New Directions, New Voices
Emerging Research on Race and Ethnicity

Edited by Claire Alexander and Malcolm James
Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic Britain

Runnymede is the UK’s leading independent thinktank on race equality and race relations. Through high-quality research and thought leadership, we:

- Identify barriers to race equality and good race relations;
- Provide evidence to support action for social change;
- Influence policy at all levels.

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Our understanding of race and racisms in contemporary Britain needs to be informed by the best evidence and inspired by fresh ideas and approaches. While Runnymede was founded in the 1960s, it has always sought to learn from the most up-to-date research evidence. At the turn of the century, the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (The Parekh Report) sought to not only analyse the current state of race relations in Britain but also propose a strategy for the future. The Commission proposed ways to counter racial discrimination and disadvantage and make Britain confident in its rich diversity. It outlined the future of our society, both in terms of vision and concrete objectives.

Looking back over these past ten years, while there has been progress in both challenging inequalities and promoting diversity in some areas, it is clear that the shape of the challenge has changed and the forms and impact of racisms have changed. Assimilationism and denial of race inequalities are popular in mainstream debate in ways that would have been unthinkable in 2000.

Leadership from our coalition government on equality and multiculturalism has been mixed. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, points to the failure of Britain’s ‘state multiculturalism’ which, he argues, has promoted segregation and diminished national identity. Meanwhile the only minority ethnic member of the Cabinet, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, has warned against the growing legitimacy of Islamophobia which has served to alienate British Muslims. Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, in response to his coalition colleague’s intervention, used language derived from The Parekh Report (‘a community of citizens and a community of communities’) to present a more sympathetic view of multiculturalism.

If we thought that we had reached a settled position on issues of race and racisms in Britain, this internal debate highlights that it is still very much a live, dynamic political issue with serious implications for the lives of British citizens and residents. Learning from new insights and engaging with the work of emerging researchers will put us in a better position collectively to engage in the ongoing debates with fresh and up-to-date evidence and thinking.

This collection has come about through a London School of Economics conference for doctoral students on race, ethnicity and postcolonial studies. The papers in this volume represent these emerging researchers’ views on where their research intersects with contemporary social policy. The papers take into account our current concerns in the way we now think about inequalities – such as highlighting the role of intersectionality – while maintaining a focus on how racial identities and perceived racial difference persist.

Many of the authors of this collection are members of our Runnymede 360 Network. The network aims to bring together leaders in race equality – both aspiring and established – for collective learning, support and action. For the aspiring leader, the network offers routes to make connections with those in positions of leadership. For the established leader, the network offers fresh insight, new directions and voices to current policy and practice. This collection is a reminder of the complexity of race and ethnicity, how inequalities and discrimination persist in contemporary Britain and represents a signal of hope that there is an emerging generation of thinkers ready to confront these challenges.

Rob Berkeley
Director
Runnymede
The past two decades have seen dramatic and significant changes in the racial and ethnic landscape of Britain. Internationally, the increased scale and scope of international migration, the break-up of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the rise of China and India as emergent economic and global superpowers, the resurgence of ethnic nationalisms and new border wars, religious identities, of ‘terrorist’ cyber-networks and Far Right techno-wars, and the decade long War on Terror, have unsettled old patterns of movement and settlement and posed new challenges to our ideas of nationhood, identity and belonging.

At home, these new challenges have been met in complex ways: on the one hand, we have witnessed the institutionalization of Fortress Britain through the increasing securitization of our borders, marked by the hostility towards new ‘strangers’ – asylum seekers and economic migrants – and the erosion of protection for foreign nationals living in the UK. At the same time, and particularly in the decade following the 2001 ‘riots’ and the attacks of September 11, there has been a shift away from idea(l)s of multiculturalism and diversity towards an insistence on citizenship, community cohesion and Britishness, which have targeted long-settled black and minority ethnic communities. Britain’s South Asian Muslim communities have been a specific focus of these discourses and policies, with the rise of Islamophobia at both the centre and extremes of political rhetoric and popular representation. The increased visibility of the Far and Extreme Right, embodied in the (brief) electoral successes of UKIP and the BNP and the street activism of the English Defence League, has catalysed and legitimated increasingly punitive measures against old and new ‘strangers’, with Muslims, asylum seekers and new migrants positioned as the enemies within and without our borders.

