and Asian communities could have escalated into further physical conflict. This, to some extent, reveals the fragility of inter-ethnic relations in Birmingham.

Underlying racial tensions: Lewisham

The participants at the Lewisham roundtable expressed concerns that the riots had unearthed long-term racial tensions that had perhaps been 'swept under the carpet' but were able to come to the fore in the aftermath of the riots. They were particularly fearful in Lewisham that the looters and criminals involved were perceived by the wider community to be solely young black men. In the days following the disturbances, the roundtable participants reported that white members of the community and members of the English Defence League attempted to defend businesses from looters.

Participants at the roundtables were reluctant to apportion blame to any particular community or ethnic group, but they spoke of how the black community can become a scapegoat for these disturbances. One participant in Croydon said 'society likes to find someone to blame and young black men are the easiest target'. A number of the participants were eager to point out that a multitude of people from different ethnic backgrounds were involved.

What we do know about previous 'race riots' in the 1980s and 2000s is that they too were ethnically mixed. Lord Scarman wrote of the 1981 Brixton riot: 'White people, as well as black

people, helped to make and distribute petrol bombs on Saturday' (Scarman, 2001, p.126) but that there were still racial elements to that disorder. The Scarman report went on to stress the importance of tackling racial disadvantage and racial discrimination to prevent further outbursts.

Community cohesion

The government inquiry into the 'race riots' of 2001 in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford found that ethnic communities were essentially living 'parallel lives' and the physical and cultural segregation engendered the conditions for the riots (Cantle, 2001). The concept of community cohesion, a term generally used to describe a state of tolerance between people from different backgrounds, emerged from the official government response.

Coventry is home to institutions that are known for promoting community cohesion. The roundtable participants in Coventry generally felt that community relations were stronger there than in neighbouring cities such as Birmingham or cities with similar demographics such as Bradford. Participants discussed the 'cohesiveness' of the community and linked good community relations to the relatively low level of civil disturbances in August 2011. However, some participants in the group, particularly those who worked with minority ethnic communities, cautioned against complacency.

We can perhaps see from the participants in Coventry that community cohesion can in part address the issues of inter-racial tensions. However, it may still fail to tackle challenges of racial inequality when communities are under stress from external forces such as growing scarcity in resources or greater competition in the job market. It is likely to be more than coincidental that inter-racial tensions and civil unrest increase during periods of economic downturn, and where economic inequalities between groups are on the rise (White, 2011).

Precarious lives

Unemployment, particularly for BME groups, was cited during the roundtables as possible explanation for the civil disturbances. London and the West Midlands, where the majority of the riot roundtables took place, feature in the top three areas with the highest unemployment rates in the country (ONS, 2011b). In this economic downturn, unemployment for black and minority ethnic people is at an all-time high (Wood et al, 2009). Roundtable participants repeatedly attributed the rising unemployment rates to the feelings of despair and hopelessness that potentially led to the riots.

The 'precariat' is a term that refers to people with little or no job security or prospect of

employment (Brotherton & Hallsworth, 2011). The composition of this group is often young urban residents from minority ethnic groups, the working-class and the downwardly mobile. It is a well established fact that there are ethnic penalties in employment. When subjected to CV testing, private sector employers showed a discrimination rate of 35% in the private sector compared to 4% for the public sector (Wood et al, 2009). While many commentators have pointed to the cuts as a potential cause of the riots, participants also spoke of how the loss of public sector jobs impacts on ethnic minorities as they are overrepresented in that sector.

Education and employment

We know that only 6.8% of Black Caribbean students achieved the newly-adopted English Baccalaureate benchmark in their GCSEs in 2010 (Runnymede Trust, 2010) and that for every African-Caribbean male undergraduate at a Russell Group University, there are three African-Caribbean males aged 18-24 in prison (Sveinsson, 2012). During the roundtable discussions, education professionals spoke of institutional racism in the education system but also the difficulty BME young people may have in finding employment even when they have all the relevant qualifications. Participants discussed why succeeding generations of qualified BME people have found themselves surplus to the requirements of the labour market.

We are in a period where the number of unemployed young people is at a record high (TUC, 2012). Figures show that the number of 16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) was at a record high in 2011, and that it is from this group that offenders are most likely to be drawn (Sveinsson, 2012). The project participants recounted feelings of anxiety and hopelessness in relation to youth unemployment levels and race discrimination in employment. There was a real sense that these issues contributed to the frustrations that erupted into the scenes of destruction that we witnessed across England.

A stake in community

Ministry of Justice figures show that those involved in the civil disturbances came disproportionately from areas with high levels of deprivation (MOJ, 2011). Roundtable participants went a step further and linked the high proportion of BME people to those deprived neighbourhoods across England. During the discussions around deprivation, participants explored how regeneration can often come in the form of exclusive and uneven development that can lead to certain members of the BME community feeling disconnected from their own cities.

In 2009, Runnymede published the report *Why Do Assets Matter?* (Khan, 2009) that briefly explores various lines of thought on the relationship between owning assets and citizenship. The report also notes the need for more research and discussion around how having a stake in a community corresponds to the concept of community cohesion. The riot roundtable participants provided examples of a divide between those who had investments in their local communities and those who did not. The examples provided a possible explanation as to why so many people were willing to be destructive towards businesses in their own community during the riots. There are currently around 360,000 self-employed people from minority ethnic groups in the UK, representing nine per cent of the self-employed population; however, there is a wide variation between ethnic groups. Black Caribbean (4%) and black African (5%) people have lower self-employment rates than any other ethnic group (Runnymede Trust, 2011).

Segregated public spaces

Roundtable participants commented on how the commercialisation of urban cities, combined with the policing of those areas has changed the nature of public spaces. Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), dispersal zones and gang injunctions were raised as having some bearing on the sense of alienation that some young people may feel in their own neighbourhoods. Furthermore, research has shown that the process of regulation of space and social exclusion is often compounded by processes of racialisation (White, R. & Cunneen, C., 2006, pp. 17-29).

Close to the edge?

It is often easy to forget that over two-thirds of young people are concerned about being a victim of crime (Young NCB, 2010). One young researcher reported how vulnerable she personally felt during the civil disturbances in London and said that her peers were quite affected by the riots. Not only were they scared, upset and shocked by the violence during the riots, but in the aftermath they felt demonised by society.

The civil disturbances in 2011 were seen by the general public through the mediated lens that focused on the criminal nature of the disturbances rather than any possible political motivations. Roundtable participants offered varying opinions on whether the disturbances could be classed as rioting, protest, demonstration or even uprising. Although the participants acknowledged the extent of the criminal and acquisitive nature of these civil disturbances, many also held the view that these were not issueless riots. Participants noted that the political motivations were perhaps harder to identify as riots cannot be fully understood by

the norms of political protest. What we do know is:

...riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. (Martin Luther King Jr, 1968)

Failing political institutions

The roundtable participants stated that the civil disturbances need to be examined in the context of global, national and local events. In the build-up to August 2011, there were protests, strikes and public demonstrations of dissatisfaction with changes to public sector pensions, MPs' expenses, the banking crisis, public spending cuts and changes to tuition fees. Participants felt that these 'quiet riots' (Solomos, 2011), were signs that we were closer to the edge than we knew at the time.

There was a sense from all the riot roundtables and the young people's research that the civil disturbances were a violent outburst of building frustrations that our political and public institutions were unable to appropriately respond to in the lead-up to the riots. Young people under the age of 18 cannot vote and are therefore excluded from that specific democratic practice but roundtable participants also spoke of a wider political disenfranchisement across all age groups.

A recent study into ethnic minority voting behaviour (Heath & Khan, 2012) found that although ethnic minorities were, on the whole, highly supportive of British democracy, there was worrying evidence that second-generation citizens of Black Caribbean heritage do not feel that the British political system has treated them fairly and as a group they are most likely to feel alienated from British political life. The EMBES study suggests that the alienation could be attributed to the perceived lack of redress for racial discrimination and race inequality by political parties.

Research has shown that, in times of austerity, there is a link between civil unrest and austerity programmes of the kind that the UK government is currently pursuing (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). Participants highlighted a disconnect between those bearing the brunt of the public spending cuts and those in positions of power that appeared to be unaffected. Furthermore, some participants felt that government policies were purposefully undermining communities, and when peaceful demonstration had, in many instances, resulted in little or no change, the riots provided an opportunity for people to vent their frustration. Participants across all roundtables expressed that there had been a breakdown in the social contract

between individuals and the government. Participants explained this in the context of growing race inequalities combined with the inability to influence government policies. Legitimacy is the acceptance of the government's authority; the civil disturbances of August 2011 appeared to be a very clear challenge to that authority.

Conclusions

There were a multitude of events that took place during those five days in August 2011 and there were a multitude of reasons for people to be involved in the riots. Our research indicates that the police's slowness to react to the civil disturbances may have contributed to the spread of the riots and the participants at the roundtables felt that the government's response displayed a real lack of understanding of the issues but also an unwillingness to further investigate why these incidents occurred.

One key finding from our research is that strained relationships between the police and the BME community were a significant factor in the outbreak of the riots. Participants felt that the death of Mark Duggan and the miscommunication with the Duggan family was a significant 'trigger' and this incident awakened memories of minority ethnic experiences of injustices in the criminal justice system. The profound sense of injustice felt in black communities and, perhaps to a lesser extent the Asian communities, appears to coalesce around the police service. Stop and search and the way it undermines trust between the police and the community appeared to be a significant factor in the motivation for many who took part in the civil disturbances. Minority ethnic people 'remain over-surveilled and underprotected within all stages of our criminal justice system' (Runnymede, 2011, p. 33) and we heard of intense localised grievance directed at the police in many of the areas we went to.

Unlike previous 'race riots', conflict between ethnic groups did not appear to be the reason for the 2011 riots. However participants at the roundtables expressed concerns that this last set of disturbances had unearthed racial tensions between communities which were able to come to the fore during and in the aftermath of the riots. It would appear that all the communities we visited were vulnerable to increases in inter-racial tensions and civil unrest during this period of economic downturn, and where economic inequalities between groups are on the rise. Furthermore, those groups that appeared to not have a stake in their communities, most notably African-Caribbean people but also young disenfranchised people, were perhaps more likely to direct their anger towards their own neighbourhoods.

In August 2011, we witnessed people from all ethnic backgrounds taking part in the riots but that does not suggest that there was no dynamic of racial inequality at play. Building

frustrations with race discrimination in terms of finding employment and rising unemployment levels for BME people possibly contributed to the reasons why people were involved in the civil disturbances. Our young researchers found that youth unemployment and a lack of activities for them to do were directly linked to the reasons why young people took part in the civil disturbances.

The ferocity of the criminal damage and the extent of the acquisitive nature of the civil disturbances in 2011 perhaps made it difficult to spot the political motivations behind these disturbances but many of the research participants felt the civil unrest exposed symptoms of growing inequalities.

In the lead-up to August 2011 the 'quiet riots', protests and demonstrations were indications of smouldering tensions that would manifest itself on a larger scale. Growing levels of race inequality in conjunction with people living more precarious lives perhaps created those specific conditions where people felt able to ignore normative social rules.

In the wake of the riots, social researchers and other commentators linked various levels of social inequality across all races and ethnicities to the disturbances. As Danny Dorling explains, gross inequalities keep particular races as markers of disadvantage and although 'greater equality does not cure racism... [what it] does do is reduce the racism endemic within a society, and the crime committed and suffered by those who are part of that society' (Dorling, 2012, p.20).

At each of the roundtables we heard examples of racial injustices reminiscent of the 1980s and this was directly linked to building frustrations that exploded into those violent scenes. Recognising the intensity of those feelings and the pervasive nature of institutional racism, race inequalities and political disenfranchisement is intrinsic to understanding why the civil disturbances broke out in August 2011.

References

- Brotherton, D. & Hallsworth, S. (2011) *Urban Disorder and Gangs A Critique and a Warning*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/167/32.html>
- Cameron, D. (2011a) 'Speech on the Fight-back after the Riots', *New Statesman* 15 August 2011. Available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2011/08/society-fight-work-rights>
- Cantle, T. (2001) *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review*. Available at: <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/Default.aspx?recordId=96>
- Dorling, D. (2012) 'Disadvantage and Social Structure' in K. Sveinsson (eds) (2012) *Criminal Justice v Racial Justice - Minority ethnic overrepresentation in the criminal justice system*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/172/32.html>
- Heath, A. & Khan, O. (2012) *Ethnic Minority British Election Study – Key Findings*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/EMBESbriefingFINALx.pdf>
- Khan, O. (2009) *Why Do Assets Matter? Assets Equality and Ethnicity: Building Towards Financial Inclusion*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/133/32.html>
- Macpherson, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. London: The Stationery Office
- Metropolitan Police, 'New measures announced to increase effectiveness of stop and search' available at: <http://tiny.cc/42j6cx> (no date)
- MOJ (2010) *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2008/09*. London: Ministry of Justice.
- MOJ (2011) *Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th to 9th August 2011 – October 2011 update*. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/55j6cx>
- Nwabuzo, O. (2012) *The Riot Roundtables: Race and the riots of August 2011*, London: Runnymede.
- ONS (2011a) *Statistical Bulletin, Population Estimates by Ethnic Group 2002 – 2009*, 18 May 2011. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/r7j6cx>
- Rollock, N. (2009) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 10 Years On An Analysis of the literature*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/118/32.html>
- Runnymede Trust (2010) *Black students half as likely as white peers to achieve English Baccalaureate*. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/q9j6cx>

- Runnymede Trust (2011) *Joint submission by UK NGOs Against Racism to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) with regard to the UK Government's 18th and 19th Periodic Reports*. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/fbk6cx>
- Scarman, Lord J. (1981), *The Brixton Disorders, 10–12th April (1981)*, London: HMSO.
- Solomos, J. (2011) 'Race, Rumours and Riots: Past, Present and Future', *Sociological Research Online*, 16 (4) 20. Available at: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/4/20.html>
- StopWatch (2011) *StopWatch policy group submission to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the riots*. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/cdk6cx>
- Sveinsson, K. (2012) *Criminal Justice v Racial Justice - Minority ethnic overrepresentation in the criminal justice system*. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/172/32.html>
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (2012) *Riots, demonstrations, strikes and the Coalition programme*. Available at: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/news/homepagestories/more-cutbacks-mean-more-riots/2011>
- The Guardian (2012) *Reading the riots*. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/rfk6cx>
- TUC (2012) *Labour Market Report Number 22*, January 2012. Available at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-20508-f0.cfm>
- White, J. (2011) *The history of riots in London shows that persistent inequality and injustice is always likely to breed periodic violent uprisings*. Available at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/2011/10/25/london-riot-history/>
- White, R. & Cunneen, C. (2006) 'Social Class, Youth Crime and Justice' in Goldson, B. and Muncie, J. (eds) *Youth Crime and Justice*, London: Sage.
- Wood, M. et al (2009) *A test for racial discrimination in recruitment practice in British cities*. Available at: http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_607.asp
- Young NCB (2010) *Young NCB Priority: Youth, Crime & Prevention Children and Young People's Fear of Crime Survey 2010*. Available at: http://www.youngncb.org.uk/news_items/yncbs_fear_of_crime_survey_-1.aspx

Section 5

London and Diasporic Belongings

Contested Memories: the Shahid Minar and the Struggle for Diasporic Space — Claire Alexander (LSE)

Introduction

I want to thank Nira and the conference organisers for inviting me to speak today, and it is a particular pleasure to be invited to be on a panel with Avtar Brah, whose work has been so central to my thinking and to shaping our understanding of race and diaspora in Britain.

It is almost impossible to say something sensible about these complex and paradoxical formations and encounters in 15–20 minutes except to say that they are complex and paradoxical, and that this itself is an important statement at a time when the dominant political and policy narratives are to quash complexity or erase these difficult terrains of difference, sameness, inequality, violence and conviviality in a global city like London. So I want to draw on Avtar's very powerful notion of 'diaspora space' which it seems to me is very much a space of paradox, of recognising and naming these paradoxes. Avtar has defined diaspora space as:

It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle... the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of "us" and "them" are contested (1999).

Bearing this definition in mind, I want to explore some of these tensions and positions through the very intimate lens of one particular diasporic space: the Shahid Minar in Tower Hamlets, London. The material I am presenting is drawn from a larger project on 'the Bengal diaspora' which explored migration and settlement from and within the state of Bengal in the period after 1947 and is concerned in particular with how movement and belonging can and must be understood empirically and historically, through structures of power and in relation to a particular place. What I am hoping to do is use this site as a prism through which to view some ways in which ideas of diaspora, community and cultural identity are created and performed, and the ways in which this performance is itself contested in the shifting time and place of multicultural London. In particular, I want to open up this site as a space of

encounter, dialogue, conflict and paradox.

The Shahid Minar

Shahid Minar translates as 'Tower of the Martyrs'. It was constructed in 1999 and is a replica of one in Oldham, in northern England (another less well-known but long-established Bengali community – the second largest in the UK and the site of riots in 2001), which is itself a copy of the original in Dhaka. The original Shahid Minar stands near the Dhaka Medical College and was built as a memorial to the Bengali Language Martyrs who were killed by police in 1952 for demonstrating against the attempt to impose Urdu as the main language of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh); the moment which is usually held to mark the beginning of the Bengali nationalist movement, and which ended with the Liberation War and the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

The monument stands in Altab Ali Park across the Whitechapel Road from the entrance to Brick Lane, and was formerly known as St Mary's churchyard. The Shahid Minar has become a primary site for a version of nationalist/cultural identity work and politics in East London and elsewhere. At midnight on 21st February each year, Ekushe, a memorial service for the language martyrs is held at the Shahid Minar and attended by around 2-300 Bengalis from East London and further afield. Wreaths are laid around the monument and there are speeches by local community leaders and representatives of political and cultural organisations. This ritual is a lived performance of links to Bangladesh, to its history, the remembrance of the national struggle and to a set of intertwined values around secularism, language, culture and nationalism. It is the claiming of a national and cultural identity that privileges notions of shared origins, of belonging and of 'roots'. One woman I interviewed, who runs a local Bengali cultural organisation told me, "it's my identity, it's our identity. If I don't mark it, I don't know my roots".

Ekushe performs this transnational link, reflecting and calling into being the sense of belonging in the context of displacement in time and space. The performance of Ekushe conjures elsewheres and also 'elsewhens' not only of Bangladesh but of Bengali diaspora communities. The memorial commemorates not only one event but a series in which the language martyrs are both symbol and staging post for a broader and longer national struggle. Its apotheosis is reached nearly two decades later with the foundation of Bangladesh and, indeed, the annual ritual points to the unfinished process of nation building and to its victims, for example, the estimated three million murdered and thousands raped during the Liberation War. Indeed, Ekushe in East London is co-ordinated by the UK branch of the Nirmul Committee, a group dedicated to the ongoing prosecution of war criminals, an

example of what Brubaker might term 'long distance nationalism'.

At the same time, the monument itself and the act of memorialisation tells other stories which speak to an alternate version of diaspora, one which tells of the remaking of home in new places: 'routes' rather than 'roots' and is 'present-centred', both in spatial and temporal terms. I want to explore some of these next. Obviously, given the time constraints, I cannot do more than gesture at these stories but hope at least to give you a flavour of some of these dimensions.

The national-local story

The first level I want to explore is the national and the way in which the Shahid Minar speaks to the position of the Bangladeshi community within Britain and within Tower Hamlets. I want to use the two levels interchangeably here due to lack of time but also because Tower Hamlets is generally considered to be the 'heartland' of the Bangladeshi community in the UK. Somewhere between a quarter to a third of Britain's Bangladeshi population lives in Tower Hamlets: the highest concentration anywhere in the UK, about half of whom are third generation London-born and bred. The area, and the Bengali community, has been marked by a rather schizophrenic set of representations: externally, in particular, Tower Hamlets has been marked through images of poverty, unemployment, poor education, poor health and bad housing. At the same time, the development of Banglatown, of the Baisakhi Mela or the Brick Lane Curry Festival from the mid-1990s has seen a cultural claiming and positioning of this community as an iconic site of multicultural Britain.

The building of the Shahid Minar illustrates the engagement with wider British society, in particular as a way of claiming space within this society. The Shahid Minar in its current, permanent form was funded by the community – 50 local groups and business people donated £500 each towards the structure – but in conjunction with the local authority, which provided permissions on the land and the structure. Before this, one local activist told me¹⁹:

Bengalis were observing Martyrs' day by creating a temporary Shahid Minar with wooden planks and stuff and using community centres. They've been doing it for years, since 1952, so it's nothing new... [then] the council thought we ought to have a permanent monument.

There's another important side-story here too about the ways in which the Labour party and the local council in Tower Hamlets have been increasingly dominated by Bengali councillors from the 1980s onwards. It is possible then to see the establishment of a permanent monument as a 'coming of age' of the Bengali community, a recognition of the permanence

¹⁹ All quotes are from interviews conducted by Alexander in 2008 as part of the 'Bengal Diaspora' project

of their presence, an increased confidence and visibility and contribution to the area in a broader context of a global city and a national context that had not yet pronounced the death of multiculturalism (which would happen after the riots of 2001 and the start of the War on Terror). It testifies too to the intricate and long historical linkages binding Bengal to Britain, from the time of the East India Company through two world wars to the influx of workers from the 1960s and their families from the 1980s, which challenge the dominant representations of Bengalis as outsiders, as latecomers to the British nation or Tower Hamlets being dubbed the 'New East End'. Tower Hamlets council has recently developed a Bengali Heritage Trail through the area, in which the Shahid Minar is a key site, and which tells this story. So the Shahid Minar is part of a marking of territory, staking a claim for the Bengali community within a longer history of migration, settlement and 'integration', and a future which is seeing Bengalis moving eastwards, out of Tower Hamlets. A local councillor placed the Shahid Minar as part of both a Bengali and a local East End heritage:

The restaurant community on Brick Lane is not secure. It will disappear. I hope not in my time....The mosques won't go, some of the businesses will remain, the landmarks, some of them will remain – the Shahid Minar, the gate, the naming of some of the streets, some of the estates, some of the schools. It will take a long time for the Bangladeshis to be totally eradicated from the area, maybe in about 50, 100 years and who cares after that?

The history

However, as one might expect, this cultural claiming of space is not without its own struggles: it is significant that the Shahid Minar is located in Altab Ali Park which was renamed in the late 1990s in memory of a more local martyr, garment worker, Altab Ali who was murdered in a racist attack in 1978, and this points to a more UK centred anti-racist struggle. A local councillor who had been a teenager in the area in the 1970s told me, "People were living with real fear, fear of being murdered, fear of being beaten up, fear of walking the streets safely". Through this period, though, the young men started to band together in self-defence and a number of youth organisations were set up, who took on the National Front (NF). The chair of the Brick Lane Mosque committee told me, "Almost every Sunday we had to face attacks by the skinheads and the racist National Front. In Bethnal Green they used to sell their leaflets and... we have to fight for it, a long, long fight, and then they moved away...".

The murder of Altab Ali was a turning point. After his murder, the Bengali community organised a protest march. The councillor told me that 'For the first time, Bengalis marched from Whitechapel to Parliament House, on the way round Hyde Park corner and back to

Whitechapel. It took about eight hours. About 10,000 people. That was the first time Bengalis came out'. One interviewee, who worked as a youth worker in the area in the 1970s, drew clear connections between the local anti-racist struggle during the 1970s and the liberation struggle and saw both as central to understanding the contemporary significance of the Shahid Minar to the local community:

Altab Ali Park... had importance to the community because of the murder of Altab Ali there and the park being a rallying point for lots of demos, meetings and protests, so it was always seen as a symbol of protest and of celebration... A lot of people who fought the anti-racist struggle were all inspired by Bangladesh's independence movement, so it's all kind of connected.

The religious divide

However, within the Bengali community, the monument itself has been, and remains, a source of disagreement: this can be read partly as a struggle between more Islamist inspired groups and more secular nationalist activists within the community which can partly be read as a generational divide. This division can also be mapped onto a struggle between the two most important local mosques: Brick Lane Mosque (BLM) which stands on Brick Lane itself (with a complex history which reflects the area's migration history) and sees itself as a very Bangladeshi mosque, appealing to the more secular nationalist and anti-racist activists of the 60s and 70s and East London Mosque (ELM) which stands about 100 yards away from the entrance to Brick Lane and Altab Ali Park, which is seen as a more 'global' Muslim organisation and is more popular with the younger British-born generation.

I interviewed representatives of both mosques and the differences in attitude were fascinating. The chair of BLM told me that the Mosque's imams opposed the shrine but not the act of memorialisation, whereas he takes a more pragmatic view:

I was involved with the building of the Shahid Minar... but religiously it is two different things. I have a role as a community leader and then I have a role in the mosque management committee... The mosque cannot oppose anything, the people who are religious scholars, they oppose, they make their views clear that this is not good and we shouldn't go there. But people still go there and we as community leaders feel it is our obligation as well and we go there... [there is] no tension, no conflict.

By contrast ELM is seen as more hardline and hostile to the Shahid Minar and there are stories of younger mosque members disrupting the Ekushe memorialisation ceremonies. One interviewee said of ELM, 'they are Muslims first and foremost and nationality, ethnicity or division should not come into it... So they don't believe in Bengali nationalism, and if they

could they would delete Bengal's history and heritage'

Unsurprisingly, the view from ELM was rather different. I spoke to two representatives of the London Muslim Centre (LMC), who told me:

You see we as Muslims have a particular way...and this kind of thing which are (sic) just copying the West if you like....it has no basis in our religion. We should pray for the ones who died in the language movement.... but it's the process in which you recognise them.... I don't have to do a show of grief for example of how it's done on the Poppy day... I do it in the confines of my personal space.... You won't find any imams praying in Altab Ali Park on the 21st of February.

Concluding comments

Through this very small and detailed empirical story, I want finally to gesture towards some of the wider paradoxes this site captures and the questions it raises for the understanding of migration and settlement in London. There are three main points to draw:

- There is a need to consider the role of space and place in the understanding of migration: this is not simply about the movement from place of origin to place of settlement but to think also of the intersection of transnational, national and local processes and specificities which shape movement and continue to reshape the migration experience over time.
- There is a need to place these movements temporally, and here there are two dimensions: firstly the role of history in explaining settlement and the conditions for belonging (or not) and the way that histories are narrated as part of opening up the space for belonging as a process of claims-making; secondly, we need to recognise that these circumstances are constantly open to change and redefinition, to contestation and challenge. The history of the Bengali community in London (and East London in particular) is a very clear example of this.
- There is a need to recognise processes of power in shaping migration and settlement: this can be both external – through the influence of global processes and politics, as well as national policies, inequalities and exclusions – as well as internal to the imagined community (and these of course are also shaped by external forces). This requires us to engage in some quite fraught and perhaps unwelcome discussions.