On the other hand, the visible and aural super-diversity of some of Britain’s cities, the opening up of Britain’s white hinterlands to new migrant populations, the growth of a mixed race population, and the record number of BME politicians in the Houses of Parliament and Lords, are testament to the indelible transformation of multicultural Britain. BME individuals and communities are at the heart of Britain’s economy, from the multi-billion pound industries of Britain’s richest man, Lakshmi Mittal, to the estimated 85,000 workers employed by the £4bn Indian/Bangladeshi food sector and the 35% non-white staff of England’s National Health Service. Such successes have led some to argue that Britain is now a ‘post-racial society’ (Mirza, 2010), where race and ethnicity are no longer barriers to success and where social class and individual character are now the key determinants of life chances. A recent report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission declared that Britain is ‘now a largely tolerant and open minded society’. At the same time, however, the report pointed to persistent and entrenched racial and ethnic inequalities, and cast Britain as ‘fac[ing] a fresh challenge – the danger of a society divided by barriers of inequality and injustice [Where] for some the gateways to opportunity appear permanently closed’ (EHRC, 2010).

The increasing complexity of race and ethnicity in Britain is reflected in academia, where longstanding concerns with racial and ethnic inequality have been supplemented, and some might argue supplanted, by issues of cultural identity. While racial and ethnic divisions are now recognized as being core issues in many social science and humanities disciplines, we have also seen the splintering of the field, with the emergence of debates around new migrations, religion, asylum, mixed race, whiteness, postcolonial and diaspora theory, as well as a re-engagement with the intersection of race and ethnicity with gender, sexuality and particularly with class.

The current volume reflects the complexity of this contemporary terrain, mapping both the continuities and the changes in our understanding of race and ethnicity, and the challenges to race equality in 21st century Britain. The papers came
out of a London-wide two-day Race, Ethnicity and Postcolonial Studies (REPS) workshop for doctoral students, held in the summer of 2010 in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics. The research showcased here explores a range of key contemporary issues, providing insights from new empirical research that focuses on the changing policy and political climate, key areas of policy intervention (such as education, youth policy and counter-terrorism), emergent identities (including new migrant communities, Muslim identities, diasporic youth identities and white identities), and the tensions between anti-racist and post-racial political mobilization. Although the research is by students at very different stages of their doctoral training, the collection provides insights into the ‘new directions’ of research around race and ethnicity, while retaining a commitment to longstanding concerns with racial justice and equality, to public engagement and social change. The ‘new voices’ we present here both build on the longer history of race research in Britain and take it forward to deal with new issues and new times.

References


A decade ago, the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CFMEB) (2000) called for an urgent collective re-imagining of Britain’s diversity to enable the country to come to terms with its modern, multicultural self and to foster a more inclusive sense of shared belonging. The Commission’s report was in part attempting to identify discourses of the nation that could move beyond narrow forms of Black and minority ethnic (BME) identity politics and exclusionary policy notions of Britishness. In the period since the CFMEB report New Labour policymakers have constructed discourses of Britain positioning BME identity-based organizing as a problem for national collectivity and arguing for a strategy of ‘community cohesion’ to counterbalance the fragmentary effects of multiculturalism. Though still taking form, the Coalition Government’s ‘Big Society’ agenda – with its repeated claim that ‘we are all in this together’ – looks set to continue on from New Labour and assert the ‘national interest’ over particular needs of BME people and Voluntary and Community Organizations (VCOs) working on their behalf.