These are not particularly original insights, but they are nevertheless important ones,

particularly in the current climate of hostility towards migration and minority groups. I would say finally that there is a need for detailed and inter-disciplinary work to map these terrains empirically and historically, and to try and engage with discussions outside of the academy to shift the terms of the political and policy debates.

A reworked full version of this paper has been recently published. See Alexander, C., (2013) 'Contested Memories: the Shahid Minar and the struggle for diasporic space', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36 (4), 590-610

Cyprus and the City: The Negotiated Home of Cypriot Refugees in London — Helen Taylor (UEL)

This paper is based on narrative research with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees who have lived in London since fleeing the post-independence unrest of the 1960s and the war of 1974. The title of the conference – City of Paradox – is an apt description of the relationship that Cypriots have had with the capital, which has always been marked by contradiction and complexity. Coming here first in the 1920s, Cypriot migrants arrived in larger numbers in the middle of the century when Britain solicited cheap labour from its colonies. When 10,000 fled to Britain in 1974, as the division of the island led to the displacement of up to 200,000 Greek Cypriots and 50,000 Turkish Cypriots, they were admitted as colonial citizens ‘with special concessions’. But they were never recognised as refugees, and by 1979 most were forced to return (even though their homes remained inaccessible). Hence the paradox: that when Britain needed Cypriot labour, the door was open but when Cypriots needed sanctuary a decade later, it was only slightly ajar.

The second paradox is that at the same time as Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were being partitioned into separate states in Cyprus, many of those exiled in London found themselves living alongside each other just as they had always done in Cyprus. Those who left Cyprus in the 1950s did not live through the conflict and still maintained the memory of Cyprus as a bi-communal island. Home for Cypriots in London has continued to be one where the two communities live together in what Brah calls the ‘diaspora space’, alongside other migrants and indigenous communities (1996, p.208).

London also remains a ‘City of Paradox’ for Cypriot refugees precisely because it became their home by default. It will always be the home they did not choose but were forced to accept in difficult circumstances. For many the lost home in Cyprus has been protected by the rose-tinted glow of nostalgia because, like a prematurely dead relative, it has not been around to disappoint them. London is forever guilty of not being the lost home and of being, in many cases, the antithesis of Cypriot life. But London has also been a place of safety for those who were allowed to stay, and has given many an education and a livelihood as well as a home.

Cypriots have spent the decades since their arrival setting up businesses, going to school and university, having children, buying houses, working, campaigning and socialising, in other words, living life. But they have also kept one eye on Cyprus and the homes that they were forced to leave, maintaining their commitment to their lost homes through rituals of remembrance. Rather than a pathological response to the catastrophe of exile, however, this ongoing negotiation between old, new and potential future homes illustrates, I believe, the development of complex strategies of belonging in the face of life-changing challenges.

Living through such paradoxical circumstances makes the dichotomous choice of belonging to 'here' or 'there', to London or Cyprus an irrelevance. Cemal²⁰, who fled a Turkish Cypriot suburb of Nicosia as a child in 1963, was able to articulate some of the contradictions of belonging during protracted exile when he said:

Having spent nearly 50 years of your life in a different place, no matter how much you miss home – I said the word 'home' again with Cyprus, but I suppose it will always be my country. You can't deny that, I was born there. But if you spend as long in a foreign country, much longer than you actually did in your own country then this country becomes your home, no matter how insulated you might be from the indigenous population. (2009)

Home, then, can be a complicated place, not least for those involved in the process of losing and making home. Many Cypriots feel ties not only to Cyprus and Britain but also in some case to Turkey or Greece, or other diasporic homes such as Australia. But in adding this complexity, it would be misleading to simply read home in spatial terms.

The research I did with Cypriot refugees explored the meaning of home for those living in protracted exile. From the narrative interviews, four key aspects of home emerged (2009): by combining an understanding of the spatial aspects of home with temporal, relational and material elements, a more complex – although by no means complete – understanding of home was possible. The spatial home refers not just to physically bounded nation states but also to the buildings we live in as well as surrounding houses, shops, places of worship, streets and landscape. The temporal home recognizes that homes exist in a particular moment when there is a coming together of different elements which change continually as well as existing in the memories of past homes and dreams of future homes. The temporal home also describes the daily routines, and cyclical events. The material home encompasses the trees and the soil, the food and the flowers, the scents and tastes of home that typify the sensory relationship with the land and the daily, embodied experience of home.

²⁰ Pseudonyms have been used for all participants in the study.

While, the relational home describes the close family bonds as well as the social networks that exist with friends, neighbours, acquaintances and business contacts and which facilitate the formation of social and cultural capital. It is the coming together of all these elements which gives home its unique character at any given time.

To illustrate how some of these elements demonstrate the ongoing negotiation of home, I will now offer a few snapshots from my research:

The exiled villagers of Agios Amvrosios have a well-organised village committee in London which campaigns for their right to return to their lost homes, as well as engaging in wider campaigns for the removal of Turkish troops from Cyprus and the reunification of the island. The committee is focussed on “keeping traditions going and keeping the community together” (2009), while one member told me its purpose was “to help us not forget our village... and keep the flame alive”. Its role then could be seen as backward looking, concentrating on preserving the memory and culture of the lost home while campaigning for the restitution of that home. However, the strategies employed by villagers also demonstrate their skill in engendering belonging in the context of their London home. One of the key events in the committee’s calendar is the annual dinner dance, which continues the tradition of the apricot festival that was held in the village square to herald the arrival of the village’s main crop (2009). Central to the event, both in Cyprus and here, is the apricot dance performed by young girls from the village. The dancers are now third generation, have never lived in the village and, in most case, have never seen it.

The continued inclusion of the apricot dance at the festival is a repetition of a long-established ritual from the village which reminds villagers who they are at the same time as reminding them of their lost homes. For second and third generation villagers, it instructs them in the cultural identity of the village so that they are able to perform as proper children of Agios Amvrosios in the context of exile as well as at some unspecified future date, should return ever be possible. The dance has changed from being an expression of culture and a site of celebration in Cyprus to a representation of home, providing continuity with the temporal home of the past, while staying true to the cycles of nature and the material home, celebrating a harvest that no longer takes place. It is also possible, however, that villagers enjoy these annual gatherings and the repetition of the apricot dance simply because it makes them feel like they belong, engendering the sense of being ‘at home’ in London. In his work with Lebanese migrants in Sydney, Hage found that the “yearning for homely communality translates into an attempt to build the past conditions of its production”, such as surrounding oneself with others speaking the same language and reconstructing neighbourhoods (1997, p.105). While the loss of the relational home, through the shattering of social networks, has been recognised as one of the greatest losses of exile, these villagers have demonstrated admirable proficiency at rebuilding and extending these networks in a new context.

It is also important to remember that, when the girls who perform the apricot dance take off their costumes, rather than embodying a distilled version of Cypriot village identity, they will

be typical of many young people in the world city of London who have always lived with diverse cultural influences. For second and subsequent generations of Cypriots, Cypriot identity is intertwined with notions of Britishness and being a Londoner; the first generation has also been changed by the daily encounter with London just as London has been changed by its encounter with them.

For villagers from Agios Amvrosios, material aspects of home emerge in the way that the apricot tree has become a symbol of the village in exile. In Cyprus, apricots represented financial wealth as a crop, as well as suggesting the unique character of the village, by producing – according to villagers – the first and best apricots of the year. Now the trees are not in orchards but in inner-city gardens in London. Village leader Dimitris told me (2009): “Every person from our village, you find an apricot tree in his garden. I think it’s a symbol for everybody that we like to go home one day... It’s a dream. One day we will be able to go back free.” These trees now perform multiple duties. As a familiar feature of the landscape of the village, they reproduce the sights, scents and taste of home in a new context, recalling memories of home as well as making London feel like home. At the same time the tree is doing political work as a symbol of the lost home, demonstrating the commitment to return, just like the olive tree has come to symbolise Palestine for its refugees.

Having a garden with recognisably Cypriot elements is important for many and the same plants can be seen repeatedly, as Eleni explained (2009): “I’ve got jasmine in my garden, which is one of the Mediterranean types of plants. And if you drive down north London you would know... a Greek home because of the... big white tubular lilies.” In this way, the garden is a vibrant, sensory and material link with the lost home but also makes the home in London more pleasurable, more homely. These plants have also changed the north London ‘botanoscape’ so that jasmine, lilies and vines are now a part of the scents and sights of the city for all its inhabitants.

When Cypriot refugees arrived in London, in spite of the Cypriot migrant community already living here, much about the city initially seemed strange and disorientating. Salih explained (2009): “Obviously it takes time to get used to a new system. City life for me was very strange and scary because everything was different. I felt isolated and sometimes I felt lonely. Sometimes I felt that I wouldn’t be able to succeed.” However, far from refugees being unskilled and anonymous people, as they are so often portrayed, it is the unfamiliar context that is temporarily disempowering. The emplacement strategies used to give place meaning through daily practices, such as food preparation, prayer, and rituals surrounding birth, death and marriage, must all be started anew in exile. But Cypriots have been very skilled at

making the spaces of the city their own. Cypriot-run cafes opened in London as early as the 1920s. While the migrants of the 1950s settled first near the West End, Euston and Camden, before transforming the London borough of Haringey so that Green Lanes, the road running through its heart, became known as 'little Cyprus'. Anthias (2006) describes Haringey as "an ecological centre" of the Cypriot community where "ethnic concentration and association are instrumental in perpetuating the ethnic category". Although many Cypriots now live elsewhere, the area remains a living map of Cypriot emplacement, from Yashar Halim's bakery to the bi-communal Cypriot Community Centre, men-only cafés named after Cyprus villages and Greek Orthodox churches like St John the Baptist. This is not and never could be a recreation of Cyprus but demonstrates the skill of Cypriots in constructing components necessary to facilitate spatial belonging while creating a context for the reconstruction of social networks. As Massey states, place changes us, "...not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it) but through the practising of place... place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us" (2005, p. 154). Over the years, practising place in London has changed the meaning of home for Cypriots.

Another of the painful paradoxes of exile has been that, while trips to and from Cyprus have been frequent and regular, the lost home remained off-limits. When border restrictions were relaxed in April 2003, it was suddenly possible for visits home to be made 30 years after access was denied. This momentous opportunity came with its own challenges for those for whom the lost home had been based on rituals of remembrance. Eleni, a worker for a Greek Cypriot women's project, told me of her concern:

...my initial reaction [on hearing that the border had opened] was, 'Oh my god' ...all these people that left the beautiful house or land... would go back to maybe a derelict bit of a wall. But they have all these beautiful memories of their home ... And that picture is in your head. It doesn't go away and it doesn't move with the times. So people's memories would be like a snapshot of what their house was as they saw it the last time. (2009)

It is perhaps the preservation of this snapshot that made building a new life in London possible. While the lost home was inaccessible, the only option was to make a new home while staying loyal to the memory of the lost home through the collective perusal of photos, the keeping of house keys and deeds, the gathering of fellow villagers and the passing on of memories to the next generation. When it became possible to visit those lost homes once again, the reality of how they changed became evident. Emine told me (2009) about her 'beautiful village' which she remembered as 'really, really lovely with birds singing'. But on a return visit she found her family's houses had been demolished and their trees cut down. The experience was temporally and spatially disorientating, and she said, "When I went back I

was not where I was supposed to be. And then where I was supposed to be is not really there. I am nowhere.” She regretted the intrusion of reality on her memories of home and did not want to go back. Her experience points to yet another central paradox of the exile experience: even if physical return does become possible, real return is never an option as the past cannot be regained. As Warner says, return “denies the temporal reality of our lives and the changes that take place over time” (1994, pp. 170-171).

The Cypriots I spoke to were engaged in a delicate balancing act between maintaining their commitment to their lost homes and to the right of return, many of them active campaigners for a political solution, at the same time as taking a pragmatic approach to life in London. The strongest pull for most was the fact that their children were now deeply emplaced in London making a permanent return impossible. Those who arrived as children or teenagers have spent a far greater portion of their life in England than in Cyprus. As a result, this city is the setting for the life events of three or four decades. The irony is that the more successful Cypriots have been in remaking home in exile, the harder it will be for them to leave should return ever become possible.

References

- Anthias, F. (2006) 'Researching society and culture in Cyprus – Displacements, hybridities and dialogical frameworks', in Papadakis, Y., Peristianis, N. and Welz, G. (eds.) *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Brah, A. (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
- Hage, G. (1997) 'At home in the entrails of the west: Multiculturalism, "ethnic food" and migrant home-building', in Grace, H., Hage, G., Johnson, L., Langsworth, J. and Michael Symonds (eds.) *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*. New South Wales, Western Sydney: Pluto Press.
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Taylor, Helen (2009) *Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life: The Meaning of Home for Cypriot Refugees in London* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of East London).
- Warner, Daniel (1994) 'Voluntary repatriation and the meaning of return home: A critique of liberal mathematics', in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 7(2/3), pp. 160-174.

Talking about Home: Exploring the Particular Communities in Particular Places that Create ‘Localities of Belonging’ — Nicola Samson (UEL)

The East London street where I live provides geographical, historical and social context for my PhD research on the lives of 14 women and their experiences of belonging. The women grew up in countries across the world, are from various ethnic backgrounds, range in age from mid-twenties to mid-seventies, and have been living in the street anywhere between a few months and 30 years. I have used semi-structured narrative interviews to explore their lives and encourage the women’s changing sense of belonging to unfold through their life stories. This paper will initially discuss two of the women’s memories of their childhood homes and the sense of belonging they developed in their young lives. In particular, it will explore my concept of the localities of belonging which some of the women experienced as children. The second part of the paper will consider the two women’s ethnic belonging as adults living in East London making connections with their childhood experiences.

Stories of community and belonging

In discussing my concept of ‘localities of belonging’, I am focusing here on two women migrants: Angelique from Trinidad and Frederica from Malaysia, both of whom experienced a strong sense of belonging in what they describe as the close communities of their early childhoods.

Angelique

Brought up by her grandparents in a beautiful, upper-middle-class area of Trinidad with streets named after precious stones and large houses with lawns and verandas, Angelique describes a fairy-tale, idyllic childhood in a paradise of sunshine and flowers where the children picnicked under coconut, orange and mango trees dripping with fruit, and where “... there were no strangers [...] everybody knew everybody” and where neighbours near and far were like extended family (Angelique, 2010).

As the extracts show, Angelique could not imagine having a greater belonging:

N: You did mention that you felt it was a real community, erm, where you grew up and the people you grew up with, how did you feel as a child then in terms of your belonging? Did you have a sense of belonging there?

A: [overlapping] Oh yeah. Even now, even now on Facebook we're part of Emerald Avenue group because we're all in our 40s, 50s and we KNOW that was us, that, the Dale belonged to us then, it's not what it is now, we could never be part of what it is now... because that sense of community, that sense of belonging, that sense of familiarity... has gone. [...] I wish I could do the same for my son, I wish he could have that sort of childhood, that, that ... that feeling of community and that sense of... camaraderie and friendship... and love, there was something really embracing about the whole area.

(Angelique, 2010)

Frederica

In Malaysia Frederica was the fourth of five children in a Chinese family who lived in a traditional "... rambling sort of compound" comprising a long wooden building with an *attap* (a kind of palm) reed roof divided into separate homes with three detached houses at one end.

Not as large as a village but home to about 30 families, it was a happy place providing a childhood that she says was "quite idyllic":

... we had that in, in my childhood house, this long house and at the end of it the three detached houses, and the rest of it was a communal space...where all the kids played together, different ages but we all played together. There was a sort of makeshift badminton court, there was a water pump in the middle ... many people from the long houses they, they used that as the washing area, the women came out to wash. So there was this, you know, communal thing that everybody knew everybody ...

(Frederica, 2010)

Localities of belonging

Similar stories of childhood were given by seven of my interviewees and the analysis that follows is based on all their experiences. Their musings could be dismissed as opaquely remembered childhoods, cuddly-blanket wrapped memories of distant past lives holding at bay adult realities of responsibility, jobs and motherhood in the urban gloom of East London's grimy streets and tightly closed doors. But I believe these women's stories of childhood highlight striking similarities in very different situations that created a real sense of community and belonging for them as children.

Three common themes arise: firstly, these were places where people knew and engaged with each other. Frederica's words speak for most of the women when she says, "So there

was this, you know, communal thing that everybody knew everybody ...”. This notion of everyone knowing each other was reinforced with depictions of shared living spaces; not simply that there were communal spaces but that the doors of their separate homes were left open for people to come and go; where connection and friendship across generational boundaries were shaped. The notion of everyone knowing each other was furthered by a repeated perception of there being no strangers. This apparent absence of strangers suggests the women experienced a sense of safety and security in their childhood areas.

The second theme that emerges is that of freedom and peer friendships. They experienced freedom to ‘do their own thing’, to go off with friends expressing ideas of openness and space into which they could disappear out of sight for hours at a time, on their bikes, into countryside, forest or beach. The women portray both times and places of play and enjoyment where they felt confident and happy, being themselves. Even where there were no idyllic landscapes pictured, having friends and spending time with their peers was a dominant element of these stories.

The third theme is, in some respects, a consolidation of the first two. It concerns the familiarity of the people and places in the women’s young lives and the attachments they formed as children to those people and places. It is precisely this familiarity and the attachments made that created their childhood places as particular communities of people in particular places, to which they experienced a sense of belonging, and which I will term a ‘locality of belonging’. The actual childhood homes were all very different in terms of country, environment and size. It is not these broader aspects of their childhood homes that provided a sense of belonging but the relationships that developed within the localities of people and place. That is, they found a sense of belonging in an individually defined locality of people and place which may or may not relate to formally mapped boundaries but are meaningful to their experience.

My analysis is, of course, of adults’ stories of childhood. How would it compare to studies exploring how children themselves experience a sense of belonging? Scourfield et al.’s (2006) study of children aged between 8 and 11 years (‘middle childhood’) is primarily focused on exploring their identification with nation but they devote a chapter to discussing “... children’s imagery of their locality [...] their emotional attachment to place and their perception of quality of life in their community” (2006, p. 84). The authors establish that children predominantly defined where they lived by talking about the immediate localities that were most vivid to them, particularly where they played, walked and cycled, and found that “... locality is more significant to children in their everyday lives than other dimensions of

place and space”, including the larger perspectives of town or district (Scourfield et al., 2006, pp. 85-86). This clearly resonates with the stories told to me by adults. Perhaps particularly significant to my research was that they found it was the people in the places that ultimately rendered the places important.

Diversity, ruptures and dislocations in childhood belonging

It is not possible here to consider all the aspects of childhood belonging that arise in my research but there are a couple of points I must mention. It should not be assumed that most of the women grew up in monocultures where people's lives were untouched by difference. The Trinidad of Angelique's childhood and the Malaysia of Frederica's, were both very ethnically diverse but as young children they experienced no division or difficulties. Secondly, the localities of belonging that I have identified relate specifically to young children. As teenagers their particular relationships to people and place often changed and there were ruptures in their belonging as they grew older. In addition, the locality of belonging related to half my interviewees, both migrant and non-migrant women. The other half, also migrant and non-migrant, experienced dislocated childhoods because they frequently moved from place to place, or they were alienated and seen by others as outsiders, most notably in the realms of language and/or accent, ethnicity, skin colour and disability.

Ethnic belonging in adulthood

My research explores varying aspects of the women's adult belonging but this paper only considers elements of their adult ethnic belonging which have clear links with their childhoods. As a whole, the research includes both migrant and UK born women but this paper focuses specifically on Angelique and Frederica both migrants who left their childhood home countries as young women respectively 18 and 20 years old. Their reasons for coming were very different.

Angelique coming to England

It was Angelique's mother who decided that Angelique should improve her life chances by coming to study here. Angelique imagined she would stay for about five years. The extracts show how alienated and lonely she felt in London.

My mum saw that as ... as a step forward [...] for me to do something different, not to get [...] what she would term middle class mediocrity. [...] that's, that's what my mum didn't want for me.

I was on my own, it was horrible [...] I was let down in a big way coming here 'cause there was no love, there wasn't just the coldness of the weather but there was a coldness to the people.

... my three luxuries in life were to have a phone so that I could always call home, to have heating so that I would not feel the cold, and to be able to go home. Those were my three luxuries, for 12 years. Those were the ONLY things that mattered to me.

(Angelique, 2010)

Frederica coming to England

Frederica herself chose to leave Malaysia because of the increasingly volatile and repressive political situation there and her own feelings of being stifled by the very closed and claustrophobic community that she lived in.

That, that was the main thing, to get away... [...] living] in a country where you couldn't say anything, all the papers are censored. To this day they are censored.. . It wasn't ...satisfactory to ME.

Growing up in Malaya I've seen how there is community, you know, there's extended families and there's neighbours, and the people in a neighbourhood you live in, but that kind, it creates a sort, it CAN create er claustrophobia. It can create a LOT of emotional unhappiness. I've seen it first hand.

... I would feel... very claustrophobic and I think... that might be why I came as well, a second reason apart from the politics. 'Cause life can be very, very, closed in, in a close community.

(Frederica, 2010)

In the interviews I asked Angelique and Frederica what meaning their ethnicity has for them now; whether it has any importance in their sense of belonging. Again, their responses were notably different.

Angelique

This was Angelique's response:

To be a Trinidadian [sigh] is to...I think being a Trinidadian is, is...or acknowledging that you're a Trinidadian is knowing how rich you are in heritage... To know, to know...how many races and cultures that contributed to my being, that's a wealth, that's something to be proud of. And I am proud. I am proud to carry myself and say, I am a Trinidadian.

...it's not a NATIONAL pride, it goes deeper than that, it's a pride of being'.

(Angelique, 2010)

As can be seen from her quotes, Angelique has a potent sense of her ethnic belonging as a Trinidadian with her grandparents a mix of Indian, Portuguese, Chinese, Venezuelan and Carib- Indian and she decries what she feels is the "... stereotyping and compartmentalising" of her in Britain where she is seen simply as a black woman. In London she continues to celebrate religious festivals regardless of denomination saying "... it's all PART of who we are" as well as other non-religious Trinidadian occasions like Indian Arrival Day and the Spanish Christmas tradition of *parang*.

But perhaps more than anything, food symbolises home for Angelique and is central not only to the celebrations but in her day-to-day living and her continuing ethnic belonging.

Food, good food is about home. We have people coming [laugh], when Louis [husband], when the weather is really, really yucky and rainy and horrible, Louis will go out to Green Street or to Woodgrange Road and find yam, cassava sweet potatoes, eddoes, home, home of root vegetables and he will come home and he will make biggest pot of soup...just like we used to make it at home. And you call people up and say, come and get your soup... And people will drive through that weather to come and get some of Louis' soup...Because we know a bit of home. And everybody knows it's a bit of home.

(Angelique, 2010)

Since meeting her Trinidadian husband, Louis, ten years ago, Angelique no longer feels the need to return to Trinidad so frequently. She tells of how he cooks as their grandmothers did in Trinidad and anything that Angelique "... used to have to get on a plane and go home to get", Louis makes for her. The ingredients may originate from all over the world but the combinations of fresh herbs and spices provide the Trinidadian twist that Angelique so craves. The food also entices other Trinidadians and while in her mind Trinidad still embodies home, her locality of belonging is recreated in an East London street.

Frederica

This was Frederica's response regarding the importance of ethnicity to her sense of belonging:

N: So what does being Malaysian mean to you now?

F: Er...not a lot. It means a certain way of living, a sort of street, street way, you know, lots of... food. Mainly, that's what it means to me NOW. [...]

N: How important are custom and tradition -

F: Not very.

N: - if at all?

F: Not very. Erm... I don't observe the New Years, the Chinese New Years or all the other customs, because I don't even know when they happen.

(Frederica, 2010)

As the dialogue portrays, she has little enthusiasm to engage with her Chinese Malaysian upbringing. She does not practise any of the Malaysian traditions and customs and describes herself as a "... much watered-down, wishy-washy person between all these cultures...". She thinks of herself as a member of "this human race community" and feels oppressed by what she remembers from childhood as claustrophobic ethnic communities. She prioritises having the freedom to lead her life as she chooses.

However Frederica also reveals that Malaysian food remains very important in her life, not just the Malaysian flavours, "a particular taste" that she would miss if she could not have it after a few weeks, but because of the centrality of food in Chinese Malaysian culture.

For enjoyment we eat. And our greeting in Chinese, when you see someone, is, 'Have you eaten?' ... That's the way they say hello [...]. If you haven't, come in, you know, so it's a very hospitable sort of thing, with food. And in Malaya we eat round the clock. ... So huge efforts go into getting your food. Erm, when we go home to visit, we're always taken out, every day. [...] It's something that I think [in] British life... is SO alien from. You have certain food at certain times of the day, in, in Malaya you can have any food at ANY time of the day.

(Frederica, 2010)

For her husband and children, Frederica will still cook the range of foods she would eat in Malaysia with ingredients and spices she can buy locally in Forest Gate and, she will still cook different meals for each of them keeping a Malaysian tradition of people eating whatever they choose.

Translocational positionality

In briefly discussing Angelique and Frederica as adults in East London, I am going to consider their ethnic belonging with reference to Anthias' (2008) concept of translocational positionality which recognises the importance of context, meaning and time in the intersection of social locations and the construction of belonging in migrant lives.