Now, at the end of the New Labour period and at the beginning of the Con-Lib coalition, my research analyses the discourses of policymakers and BME VCOs about the diverse nation, national belonging and race equality. My research across the New Labour period shows a significant strand of policymaker discourse identifying some BME VCOs as an increasing threat to the ‘national interest’ over particular needs of BME people and Voluntary and Community Organizations (VCOs) working on their behalf. Policymakers and BME VCOs are failing to find common ground on which to meaningfully address race equality, unity and diversity.

From Race Equality to Community Cohesion

In 1995, in opposition, Tony Blair’s discourse of the nation alludes to past racial inequalities and critiques the fragmented nature of Britain:

> Let’s build a new and young country that can lay aside the old prejudices that dominated our land for a generation. A nation for all the people, built by the people, where old divisions are cast out. (cited in McGhee, 2005: 163)

The critique is coupled and balanced with a sense of possibility that the nation could become inclusive, democratic and unified. Once in power New Labour commissioned an Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Leading politicians, such as the then Home Secretary Jack Straw, accepted the Inquiry’s findings of ‘institutional racism’ levelled at the police. The Inquiry report informed the 2000 Race Relations Amendment Act and the Act required public authorities to take a more proactive stance against discrimination and for race equality. This initial part of the New Labour period appears to represent an important but fleeting ‘radical hour’ in ideas of the diverse and inclusive nation-community. Over the course of the New Labour period both the willingness to criticize the condition of the diverse nation and race equality declined and/or was increasingly set in the context of a more integrationist agenda of ‘community cohesion’.
The most obvious cause of this shift in policy discourse was the disturbances in the North of England in the spring and summer of 2001. However, the response to the launch of the CFMEB’s report at the end of 2000 already suggested a shift in policy thinking about the co-existence of BME and national identities. The CFMEB’s (reasonable) assertion that Britishness carried negative racial baggage – was met with particular hostility from politicians and media and the report was labelled ‘unpatriotic’. By the time of the northern disturbances policymakers were primed to interpret these violent events as part of a more concerted threat to Britishness. As a result, instead of the disturbances leading to policy focus on poverty, exclusion and racism the effect was to create ongoing policy discourse on the danger of the organized and separatist activities of BME communities spurred on by unfettered multiculturalism.

The Trouble with BME Communities and BME Organizing

The response by John Denham on behalf of the Government to the independent reports into the violence in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham lays the ground for future policy concerns about BME communities and organizing:

> We recognise that in many areas affected by disorder or community tensions, there is little interchange between members of different racial, cultural and religious communities and that proactive measures will have to be taken to promote dialogue and understanding. We also take on board the need to generate a widespread and open debate about identity, shared values, and common citizenship as part of the process of building cohesive communities. (Home Office, 2001: 3)

Though Denham talks of open ‘debate’ and ‘dialogue’ some aspects of identity and shared values are more open to discussion than others. For example, pertinent issues such as the connections between racism and Britishness and the possibility of solidarities defined beyond the nation are not subject to debate. Instead some BME community activities and organizations are identified as impediments to ‘interchange’ – a theme continued in a Fabian pamphlet written by former Ministers Ruth Kelly and Liam Byrne. They quote Francis Fukuyama on the danger of certain types of active community:

> A highly disciplined, well-organised group sharing common values may be capable of coordinated collective action, and may nonetheless be a social liability…. (cited in Kelly and Byrne, 2007: 10)

There are no direct accusations against BME communities and VCOs as liabilities to the nation as a whole, but the implication is clear. In 2007, the government-appointed Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) takes this discursive strand to its logical conclusion. The CIC (2007) reiterated proposals first mentioned in Ted Cantle’s report on the lessons from Bradford, Burnley and Oldham (Community Cohesion Review Team, 2001) to presume against ‘separate funding of distinct communities’ in order to combat community polarization. Again, the language avoids direct mention of ‘problematic’ groups but the focus is BME VCOs that largely benefit from such funding. Though these proposals have not been enacted this thread in policy discourse of shared belonging leaves BME VCOs in an ambiguous position.