There are very obvious differences in Angelique's and Frederica's ethnic belonging as adults. Food is clearly important to both of them but it cannot simply be said that food gives a sense of ethnic belonging. It is not the acts of buying, cooking or eating food alone that induce a

sense of belonging but the meaning or positionality (Anthias, 2008) that they give those actions. For Angelique, who did not herself choose to leave Trinidad and who has always wanted to retain and maintain her belonging to the country, food provides performative acts (Fortier, 1999) that to a great degree fulfil the meaning she desires them to have and thereby give her a sense of ethnic belonging. It is very different for Frederica. Even after nearly 40 years of living in Britain she would miss Malaysian food if she did not eat it, but it does not give her a sense of ethnic belonging to Malaysia. Her choice to leave Malaysia to escape both the way of life and the political situation is far more influential on how she feels about the country than the Malaysian 'taste' and attitude to food she so loves. Anthias (2008, p.8) notes that "Ethnic ties cannot be considered in isolation, as delivering 'belonging', given that they are intersected with social relations of different types..." Relating this notion to Angelique and Frederica, it would appear that the circumstances in which they left their childhood homes have most significance in their translocational positionalities as adults.

Understanding locality of belonging as the relationship with particular communities in particular places, it is evident that as adults Angelique and Frederica relate entirely differently to the localities of belonging they experienced as children. For Frederica food is a link to her childhood but she has disconnected herself from that community. Angelique however sustains her practice of Trinidadian traditions, experiences a powerfully Trinidadian relationship incorporating food, her husband and other Trinidadians, and has recently formed internet links with childhood friends, all providing a vital continuity with the locality of belonging she experienced as a child.

References

Anthias, F. (2008) 'Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging', *Translocations: Migration and Social Change*, 4(1), pp. 5-20, *An Irish Inter-University Open Access E-Journal* [Online]. Available at: http://www.dcu.ie/imrstr/volume_4_issue_1/Vol_4_Issue_1_Floya_Anthias.pdf (Accessed: 1 July 2011).

Fortier, A-M. (1999) 'Re-membering places and the performance of belonging(s)'. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(2), pp.41-64.

Scourfield, J., Dicks, B., Drakeford, M. and Davies, A. (2006) *Children, place and identity: nation and identity in middle childhood*. E-Book Library, UEL [Online] Available at: <http://uel.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=355981> (Accessed: 20 November 2011).

Primary sources

'Angelique' (2010) Interview with Nicola Samson, PhD research, 12 May.

'Frederica' (2010) Interview with Nicola Samson, PhD research, 16 January.

Section 6

Imagining

London

The Inside/Outside World of Monica Ali's Brick Lane — Lucinda Newns (London Metropolitan)

Introduction

This presentation forms part of a larger PhD project about gender and domesticity in contemporary diasporic fiction. The central aim of this research is to unpack the coded 'passive' space of the domestic in order to expose the complex processes of cultural negotiation and identity positioning which occur as migrant and diasporic characters strive for belonging within the larger spaces of nation and trans-nation.

The title of this conference is 'City of Paradox' and I am gesturing at this paradoxical nature of cities with the title of my presentation. By referring to a world as having an inside and an outside, I am alluding to the idea that places have multiple faces, which manage to co-exist even as they complicate and interrogate one another.

Context of paper

In the thesis chapter from which this presentation is drawn, I trace a parallel between Brick Lane's (2004) protagonist, Nazneen and its setting, Brick Lane. I argue that both the character and the setting are made up of an 'outside', which is made immediately knowable and accessible through a kind of performance, and an 'inside' which the performance intends to obscure. However, this is not to reduce 'inside' to some essential core of meaning or 'truth' but rather in the sense that it is less immediately knowable and consumable by outsiders.

In the case of Nazneen, I look at how the linguistic distance between the narrative voice as a rendering of Nazneen's consciousness and the character Nazneen who thinks and acts creates the feeling that she is performing the role of "the unspoilt girl from the village" which has been assigned to her by her husband and the diasporic Bangladeshi community at large. I argue that this performative aspect of Nazneen's characterisation serves to undermine her role as the maintainer of tradition and the 'symbolic bearer of the collectivity's identity' (to use Nira Yuval-Davis's language) (1997); a role which the (primarily) male characters depend on in order to sustain their connection to home (in this case, Bangladesh).

However, in the interest of time and in keeping with the theme of this conference, I will be focusing on Ali's setting, Brick Lane itself. The 'inside' that I will be talking about in relation to the novel's setting is also about unpacking those aspects of city places that tend to get marginalized and under-theorized in academic literature, in this case, the domestic and the everyday (I use the word 'place' rather than 'space' here because placeness is associated with the meanings that we ascribe to particular spaces).

Plot summary

On a basic level, Brick Lane is a migration narrative. It contains the conventional plot markers of departure, arrival and settling, accompanied by periods of culture shock, adjustment and adaptation. Specifically, a young Bangladeshi woman called Nazneen is brought to London following her marriage to a much older though 'educated' man named Chanu and they make their home on a council estate near London's Brick Lane.

The novel's plot structure is also complemented by the familiar theme of return or 'going home syndrome' as it is described in the novel. At the end of the novel, this 'going home syndrome' manifests itself as a literal return home for Nazneen's husband Chanu, though for most of the novel's characters, home is something that can and must be created in the diasporic space of London's East End.

The re-branding of Brick Lane

As some of you may be aware, Ali's novel as well as its film adaptation was met with a certain amount of resistance from the Bangladeshi community living in and around Brick Lane. This criticism was largely attributed to Ali's representation (or misrepresentation as it was described) of the area and its people. And yet, many literary critics have praised the novel for exactly the same reasons, establishing it as a document which gives readers access to some kind of hidden 'truth' about Brick Lane's Bangladeshi community. As one reviewer puts it, the novel, "opened up a world whose contours I could recognize, but which I needed Monica Ali to make me understand" (Bedell, 2003). The recognisable "contours", that this reviewer speaks of, refer to those aspects of Brick Lane which are easily accessible and well-known to outsiders.

In her article about gentrification in Brick Lane, Sarah Brouillette (2009) discusses how this consumable version of the area came about. She cites processes of gentrification from outside led by an influx of middle-class homebuyers interested in the area's Georgian architecture and proximity to the City. But she also discusses a parallel form of gentrification from within, involving a campaign to re-brand the area as 'Banglatown'. This re-branding,

Brouillette says, was about redefining Brick Lane as a “monocultural enclave” with a “commercially visible, viable and essentialized image of Bangladeshi identity”. The re-naming of the area was eventually made official in 2002, just one year before the publication of Monica Ali’s novel. This re-branding of Brick Lane into an ethnic enclave which is easily accessible to and consumable by outsiders had positive effects in that it helped to bring in wealth for local businesses while also challenging notions of ethnic areas as segregationist or potentially dangerous spaces.

If we look at how Brick Lane gets represented in cyberspace (2012), we begin to get a feel for this branding:

The first hit when doing a Google search of ‘Brick Lane’ appears to be hosted by Tower Hamlets Council. Immediately, we see that it is focused on Brick Lane as a space of consumption as evidenced by the images of boots and other clothing items. On the ‘About’ page, we get a strange juxtaposition describing the place as both a destination for “trendy bars and clubs” and the “hub of the Bangladeshi community”.

Further down in the results list is another site: the ownership is unclear but it appears to be related to local Bangladeshi businesses, as there is a focus on these and it also advertises property in Bangladesh. Again, the wording is interesting. While it acknowledges that the owners of the ‘authentic’ curry-houses in Brick Lane are Muslim and so do not drink, it emphasises an openness to non-Muslims who wish to bring their own alcohol to consume on the premises.

These strange juxtapositions produce a contradictory image of Brick Lane as at once ‘authentically’ Bangladeshi and trendy, accessible and consumable by non-Bangladeshis. In this way, the branding functions to present Brick Lane as an emblem of the success of British multiculturalism, helping to sustain the community’s presence economically, culturally and politically. Despite these positive aspects, the re-branding project has its drawbacks. Any process that requires the propagation of an essentialised identity to function can be damaging as well as it creates boundaries of belonging which must be continuously policed. We can see evidence of this policing in Ali’s novel in the form of the ‘leaflet war’ between the English nationalist Lion Hearts and Islamist Bengal Tigers as much of the rhetoric used by both sides is about the proper ‘display’ of women’s bodies. As is often the case, women are positioned as the boundary-markers of this ‘essential’ identity formation.

Ali’s characters call attention to the paradox at the heart of claiming space within a multicultural setting. There is a moment in the novel in which Nazneen expresses her confusion at the sight of Hindu gods in a restaurant window and asks her husband if Hindus are moving into the area, to which Chanu replies, “Not Hindus, marketing. Biggest god of all.” “The white people liked to see the gods”, he says “for authenticity”. “Authenticity” here is

about presenting a version of Bangladeshi culture that can be easily read by those passing through, even if this means playing with history, mobilising stereotypes from England's colonial past in an exoticised or even Orientalist fashion. So 'authenticity' in this case gets exposed as a performance that fulfils a particular purpose rather than being an accurate representation of the place or its people.

We nevertheless see the success of this so-called 'marketing' in the novel as Chanu points out that there is much more wealth in the area than ten years ago while Nazneen describes the proliferation of so-called 'smart' restaurants in the area:

There were smart places with starched white tablecloths and multitudes of shining silver cutlery. In these places the newspaper clippings were framed. The tables were far apart and there was an absence of decoration that Nazneen knew to be a style. In the other restaurants the greeters and waiters wore white, oil-marked shirts. But in the smart ones they wore black. A very large potted fern or blue and white mosaic at the entrance indicated ultra-smart. (Ali, 2004, p.252)

Even though Nazneen has such a clear understanding of this hierarchy of restaurants, we are nevertheless aware that she would never eat in any of these so-called 'smart' places. Instead we are told the customers are 'young men with sawn-off trousers and sandals and girls in T-shirts that strained across their chests and exposed their belly-buttons'. (Ali, 2004, p.253)

As Nazneen moves through Brick Lane, she notices a tourist taking pictures of the scene and finds the camera directed towards her. This reminds us that Nazneen is not the target audience of this marketing but an integral part of the performance (or rather the image of her in a sari and, we are told, walking two steps behind her husband).

Brick Lane's truth?

As mentioned earlier, the novel *Brick Lane* is often described by reviewers as containing some sort of documentary 'truth' about Brick Lane the place that allows outsiders to see behind this performance.

One might think that this 'true' Brick Lane is characterised by the drug use, gang violence and rising Islamic fundamentalism that are all portrayed in the novel, reminding us again of the image of the dangerous ethnic enclave that the Banglatown branding seeks to avoid. However, we see that these aspects of the area are already made public in other ways, specifically, in Ali's account, through a media largely driven by sensationalism. Toward the end of the novel there is a riot sparked by the ongoing tensions between the Lion Hearts and Bengal Tigers and camera crews turn up intent on finding a story on one of these illicit

activities and do not rest until they find something incriminating.

Nazneen also becomes a figure of media and political interest after the riot. A local councillor comes to her door with a photographer and asks her if she finds it hard to cope, to which she replies a simple 'No'. He then switches tactics, asking her how many children she has but when he hears that she has only two, he is left 'disappointed' (in Nazneen's words). The councillor's 'disappointment' stems from his desire to uncover a scandal about a downtrodden woman burdened with too many children but instead he is only left with the completely unspectacular image of peeling plaster.

This documentation of the unspectacular and the everyday runs through the novel and we often get lengthy descriptions of domestic objects and foodstuffs. The banality of these descriptions undermines both the exotic, Orientalist 'branding' of Banglatown as well as the sensationalist images of ethnic enclaves as transgressive and potentially dangerous spaces.

Take, for example, the description given of Nazneen's flat:

There were three rugs: red and orange, green and purple, brown and blue. The carpet was yellow with a green leaf design. One hundred per cent nylon and, Chanu said, very hard-wearing. The sofa and chairs were the colour of dried cow dung, which was a practical colour. They had little sheaths of plastic on the headrests to protect them from Chanu's hair oil. There was a lot of furniture, more than Nazneen had seen in one room before. Even if you took all the furniture in the compound, from every auntie and uncle's ghar, it would not match up to this one room. There was a low table with a glass centre and orange plastic legs, three little wooden tables that stacked together, the big table they used for the evening meal, a bookcase, a corner cupboard, a rack for newspapers, a trolley filled with files and folders, the sofa and armchairs, two footstools, six dining chairs and a showcase. The walls were papered in yellow with brown squares and circles lining neatly up and down. (Ali, 2004, p.20)

This is not the Orientalist fantasy but rather this sheer accumulation of objects gestures more at the influence of Western consumerism

Then, if we look at the detailed description of the contents of the family's picnic, yet another picture emerges:

They sat on the grass in St James's Park and Nazneen laid the picnic out on four tea towels. Chicken wings spread in a paste of yoghurt and spices and baked in the oven, onions sliced to the thickness of a fingernail, mixed with chillies, dipped in gram flour and egg and fried in bubbling oil, a dry concoction of chickpeas and tomatoes stewed with cumin and ginger, misshapen chapattis wrapped while still hot in tinfoil and sprinkled now with condensation, golden hard-boiled eggs glazed in a curry seal, Dairylea triangles in their cardboard box, bright orange packets containing shamelessly orange crisps, a cake with a list of ingredients too long to be printed in legible type. She

arranged them all on paper plates and stacked up the plastic tubs inside the carrier bags.
(Ali, 2004, p.297)

This is not the 'authentic curry' image presented by the Brick Lane marketing campaign but a mishmash of traditional cooking (blue) and modern convenience (red).