Recent estimates suggest that there are up to 17,000 BME VCOs (Voice4Change England, 2007) and that they provide a range of services such as advocacy and advice on immigration, equal opportunities and anti-racism; as well as health, welfare, housing and education services (McLeod, Owen and Khamis, 2001). The Cantle and CIC reports serve to identify these types of organizations more as part of the problem than solution to reconciling diversity and unity in Britain.

However, there are important exceptions to this problematizing. Some BME-led organisations, such as PeaceMaker in Oldham that works on ‘cross-community’ relations, benefit from funding shaped by community cohesion thinking. At the same time ‘single identity’ organizations such as Southall Black Sisters (SBS) – a resource centre in West London offering support services to Asian and African-Caribbean women experiencing violence and abuse – become vulnerable to funding cuts on the grounds of failing to contribute to or working against ‘equal provision’ and ‘cohesion’. Regardless of their attractiveness to funders, such organizations can also be excluded from the circle of policy influence because their message is deemed fragmentary rather than cohesive.

As a counterpart to what policy discourses of the nation say about BME organizing my research uses document analysis and in-depth interviews to explore how BME VCOs have responded to policymaker discourses about the diverse nation.
One striking preliminary finding suggests that, in the main, BME VCOs working for race equality do not seek, or are not able to tie, this goal to an agenda about collective benefit for society as a whole. This passage from the executive summary of the ‘Black Manifesto’ for the 2005 general election provides an illustration of this:

_Failure of Government action [against racism] will consign at least three or four generations of Black people to second class status and third rate opportunities. The consequences of Black alienation and lack of hope will have repercussions for all of society._ (1990 Trust, 2005: 3)

This call for racial equality (fairly) suggests that there may be a widespread cost to society attached to ‘Black alienation’. It is interesting to contrast this discursive frame with the approach in the Black Manifesto of 2010. This tries to locate race equality within a broader, national context. Race equality is given equivalent status to other great British achievements, e.g. democracy, human rights and the National Health Service. At the same time there is also a reminder that Britain’s journey as a ‘modern, progressive, inclusive society’ (Equanomics, 2010: 2) is not yet complete. The implication in the 2010 Black Manifesto is that race equality offers a society-wide benefit and a feel-good factor. This is a subtle and important difference and perhaps indicates a shift that is occurring amongst BME VCOs to positively connect BME identity and interests with discourses of and progress for the national collective.

**Conclusion: Towards a Bigger and Better Society?**

As the New Labour period fades into memory the Big Society appears to be the new framework for policymaking and voluntary and community organizing. There are discontinuities in this political changeover – notably on the size of public funding – but there are continuities too. For example national interest is clearly being asserted over BME or other ‘sub-identity’ claims. As the state pulls back there will be new opportunities for VCOs to deliver services, e.g. in the arenas of criminal justice and social care, and money will follow. However, core funding for campaigning, advocacy and re-imagining society will decrease. This is likely to further sideline BME VCOs working for race equality and specific BME needs. In these circumstances it is imperative that BME VCOs work with each other and with White-led counterparts to change discourses about diversity in Britain and to make greater race equality a collective goal. This kind of movement is essential to support the co-existence of diversity and unity in society and to enable BME VCOs to play their part in re-imagining what Britain is and could be and to ensure that the Big Society is a better society.

**References**

In the run up to the General Election in 2010, David Cameron paraded Brooke Kinsella (girl-next-door, celebrity and sister of the late Ben) through the streets. Providing a spotlight for the Conservatives’ youth crime campaign, Brooke spoke of Ben’s precious life and the precious lives of others lost to knife crime that year. She put her faith in the Conservatives’ pledge to make our streets safer. ‘I do think David Cameron and the Conservatives will do this’, she said as Cameron pledged to prosecute all young men with knives. The message was clear – the rights of some young people were conditional on the stereotyping and abandoning of others. ‘Real fears’ were paramount.

Responding to ‘real fears’ as social facts is one of the hallmarks of contemporary public policy. However, ‘real fears’ are not real life although they often claim to be representative of it. ‘Real fears’ are the product of racism and pernicious stereotypes often directed against young people. While they do not accurately reflect the everyday life of young people, the belief in ‘real fears’ does impact on young people. In this paper, as in aspects of my PhD research, I take a brief look at what this belief in ‘real fears’ means for young people in East London.

2. Young People, Real Fears and the Potential of Everyday Life
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Real Fears, Racism and Public Policy

When David Cameron resurrected the association between inner-city youth and urban and societal decay, he was hardly original. Working class inner-city young people have long been considered the embodiment of immorality. And this immorality has long been associated with the dangers of immigration and ethnic diversity. For the last 30 years, these sentiments have been overwhelmingly directed at ‘second generation’ black young men. Although more recent concerns over Asians, Muslims, Somalis, Albanians, ‘Eastern Europeans’ and the white ‘working class’ have confused the colour coding of public panic in the inner-city, racism continues to operate. It defines who we should be scared of and inversely who is good and moral. Through the fear that racialized young people embody, middle England knows what is right and good. Through defining who is socially unacceptable the moral majority defines itself.

In response to these young people, a plethora of public policy has been developed to bring youth to account. In the New Labour years, these policies were frequently justified by the need to address the ‘real fears’ of the good, hardworking majority. Policies on anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, immigration and crime were all justified in part through the need to address the ‘real fears’ young people presented to the ‘British way of life’. However, if the intention of policies was to eliminate the youth scourge, they failed. These policies in fact had the opposite effect. The response to ‘real fears’ created more hype and justified further action against young people. This is evident in the progression of debates on immigration and youth justice. From 1997, rising public concern over immigration, and therefore young people considered to be un-British, was in large part due to Government responses to scares associated with immigration and asylum. At a local level too, anti-social behaviour became a more potent political issue only after authorities had taken action against it. In both cases, the very act of responding to ‘real fears’ made them legitimate.

The self-perpetuating nature of these cycles meant they were little concerned with the everyday life of young people. As ‘real fears’ garnered weight, how young people lived ceased to be important. Factors such as unemployment, poor education and structural racism were conveniently pushed aside. Practices such as racial profiling, stop and search, the surveillance of dangerous young people, school exclusion and police harassment were justified. These sensationalist responses to ‘real fears’ further marginalized the young people they targeted. In addition, they diverted funding away from mainstream provision for young people to ‘problem youth’. Ironically, this diversion of funding inevitably left ‘mainstream’ young people without the support they needed to prevent themselves falling into ‘problem youth’ categories.
Real Fears and Everyday Life at Leeside Youth Club

The impact of these policies became increasingly evident over the two years I spent conducting ethnographic research in three East London youth clubs. However, it was also evident that the young people I knew were not reducible to these stereotypes, and although they were certainly no angels, the complexities of who they were and what they did was often overlooked in the name of ‘real fears’.

The disjuncture between ‘real fears’ and everyday life was first spelt out to me in the summer of 2008 by Jon Travis, an experienced East London youth worker.1 Jon explained to me that contrary to expectations, the anxieties associated with high levels of young people, immigration and transient populations had not resulted in instability in the borough. Although the borough ticked all David Cameron’s boxes, predictions of the breakdown of society had not actually transpired. ‘But’, he said, ‘if you were to ask me why, I’m not sure I could say’. Jon was telling me that ‘real fears’ didn’t explain the way that people in the borough got along on an everyday level. Immigration, transience, ‘super-diversity’ and high proportions of young people and poverty didn’t naturally correlate with instability, chaos, anti-social behaviour and violence. Conviviality had a hand in making life function (Gilroy, 2004). The longer I worked at Leeside youth club, the more these tensions between a belief in ‘real fears’ and the practices of everyday life became apparent.