Just as the photo of peeling plaster is the only 'truth' about Nazneen's daily life that the politicians can go away with, it could be said that this banality of everyday domesticity is the only 'truth' about Brick Lane that Monica Ali provides for her readers. However, this apparently banal and unspectacular work of making home needs to be acknowledged as part of what produces this place called Brick Lane. Not only is Ali's novel about undermining the problematic representations of the exotic or potentially dangerous ethnic enclave but also offering resources for an alternative view, which is not burdened by essentialisms, of what this space is about.

It is worth noting here that some critics found Ali's tendency to document the unremarkable in passages such as those above to be tedious. One reviewer describes her style as 'flatly compendious and pointlessly accretive'. However, when we look at the way Ali writes domesticity into her fiction, we cannot simply dismiss it as pointless. This critic's reaction shows the resistance to acknowledging representations of the (female-coded) domestic as insights into the complex processes involved in 'making home' in a new environment.

Furthermore, returning to the negative reception of the novel by some groups within Brick Lane's Bangladeshi community, we can find a similar kind of resistance. Both Sarah Brouillette in her article and Ali herself, in an interview with the *Sunday Times* (Craig, 2003) regard the negative reactions to the novel as largely gendered. Brouillette identifies a link between the local Bangladeshi organisation which came out strongest against Ali's novel and the predominantly male local business leaders who participated in the Banglatown branding campaign; and Ali emphasises the positive reception she has had from female members of the community.

Ali's novel, which exposes the 'branding' of Brick lane as a performance, poses a threat to the influx of wealth to the area. For example, Brouillette argues that Ali has been demonised primarily because she is seen to be exploiting the area for her own commercial purposes, i.e. selling books. More unnerving, however, is that the novel accomplishes this by disrupting the stable, essentialised boundaries of culture that this brand depends on to be successful.

In the multicultural logic of the Brick Lane branding project, the preservation of domestic norms and home-making practices becomes synonymous with preserving the cultural essence. Ali's novel, however, represents these as complex processes of cultural

negotiation. This, in turn, poses challenges to the male-centred project of creating a 'home away from home' with clearly defined identities, values and gendered norms by instilling it with new meanings and new possibilities for Bangladeshi femininity that go beyond the archetype of the 'unspoilt girl from the village'. We could interpret this as the emergence of a diasporic gender identity, which is neither a triumph of the western liberal/feminist subject nor an essentialist Bangladeshi one.

These new possibilities are perhaps best summed up by the clothing business started by Brick Lane's female characters at the novel's close. In this new venture, entitled 'Fusion Fashions', a feminised product (clothing) becomes the emblem for women negotiating the often limited possibilities of the multicultural city, showing that the unspectacular work of the domestic is more complex and productive of the public space of identity and belonging than is immediately recognisable.

References

Ali, M. (2004) *Brick Lane*. London: Black Swan.

Bedell, G. (2003) 'Full of East End Promise', *The Observer*, 15 June [Online]. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003/jun/15/fiction.features1> (Accessed: 16 December 2011).

Brouillette, S. (2009) 'Literature and Gentrification on Brick Lane', *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 51, pp. 425–449.

Craig, A. (2003) 'Let Me Be a Writer, Not a Racial Cheerleader', *Sunday Times*, 7 December.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets (2012) Visit Brick Lane. Available at: <http://www.visitbricklane.org/> (Accessed: 2 April 2012)

Phillips, D. (2006) 'Parallel Lives? Challenging Discourses of British Muslim Self-Segregation', *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 24, pp. 25–40.

Yuval-Davis, N. (1997) *Gender and Nation*. London: SAGE.

A Child of the Jago: the Reality and the Fiction — Sarah Wise (Novelist)

In his review of Arthur Morrison's novel, *A Child of the Jago*, literary critic HD Traill (1897) wrote that "The original of the Jago has, it is admitted, ceased to exist. But I will make bold to say that as described by Mr Morrison, it never did exist." The 'Jago' of Morrison's title was the scarcely disguised 'Old Nichol' slum which stood, until the mid-1890s, just behind Shoreditch High Street where the Boundary Street Estate is today. A keen eugenicist, Morrison stated that his intention in writing *A Child of the Jago*, which was published in November 1896, had been to show the gradual corruption of a basically decent boy, Dicky Perrott, by the criminal slum in which he was born and grew up. "It was my fate," wrote Morrison in his preface to the novel (1897), "to encounter a place in Shoreditch, where children were born and reared in circumstances which gave them no reasonable chance of living decent lives: where they were born foredoomed to a criminal or semi-criminal career."

A close investigation of dates shows, however, that Morrison's claim to have more or less taken up residence in the heart of the Nichol, in order to write the ugly truth about life there, was itself untrue. Morrison's own account of how the novel came to be researched places him in the Nichol between October 1894 and March 1896. But the decision to demolish the Nichol in its entirety had been taken by the London County Council in 1891, and by January 1893 — that's a whole 20 months before Morrison turned up — one local newspaper proclaimed the area "The Land of Desolation", declaring, "Half the houses are now closed by the orders of the County Council, and the dark and deserted alleys afford a likely sanctuary to the burglars and garroters of who we hear so much lately." The newspaper is describing the activities of a small number of ne'er-do-wells who had come from outside the area, in order to live for free ahead of the demolitions and in order to pursue whatever criminal or secret activities the condemned and empty buildings could give cover for. Mounted policemen were patrolling the streets of the Nichol, now that the 6,000-strong local population had been evicted or given final notice to quit, in preparation for the demolitions. Whatever Morrison did or did not see or experience in his 18 months on that spot was not the behaviour of the community of the Nichol.

The Nichol had a reasonably bad reputation before Morrison though many saw it as a tragic place rather than a wicked one. But the novel damned the spot posthumously, and 'Arthur Morrisonitis', as I call it, has afflicted most, if not all, 20th and 21st century commentators. Sadly, in my view, even some former residents came to view the place through Arthur Morrison-tinted specs, and what today psychologists call 'internalisation' took place on a grand scale. Morrison's mythic Jago, "a fairyland of horror", in critic HD Traill's (1897, p.66) lovely phrase, has usurped the historical fact of the Nichol which was for the most part pretty mundane in its awfulness. When historian Raphael Samuel came to record days' worth of cassette tapes with Arthur Harding, who had lived the first ten years of his life in the Nichol's final ten years, Harding spoke of his childhood in 'the Jago', just as often as he spoke of it in 'the Nichol'. (The Harding tapes are held by the Bishopsgate Library). This has been one of the most impressive literary re-brandings of a district in London history, perhaps even in world history.

It is a wonderful artistic vision, one that is still read and savoured today; the problem arises when Morrison (1897, pp. xi-xii) claims that it is the literal truth, written in order to stir lawmakers and others in a position to bring about change to act now to avert social disaster. He was angry with those who believed "that the sole function of art was to minister to their personal comfort — as upholstery does." The wealthy, he said, expected a novel to supply them with a "debauch of self-delusion" but that he was not the man "to coat truth with treacle". As a good read, and a page-turner, I can not praise *A Child of the Jago* highly enough; as a source for historians, it is lamentable. The novel's action spans nine years, and is told in 37 high-speed, thrilling, heart-in-the-mouth, often sickening, chapters. In the first section, our hero, Dicky Perrott, is eight years old; in the second he is 13; and in the third and last, he has reached the age of 17.

At least some of the excitement in the book arises from the role that the streets of the Jago themselves play. The maze-like configuration of the Jago street plan appears both to influence behaviour and to reflect emotional states. The slum's topography induces a cunning, furtive mentality; the possessor of that mentality, in turn, learns to make use of the Jago's intricacies to evade hostile 'outsiders' in pursuit. In Morrison's book, knowledge of Jago geography is knowledge of evil. This is one of the clearest examples of what in 70 years' time would be called 'psycho-geography': the interplay between the human mind and the physical environment in which that mind finds itself. Time and again, in *A Child of the Jago*, characters crash into each other as they burst into the slum or dash round a corner or erupt into a court. Dicky is shown to have this knowledge and so we also see him negotiating the Jago labyrinth in full flight whenever he has committed a theft. This underlines his

ambivalent relationship to the place: Dicky's worse nature knows how to exploit the streets; his better nature is routinely confounded by them. Dicky travels along his own private pathways through the slum to avoid the Dove Lane gang (Dove Lane being a thinly disguised Columbia Road).

The real Old Nichol had been completed and entirely built over by the mid-1830s but construction had not stopped there. Over the next 50 years or so, the back yards and other open spaces had sprouted a separate shanty-style development: a parallel world of illegal courts and small houses, workshops, stables, cowsheds and donkey stalls. Local map-makers and surveyors just gave up trying to keep accurate maps of the Nichol. But locals knew which houses could be passed right through to bring them out into a different street and which section of fence could be lifted for an escape from one backyard or court into another and it is true that the minority of sneak thieves who lived in the Nichol could use this secret knowledge to evade any copper who had dashed after them from Shoreditch High Street or Bethnal Green Road.

This is something that was also a feature of life in the St Giles slum, where Centrepont is today, demolished in the 1840s. The slum had secret pathways through it, all of which added to the sense that it was forbidden territory to outsiders. This is a rather delicious, eerie feeling, which Morrison made good use of, but again, it is overplayed. Outsiders may not have known about these secret ways through the Old Nichol, but they nevertheless did come into the Nichol's more conventional streets, even after dark, and a scan of the local newspapers of the 1880s shows that middle-class and lower-middle-class people were perfectly happy to go into the Nichol for evening social occasions, such as supper and harmonic evenings, and masonic lodge celebrations. These pillars of the community clearly did not believe that they would be under attack once they entered the maze. But you would never know that if you took *A Child of the Jago* to be based on fact. The people of the Jago are irredeemably awful: vicious and violent for the sheer joy of it; incapable of an act of kindness or honesty; work-shy, ignorant, and proud to be so. According to Morrison, (1897) they can be nothing other because this is the spot where decades of physical, mental and moral degeneration have created beings whose biological destiny is fixed. But they keep on breeding; Morrison himself and characters we are supposed to admire speak of them as 'rats' who 'swarm' and 'teem' and 'breed' in their 'nests'. Morrison writes: "Still the Jago rats bred and bred their kind unhindered, multiplying apace and infecting the world". (1897, p.69) HG Wells, (1896) in reviewing the book, pointed out the fallacious heritability argument. Morrison, he said, had confused environmental factors and heritable characteristics. Wells wrote:

...neither ignorance, wrong moral suggestions, nor parasites are inherited... The Jago people are racially indistinguishable from the people who send their children to Oxford, and the rate of increase in the Jago population is entirely irrelevant to the problem. The Jago is not a 'black inheritance', it is a black contagion, which alters the whole problem.

Had Morrison turned up in the Nichol before 1892, he would have found a population certainly for the most part mired in chronic poverty. Charles Booth estimated that 80% of the residents were in extreme poverty against a figure of 35% for the rest of East London. The Nichol had the cheapest rents to be found anywhere in the capital and it was the place where you ended up as the last step before the common lodging house and then the workhouse (or the gutter which many did).

Over-represented in the demographic of the Nichol were the very old, female-headed households (the male breadwinner being either deceased, absent or in prison), highly skilled artisans whose fine work was being priced out of the market by mass market, or 'slop', products, men who were out on parole or discharged prisoners whose record left them extremely unattractive to potential employers. But what was not over-represented in the Nichol was serious criminality. Despite the presence of a highly visible sub-group of young males lounging around the streets with nowhere else to go, street crime and serious assaults were no more prevalent in the Old Nichol than in any other part of East London. Just one murder occurred in the last ten years of the Nichol's existence, during a family dispute. That is not bad going for a population of over 6,000 living in the most demoralising and grotesquely revolting conditions with very little reason to feel hopeful for any improvement in their lives.

So why did Morrison libel the Nichol population? Writing in the late 1960s, Morrison scholar PJ Keating (1969, p.29) stated that Morrison's horror and loathing of the Jagoites was probably attributable to some personal source. Morrison remains a rather mysterious figure. Interviewers failed to winkle much background information from him; and, as she had been instructed, Morrison's wife, Elizabeth, burnt all his private papers upon his death, in 1945. But we know that he tried to hide his humble early years as the son of a gas-fitter and a haberdashery shopkeeper in Poplar. It is tempting to view *A Child of the Jago* as a record of a clever, ambitious, young working-class man putting a lot of distance between himself and those who had fallen into the abyss of chronic poverty.

Morrison had been invited into the slum by charismatic Anglican priest Father Arthur Osborne Jay whose own three books about his church work in the Nichol contain pretty much all the incidents and some of the characters that feature in *A Child of the Jago*. It is not going too far to say that *A Child of the Jago* is a novelisation of Jay's views of his parishioners and the

best way to confront the 'social problem', which is one of the titles of Jay's own books. One of the main, and less exciting, thrusts of the novel is the attack on all other forms of help except that offered by Jay: Church of England pastoral care. The book is apart from anything an extended advert for Jay's Holy Trinity church, Old Nichol Street and the assistance that Jay offered there. Perhaps this is why the curious name, the Jago, was chosen to re-brand the Nichol: as Tower Hamlets' former archivist David Rich put it, the Jago is where Jay goes.

This talk was adapted from a chapter by Sarah Wise in Whitehead, A. and White, J. (eds.) (2013) *London Fictions*, London: Five Leaves Press

References

Keating, P.J. (1969) 'Introduction' to *A Child of the Jago*. Reprint, London: Everyman, 1971

Morrison, A. (1897), *A Child of the Jago*. 3rd edn. London: Methuen

The Eastern Argus (1893) 'The Land of Desolation', 14 January, p. 3

Traill, H.D. (1897) 'The New Realism', *Fortnightly Review*, 67, pp. 63-73, reprinted in Traill,

H.D. (1897) *The New Fiction and Other Essays on Literary Subjects*. London: Hurst and Blackett.

Wells, H.G. (1896) 'A Slum Novel', 28 November, p. 573 *Saturday Review*, 82.

Section 7

City and Spectacle

Value Creation in the Olympic City — Gavin Poynter (UEL)

In the context of London 2012, put quite simply, we have two social processes taking place at the same time: on the one hand, we have a spectacle, as Michael Rustin has called it in his book (2009), a spectacle that involves one of the greatest sporting events to take place globally in the world; and on the other hand, particularly since the experience of Barcelona in 1992, we have a process associated with that event, which I will briefly call 'city-building'. Much of the work that we explored in that context here at the UEL has been focussed on this process of city building, in particular the city-building component that is associated with the game-delivering, the social transformation of East London as promised, and the social transformation that explicitly seeks to improve and enhance the life opportunities of socially disadvantaged communities that have long existed within that area.

The kind of conclusion that we have drawn, I think, and that certainly I would draw from the research we have undertaken, is that, in a sense, the Olympics as an event and the city building are two really good things: the Olympics is an event that attracts a global audience and elite athletes from across the world; on the other hand, in terms of the UK, the thing we desperately need is good city building, at the present time, particularly given the shortages of housing, social infrastructure and other amenities. So these in themselves may be considered to be good things. But the problem lies in the way in which these are put together. It is the bringing together of these good things that give rise to many of the issues that other papers have referred to. We have heard much about the 'London model', that is, London has not only delivered the Games on time but it would also deliver an astonishing legacy. The 'London model' is something that we should be interpreting and analysing in some details because it would be of considerable interest to future host cities.

Now, it seems to me that in this context, one of the other broad points – before going on to refer to some of the research that we have undertaken – is that throughout the 20th century politics played with sport, politics engaged with sport, particularly through experiences of the Cold War era. The Olympics could not escape the ideological debate of the Cold War era and this was reflected through a number of incidents from 1968 to 1980s with various countries

refusing to participate in the Games. Since approximately 1992, in a sense, the ideological Olympics has been displaced by an end-of-ideology Olympics. There has been a great interest in the kind of model that Michael Rustin has already outlined (2009), a kind of technocratic model of Games organisation through which, in effect, sport tends to displace politics and particularly the politics associated with city building.

One of the things that we looked at recently and [Penny Bernstock](#), my colleague, has done much of the hard research on this, has been the ways in which urban regeneration plays in the context of the mega event and gives rise to a new value, the re-valorisation of the whole area of the city, in London's case, the East End of London. How is it that this re-valorisation takes place? And who is it that vastly benefits from this process of turning a largely brownfield site into new areas of urban spatial development associated with good transport and other forms of social and commercial infrastructure? In a sense, re-valorisation when linked to this urban regeneration agenda has a certain familiar ring to it, in relation to the Games as well as other major projects undertaken recently in the UK. It goes something like this: you have a large pot of public investment, 9.3 billion pounds, the investment takes place at the lowest point of depreciation of the land and the properties in a particular area, in this case, East London. Significant public investment improves the rail and road infrastructure, constructs new buildings, green spaces and areas of considerable potential. This subsequently pushes up land values and property prices. In the context of the Olympics, we suddenly begin to find that the private sector which was interested at the beginning of the Games becomes rather more interested down the line when public investment begins to deliver the re-valorisation of certain parts of the area of East London, particularly around the Olympic Park.

The private sector engages then with the state in the way that Michael Rustin has already identified (2009) through negotiation with public authority over the potential of the Olympic Park, the Olympic Village and the area that surrounds it. In the course of this development, the obvious concern of the private sector is for viability. We can explore what 'viability' means in some more detail perhaps in the discussion. That process of re-valorisation is triggered by the public sector and the private sector in the context of the Olympics gets involved as some of the improvements begin to take shape. Who benefits from that new value that is generated? Now, if we listen to the Mayor and to successive governments, Labour and Conservative, and if we listen to the local authorities, who have very ambitious policies in relation to the convergence of the life opportunities of these disadvantaged communities with the rest of London, it would seem clear that the policy that emerges from the political sphere is geared towards improving and enhancing the social condition of the less well, less

privileged communities of East London.

From the research that we have undertaken so far, however, it appears that what could be achieved through the development of the Olympics will be precisely the opposite of that which the policy makers have announced. I think that it is important to know in some ways how and why this will take place and it does require in-depth exploration. Our work, for example, looked at the agreement between the state and the local state agencies, particularly local authorities but also the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, and developers in the area bordering the Olympics Park, in particular, Stratford High Street. The 'Section 106 Agreement' is one in which a private developer makes a commitment to provide public and community gain from the developments that are taking place. From the study conducted by Penny, particularly the 22 schemes in the Stratford High St. area, (we are following this up with the Olympic Park itself) it is very clear that there is little evidence of community gain being achieved substantially from these development activities.

First of all, the scale of the Olympic development reveals in many respects the inadequacy of all the legal framework mechanisms that the public sector has put in place to secure benefits from its investment. The private developers tend to get away with, to put it simply, a 'mitigation impact fee' as a result of the development that they have decided to construct. They do not, in any way, return to the public or community sector, anything that is commensurate with the initial public investment made, whether that has been in the form of social housing, or other public spaces. In the context, for example, of social housing from 2005 to 2012, one can see that the development that has taken place around the Olympic Park has delivered proportionately less and less social housing. Other elements of public and community benefits have also been much diminished as a result of these agreements.

What does it mean in relation to the Olympics coming to East London? I have about four observations to make. The first is this, that the Olympics does reveal a role performed by the state and public investment on behalf of the private sector and it does demonstrate, in many ways, not really some of the flows of the public-private partnership, but a rather more important dynamic in relation between the state and the private sector that is one of the increased dependency of the private sector upon the technocratic state as a source of profitability. In other words, the Olympics reveal the fundamental weaknesses existing in the British economy at the present time and the role that the state has historically played in trying to support that rather weak economy. Secondly, the claims that are made in relation to the policy associated with the socially disadvantaged in East London are all proven to be ineffective; improvements in the life of the socially disadvantaged will not come through the

Olympics themselves. That balance of benefits will largely accrue to the private sector and the developers that are working in particular pockets of East London. The nature of that development opportunity is also changing in the context of London itself: the Olympic Park is a good illustration of this. With the Qatari Sovereign Wealth Fund's investments in the Olympic Village we can see that international properties investors will begin to find London properties, in particular of the iconic type, a very lucrative investment. Finally in the context of the pattern for London and East London, for the future, the path that emerges from the Games is the path that in a way re-enforces the network of existing business interests and the networks of work that already exist within London as a whole. And this, I think, will ultimately be to the detriment sadly of the disadvantaged communities that are currently living here.

References

MacRury, I. and Poynter, G. (2009) *London's Olympic Legacy: A "Thinkpiece" report prepared for the OECD and Department for Communities and Local Government*, London: London East Research Institute.

MacRury, I. and Poynter, G. (eds) (2009) *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Remaking of London*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishers.

Rustin, M. (2009) *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Reshaping of London*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishers.

Is the Army invading British Civil Society? — Vron Ware (Open University)

After more than ten years of overstretch in Iraq, Afghanistan and more recently in Libya, the armed forces – the British Army in particular – find themselves looking for a new role not just as an adjunct of US military power, or with European partners, but [in the domestic sphere as well](#) (Richard Norton-Taylor, 2012). While the human cost of non-stop wars defies calculation, the institution has been subjected to significant cuts and restructuring as part of the Coalition Government's efforts to slash the public sector. As Londoners assimilate the fact that the city is under military occupation for the duration of the games, and that [a further 3,500 soldiers will be employed](#) (Hopkins, 2012) as bargain-basement security guards, it is clear (Ware, 2010) that the [relationship between the armed forces and civil society](#) has [changed beyond recognition over the last decade](#) (Barnett, 2012).

A recent indication is the news that Labour's latest policy review is looking at how young people could gain from "the values and expertise" of military institutions. [Stephen Twigg](#) and Jim Murphy (2012), shadow ministers for education and defence respectively, began with the now commonplace platitude that the armed forces "are central to our national character, just as they are to our national security. The ethos and values of the Services can be significant not just on the battlefield but across our society, including in schools." Their vague proposals for integrating military workers into civilian society include the suggestion that "a cadre of Armed Services mentors, mainly veterans and reservists ...work closely with those in need of guidance and support. This gestures towards the vexed issue of resettling a militarised workforce likely to be [heavily scarred by combat experience](#) (Sherwood, 2012)." One concrete plan, however, is to increase the cadet force in state secondary schools, a long-running plan that has been previously backed by Gordon Brown and Michael Gove as a solution to improving the character and moral standards of the nation's young people.

Ed Miliband's attempt to join the military choir is merely the latest proof that the status of the armed forces has changed significantly in the last decade. From 2003 onwards, the outpouring of public sympathy towards soldiers who were cast as victims of futile and unpopular wars has been part of a long drawn-out process during which British military

institutions have been repositioned at the centre of national life. As soldiers prepare to carry out security checks and public order duties during the London Olympics – the biggest mobilisation of military and security forces seen in the UK since the Second World War – the public is about to witness one dimension of these profound changes.

The games provide a tailor-made experiment to test the public's reactions to army uniforms seen up close and, above all, worn by soldiers primed to engage with fellow citizens as opposed to foreign combatants. Despite the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) [initial reluctance to commit the overstretched forces to the operation](#) (Hopkins and Gibson, 2012), the haphazard co-operation between police, private contractors G4S and military personnel can be seen as a dry run for Britain's developing state security arrangements.

While the news of thousands of redundancies and the scrapping of historic regiments has attracted most of the media attention, the revelation that the so-called [Army 2020](#) (Army, 2012) will involve a greater proportion of logistical and other work farmed out to private contractors has passed without comment. The fact that the future Army 2020 will rely on thousands of reserve, or part-time, soldiers, should be understood as another strategy to integrate military work into the civilian economy, enmeshing employers as well as recruits into a wider network of the nation's security apparatus. As Twigg and Murphy point out, "Reservists use civilian skills to support the military and the reverse should also be true".

These developments have had accumulated affects: the changing public view of soldiering as a particular form of labour; the deployment not just of [military hardware](#) (Bond and Drury, 2012) but also [uniformed soldiers](#) (Prince, 2012) in securitising the games; the cuts and restructuring of the defence sector as an index of the UK's diminishing global influence; and the mounting anxiety about the sheer numbers of ex-servicemen and women re-entering the workforce, a large proportion of whom are [suffering mental and physical health issues as a result of combat experience](#).

While the armed forces have been engaged in continuous deployment in far away countries, the 'homeland' has been inexorably subjected to new technologies of surveillance and control. With the military otherwise occupied, the onus on devising policies to cope with emergencies, from floods to chemical warfare to what are known as 'Mumbai-style' attacks, has fallen largely on police and local authorities.

A recent document (2012) from [Mark Phillips](#), based at the Royal United Services Institute, indicates that calculating a distinct role for the military in national security and 'homeland resilience' might be a fraught business. He notes that it not going to be straightforward integrating the armed forces with police and other security agencies which are not used to

military modes of operating. Military planners are also aware that the institution's relationship with the public is important as well. The King's Centre for Military Health Research (2012) reports that although 83 per cent of the public have "a high or very high opinion of the armed forces, almost 20 per cent of service personnel have faced hostility from members of the public on their return from Afghanistan and Iraq, and nearly 60 per cent of them felt people [did not understand their experience during deployment.](#)"

For these reasons alone the debates about the future of the armed forces require a politically engaged response. The official decision about Army 2020 was announced shortly after Armed Forces Day on 30 June, leaving the government open to the charge that there was a delay so as to spare embarrassment in the MoD. But, in addition to the controversial cuts and amalgamations to historic regiments, there are other aspects of the restructuring that have not been widely discussed. On the same Armed Forces Day – a new calendar event inaugurated by Brown's government in 2009 - the *Telegraph* front page ran the headline, ['Battalions with foreign bias face axe in army cuts'](#) (Harding and Kirkup, 2012). The following day, 1 July, [three more UK soldiers were killed in Afghanistan \(MoD, 2012\)](#). One of these, Guardsman Apete Tuisovurua of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, was a citizen of Fiji. He represented one of several thousand Commonwealth citizens recruited since 1998, when New Labour dropped residency requirements for Commonwealth citizens in order to boost flagging manpower levels. Aged 28, he had only joined in November 2010 and had served in his regiment for less than a year.

The suggestion that 'foreign bias' was a problem needs serious attention. Without the presence of Commonwealth citizens, the armed forces – the British Army in particular – would not have been able to deploy so widely in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and more recently Iraq and Afghanistan. The 1998 Strategic Defence Review SDR increased the size of the logistics section which recruited heavily not just from Fiji, but also from Caribbean and African countries. In 2009 the Royal Logistics Corps RLC was one of the areas capped at 15% of non-UK citizens in an attempt to maintain the 'Britishness' of the organization. Today it faces heavy cuts and the replacement of former in-house functions by private contractors. The 3rd Battalion the Yorkshire Infantry regiment (3 Yorks), due to be scrapped, has also recruited heavily from Commonwealth citizens since the turn of the century.