Built at the end of the post-WWII adventure playground movement, Leeside youth club’s original wooden frames were burnt down years later. No one was quite sure how it had happened but it had become part of Leeside folklore. Youth workers and some young people portrayed it as the wilful and considered act of a malicious and anti-social group of young people. This was the dominant version of events. In the winter of 2009, the replacement adventure playground was erected at considerable cost and the threat of attack again seemed possible. These ‘real fears’ led to closer relationships with the police. This relationship was not straightforward and was characterized as much by the obstacles that young people and youth workers erected to police profiling as it was by cooperation with the police. Nonetheless, the police presence was officially justified as protection in return for ‘community liaison’. As this relationship developed, visits from the police became more frequent. Outside the gate young people were arrested for dissenting against the police presence. Inside the gates, whilst drinking tea, the police conducted their surveillance. Little Georgie didn’t know that he was giving the game away. As he climbed nimbly in and out of the playground’s smaller apertures the police indentified who might have been responsible for a spate of local burglaries. ‘Real fears’ had real consequences.

The neat rationales that had led to the police presence were not borne out in the ambiguities that surrounded the arson attack on the original youth club. And as young people were criminalized this omission seemed increasingly important. As Kylie, one of the young people, pointed out, wasn’t it just an accident, a shelter on a Saturday night, and then a fag, and then some booze and then a lighter, and then… ‘It’s just common knowledge, ain’t it?’, she said. Kylie understood the occurrences of that night as banal and unintentional rather than malicious and willful but no one listened to Kylie. Some common knowledge was more potent than others.

The same rationalities had also led to an imagined profile for the young people responsible for the original attacks and for potential future attacks. As with David Cameron’s condemned youth, these imagined young people were portrayed in the simplistic and emotive terms of moral decay and potential chaos. But again, such neat lines of exclusion were not so easy to draw. There was simply no one that completely fitted the image that was being drawn up. As Kevin, one of the young people, pointed out: friendship groups fluctuated, young people were friends one day and not the next, and in that area, everyone seemed to know everyone, even if not directly friends with them that week. And at any rate, Kevin said, ‘everyone has good cop, bad cop’, right? Kevin was saying that inclusions and exclusions were made and broken so frequently that deducing the young people responsible for original and future attacks from their generalized immoral description would never be possible.

Conclusion

The point was that the generation of ‘real fears’ associated with imagined young people did not relate to the everyday lives of young people at Leeside. That was because the spectral

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1 All names of people, places and the youth club are fictitious.
youth that haunts the way that we speak and act against young people is imagined and fictitious. Nonetheless, as the police looked for the perpetrators of a wilful and malicious arson attack they failed to understand the more banal development of events that caused the accidental burning of the adventure playground that night. Based on their misunderstanding of the original attack they imagined and profiled young people that might be involved in a future attack. This way of thinking and acting had real consequences for the young people I worked with. Through an over-attendance to ‘real fears’ they were being criminalized.

From David Cameron’s ‘Broken Britain’ to the local police, ‘real fears’ are self-fulfilling. They justify the active marginalization of some young people for the good of the moral majority. This way of thinking and acting must be recognized not as a way of responding to the legitimate concerns of the hard working majority, but as a means of excluding already marginalized young people for the benefit of those who constitute the moral majority. As the cuts bite and Conservative rhetoric on the Big Society continues we should expect to see an increased scapegoating of marginalized young people. We should expect to see ‘real fears’ being championed where structural disadvantage should be addressed. At such times we should remember, that ‘real fears’ are not real life. ‘Real fears’ simply blame the victim and absolve the government, and society, of its responsibilities to address structural racism, the unequal distribution of wealth and the pernicious use of police powers.

Reference

My research explores how local and central government officials interpret, negotiate, translate, and re-inflect the meanings, intentions and expectations of community cohesion policy. It considers how the terms of this policy debate create limitations, but also opportunities to address inequalities based on race, class, gender and other identities. Exploring how individuals understand and practise policy helps to explain how and why government policy operates in the ways it does – as well as how it might be possible to change this.