Equally important is the fact that the presence of Commonwealth soldiers throughout the armed forces has meant that the army, in particular, has been able to reach the requisite targets for black and minority ethnic (BME) personnel. The decision to axe those parts of the organisation that rely disproportionately on migrant labour presents a different kind of

headache for military recruiters. As levels of UK-born BMEs remain stubbornly low, it is important that civilians track the attempts made to sustain a functioning multicultural army that is not disconnected from the diversity in UK society.

Paying attention to the politics of military work offers important ways of monitoring a country's national security policy, as well as interrogating the substance of national identity. There are many other aspects of the plan to reorganise Britain's defence and security sector that should cause concern. Britain's foreign policy and its relationship with the rest of the world are rapidly shifting as a result of the [seismic reconfiguration of global power](#) (Norton-Taylor, 2012). The move towards an increasing reliance on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) – what Tom Englehardt (2010) calls “the perfect American weapon” – must be resisted at all costs. The weary silence of a British public that is tired of endless war must not be taken as compliance with this latest development in human-killing technology. Likewise the UK's involvement in the global arms trade needs constant resistance and investigation.

But above all, if we are to pay attention to the new meanings of militarisation, it is crucial to connect the restructuring of the national armed forces to the workings of the security state within the UK. With the police now licensed and trained to use militarised control technologies, our cities are subject to what [Stephen Graham has identified as the new military urbanism](#) (2012): the perfect scenario for the coming Olympics. We cannot say that we have not been warned.

Originally published on openDemocracy OurKingdom

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/vron-ware/is-army-invading-british-civil-society>

References

Army (2012) 'Army to reduce by 23 units'. Available at:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/news/24264.aspx>

Barnett, A. (2012) 'The Falklands Syndrome: the 30 year legacy of Iron Britannia', *openDemocracy*, 12 June. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/hvk6cx>

Bond, A. and Drury (2012) 'Armed and ready: For the first time since the Second World War, London's green space is transformed by anti-aircraft guns for Olympic ring of steel', *Mail Online*, 13 July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/qyk6cx>

British Legion (2006), *Profile and Needs of the Ex-Service Community 2005-2020*, September. Available at: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/33526/summary%20and%20cons.%20report.pdf>

Engelhardt, T. (2010) 'The Perfect American Weapon', *Tomdispatch*, 24 June. Available at: http://www.tomdispatch.com/archive/175265/tom_engelhardt_america_detached_from_war

Graham, S. (2012) 'Olympics 2012 security: welcome to lockdown London', *The Guardian*, 12 March. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/mar/12/london-olympics-security-lockdown-london>

Harding, T. and Kirkup, J. (2012) 'Battalions with foreign bias face axe in Army cuts', *The Telegraph*, 29 June. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/m0k6cx>

Hopkins, N. (2012) 'Olympic security is next mission for troops just back from Afghanistan', *The Guardian*, 12 July. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/jul/12/olympic-security-troops-back-afghanistan>

Hopkins, N. and Gibson, O. (2012) 'Olympics security bill: how it soared to more than £1bn', *The Guardian*, 9 March. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/mar/09/olympics-security-bill-how-it-soared>

Ministry of Defence (2012), 'Warrant Officer Class 2 Leonard Thomas, Guardsman Craig Roderick and Guardsman Apete Tuisovurua killed in Afghanistan', 3 July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/11k6cx>

Norton-Taylor, R. (2012) 'Army chief signals new niche roles for UK troops', *The Guardian*, 31 January. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/defence-and-security-blog/2012/jan/31/army-military-defence>

Norton-Taylor, R. (2012) 'UK government slammed for ignoring key security issues', *The*

Guardian, 11 July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/32k6cx>

Phillips, M. (2012) 'Army 2020: Roles, Capabilities and People,' *RUSI occasional paper*, June. Available at: http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/20120702_Army_2020.pdf

Prince, R. (2012), 'Olympic security firm G4S to have payments docked as soldiers drafted in to fill gaps', *The Telegraph*, 12 July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/a4k6cx>

Sherwood, C. (2012) 'Labour should not idealise the nature of the military', *Next Generation Labour*, July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/24k6cx>

Twigg, S and Murphy, J. (2012) 'Why the military must invade our schools', *The Telegraph*, 9 July. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/r5k6cx>

Ware, V. (2010) 'Lives on the line', *Soundings*, 45, Eurozine [Online]. Available at: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2010-09-28-ware-en.html>

Wessely, S. et al (2012), 'Armed Forces day', *Letters to the Telegraph*, 30 June [Online]. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/m6k6cx>

New Forms of Privatism — Mike Raco (King's College)

In an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment, Richard Murphy (2011) the accountant and economist, argues that we are now seeing new forms of privatism or private politics and new forms of elitism. We are no longer seeing the old-fashioned politics of the big corporations lobbying the government for laws and taxations that would be favourable to their interests. Rather, the private companies want to secure new forms of taxation revenues that they would manage themselves. They claim to perform the task of the state better than the state itself. This new private politics is about getting hold of government money, getting hold of government contracts and trying to convince the government that 'we can do a better job than you can. If you delegate your responsibility to us we will do it better, cheaper, and we will do it under a series of contracts'. But actually what is it that private companies want?

My work, for example, is about how new finance initiatives are being used for new-build in London. Some people like Murphy argue that the current credit crunch is partly the result of private investment funds turning away from private business to invest in hospitals, schools, roads etc where you can get guaranteed returns for 30-40 years through contracts. Why invest in a small business in Liverpool when you can invest in a new hospital in Liverpool which will provide fantastic returns from the tax payers for 30 years? In other words, the credit crunch has been partly caused by the relationships the state developed with the private sector. There are huge networks that regulate the sector: the biggest accounting firms have been deeply involved in projects like the Olympics right from the beginning and one can easily predict that when it comes to evaluating the Olympics and its legacy these companies will evaluate themselves and get paid again and again for the same work. These sorts of companies act as the private police force of capitalism and regulate the world's biggest corporations, even though they are themselves the world's biggest corporations. In the Olympic development these networks, I would argue, are very much at the forefront of the organisation.

It is worth looking at the Olympics development in terms of the democratic deficit. Some people say to me 'well, the Olympics is an exception'. I think that that is problematic. The Olympics has provided us with a wonderful model for a particular type of development which

is hugely appealing for city authorities and governments around the world, not just in relation to the Olympic Games, but in relation to urban development projects in general. What is so interesting about the Olympics, however, was the way in which politics, the political debate, was set aside as a kind of event that finished with the bidding process in 2005. For the people involved in the preparations for the Olympics, there was a 'two stage process': two years of talking about what we are going to do, but then after two years, getting rid of, as one of the people I spoke to called, 'all of that', in other words, the politics and discussions about the legacy. The whole philosophy underlying the Olympics process seems to be that delivery of the Games on time should be at the forefront – a fascinating and explicitly technocratic model for development – that democracy and politics get in the way of delivery, so they need to be replaced and moved somewhere where they are controllable, manageable, and subordinated to the process of decision making. The argument says, 'well, this is how you get things done' regardless of the democratic process which is absolutely a fundamental point. As soon as the delivery agency was set up, they said 'ok, we are the delivery agency for the government, we are going to get delivery partners from the private sector, who will deliver everything for us', which also removes the private sector further away from accountability. Within a month of being established, they went to tender and a huge conglomerate Irish company took the contract to deliver the Games on behalf of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), a public sector body.

An interesting set of politics surrounds the whole delivery process. We need to look at the contracts, first of all. This is what I have been doing for my research. We need to look back at the contract signed in 2006: the 250 page document, which specified just about everything about the Games, was formulated by the IOC (International Olympics Committee). I have been looking, in particular, at the delivery contracts and the relationship between the Olympic authority and an American company called CLN. They managed 42,000 separate contracts with sub-contractors to deliver the Olympics, revealing a fascinating series of networks around the Games.

Some people would argue that there is a logic to this: government decides what it wants, sets up an agency, that agency goes to the private sector, it gets a transnational corporation to deliver, they come in and they manage what they called a cascade of contracts. So, 42,000 contracts were set up with business in different ways, through different levels with different tiers of contracts. The argument here is that this works, that you deliver, that unlike any other macro project you run, you get it done, you get it achieved. Certainly there is a logic to this; a lot of people that I talked to said things like 'it is a sustainable agenda. Things like employing local people', and 'this is the way to do it because it is only through contracts

that you can force companies to employ a certain number of people from the local area and think about sustainability; they would lose their contracts if they don't deliver. This works.' There is actually quite an interesting logic at play here and, something which the research has to engage with it in terms of what that means, but what was interesting for me, is the scale of privatisation here. The levels of responsibility are enormous; even local consultations to some extent were buried with private companies working on behalf of the Royal Institute of Architects (RIBA) which was working on behalf of the government.

What the state of this contract is and where politics fit into this is very problematic because the lexicon of the discussion is around the delivery of the Games. It is all that they are really concerned with. The kind of terminology in the contracts – 'capital cost', 'competitive dialogue', 'contractor compliance' – has a huge impact on what happens. When you look through the contracts, you look at the way in which, for example, risk is a proportion of the shared output. When you look at the details, you realise that everything has effectively been decided and that not much can really change after the contract is signed; so when community groups make demands about certain things, one of the problems is that the structure has not and cannot change very much. The delivery of infrastructure is a very expensive process, but the contract rewards them hugely through a series of dividends, payments and bonuses, just for getting it done, for doing their job. They are fantastic negotiators because they have got a good deal from their contracts. The conglomerate made something like £17,018 million just in 2011. I looked at these accounts. In 2011, for example, a dividend of £43 million was paid, while the average salary of workers was £60,000. They made a lot out of it, including an army of consultants, lawyers, and companies like Ernst & Young which made something like £12 million in 2009 alone. You start getting a sense of how networked this is; organisations and companies come together in a self-fulfilling, self-justifying, self-paying way. A lot of money ultimately comes from the public purse.

One final anecdote before I finish. Under the Freedom of Information Act I managed to get a copy of the contract agreed between the Olympic Delivery Authority and one of its companies in 2006, all 125 pages of it. There are many things I could say about it; one interesting thing was that any bit of this contract which mentions finance was taken out – that is fair enough because we know that confidentiality would be a problem for that kind of organisation – but this has gone beyond that. It says that:

...any prejudice in their commercial interest is likely to resolve in prejudice toward the commercial interest because the role of the company is to negotiate the prices of contracts for the Olympics authority and any public disclosure of this information is likely to provide commercially significant advantage to potential contractual competitors.

What is fascinating is that they are basically saying that my interests as a citizen are the same as the interests of the private company. The private company is working for me; it is not working for itself; it has become the state apparatus. It has taken the job of trying to deliver the Games off the state, and in that way basically what they are saying is 'the public interest is not to know because in fact the private company is the state per se.' They become so intertwined that they are fighting for me as a citizen, not for themselves. I found that more interesting than the contract, because it ties in with what I have been saying earlier about these forms of contract. It is much more than a partnership or a basic contract. This is real change taking place under the radar: the state is saying that it is no longer in charge and that the privatised companies are acting on behalf of the citizens. I found that very interesting: public and private interest become so interchangeable that they get turned around.

Another point I want to make with regard to the contract is that it is fixed in time. Clauses like 'no changes to this contract, unless provided for by the conditions of this contract has effect unless it has been agreed, confirmed in writing and signed by the parties' suggest that once the private company has signed the contract, it does not have to change anything. So if community groups or politicians talk about sustainability and make changes at a later date, the company has been under absolutely no obligation to change anything since 2006. Politically, this freezes the entire development project. Basically it says that at that moment, in 2006 when this contract was in place, everything had to be thought about, and any subsequent changes must ensure that the company is 'no better and no worse off'. In other words, if you are trying to bring in new labour, for example, and the minimum wage has gone up, the company can write to the government and demand the difference in minimum wage rates between 2006, when the contract was signed and the current moment. If there is to be a democratic premium, anything you want to bring in, you have to pay for. This is in the contract. This is unbelievably powerful in terms of locking in a series of development processes.

The implications of this go beyond the Olympics. One of these is about what the state is becoming in this context. We have been talking about hybridity here. I want to start by looking into broader debates into infrastructure, investments, Chinese companies building new constructions in Britain, all of which will have major implications for what the state is going to be, what it becomes in the absence of politics. We need to reverse the argument that we need to 'take the politics out in order to get it delivered'. We need to re-politicise it. This is a question we need to discuss more broadly: Look at Italy, for instance, where the government was handed over to a technocrat in the name of efficiency. At what point then do you take the power away from the technocrat and give it back to elected politicians?

There is also a methodological issue for us as researchers: we lack investigative skills. It is no coincidence that some of the best research on privatisation comes from journalists or from those who are accountants, like Richard Murphy who was an accountant before he became a journalist. People with accountancy skills have an ability to de-construct what is happening in a way that social scientists lack.

References

Murphy, R. (2011) *The Courageous State: Rethinking Economics, Society and the Role of Government*. Cambridge: Searching Finance Ltd.