‘Community cohesion’ became a commonly-used phrase in UK local and national government following civil disturbances in several northern English towns in the summer of 2001. Official inquiries into the disturbances found numerous causes including histories of racialized housing allocations, unemployment linked to the de-industrialization of the north of England, and populations choosing to live in ethnically-defined areas. They attempted to capture these issues in the term ‘community cohesion’, suggesting that improving relationships within and between communities would prevent such disturbances occurring again. The Local Government Association and a number of partner organizations provided the following working definition of community cohesion:

Community cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion. The broad working definition is that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

(Local Government Association, 2002)

Since 2001, community cohesion has been redefined and re-interpreted several times. Analysis of the 2001 events saw them as a problem of divisions between ‘Asian’ and ‘white’ communities, with relationships between older and younger generations particularly problematic. Since then, the ‘war on terror’ has shifted this focus to a concentration on ‘Muslim communities’, and the increased electoral presence of the British National Party has been linked in policy and media discourses to the disenfranchisement of ‘the white working class’. Increased immigration from new EU countries has been seen as a potential strain on community cohesion, belonging, fairness and ‘shared values’, as has the global economic downturn. But ‘community cohesion’ itself has turned out not to be just a passing policy phrase. It has become institutionalized through numerous government reports: a statutory duty for schools to promote community cohesion; national targets on community cohesion for local authorities; central government units and local government posts devoted to it; even an Institute of Community Cohesion which provides Masters degrees in the subject.

Despite all this work to define and promote it, the meaning of community cohesion remains somewhat fuzzy. The majority of the academic literature can be divided into two broad positions. The first takes a practical approach, establishing theoretical foundations for the concept and methods for its practice, and evaluating outcomes of community cohesion projects (e.g. Cantle, 2005; Hussain, 2007). The second position is more critical, examining contradictions within the policy literature, echoes of previous policy problems and proposed solutions, and problems with the way that community cohesion policies imagine the world (e.g. Cheong et al., 2007; McGhee, 2003).

My research takes a different approach, by considering how policy practitioners negotiate the difficulties of understanding and using community cohesion policy in their work. Having previously worked in a policy role in a local authority, I was aware that people in government organizations do not simply take policy documents at face value. They are tools which individuals and organizations interpret in various ways. They often contain...
contradictions and complexities which are not spelt out; they are often intended to allow consensus and compromise. My research considers how the ideas at the centre of community cohesion policy – community, identity, belonging, difference and equality – are negotiated by policy officers and politicians. I explore whether ‘difficult subjects’ (such as racism, and its interaction with class inequality) become more or less speakable in this context, and what practices influence this.

The research drew on my own experience as a starting point, but the majority of my data comes from a large number of qualitative interviews with senior policy officers and politicians in local authorities, and in organizations that work with local authorities at a local and national level. Most of the interviews were in Hackney in east London, but as the fieldwork developed it became clear that an important theme of how people re-interpret and understand community cohesion is in relation to local place and its reputation. Not only did people in Hackney feel that its identity was misrepresented outside the area, but they also used other specific places to help them to narrate their understandings of community cohesion policy. As a result, I conducted further interviews not just with national policy practitioners, but also in Oldham, Peterborough and Barking and Dagenham, places that were described (in different ways) as representative of particular types of ‘cohesion problem’.

Policy professionals often talked indirectly about cohesion (or lack of it), by talking about different places, times, forms of inequality, or themselves:

- Place: Certain ‘elsewheres’ come to represent ‘ideal types’ of cohesion both in official documents and everyday talk. In my interviews in Hackney, inner London was identified as comfortably diverse; Barking and Dagenham as a place of ‘white working class’ resentment; Oldham as a site of ethnic segregation; Peterborough as a place struggling to cope with economic migration for the first time. Within each of these places, local practitioners critiqued outsiders’ stereotyped views of their own locality, but used similar symbolism to distinguish their place from others.

- Time and space: Interviewees often framed conflicts about class, community, regeneration and gentrification as oppositions between nostalgia and progress; or between global capital and local authenticity. For example, the increasing presence of privately-owned or -rented flats inhabited by young professionals was described sometimes as inevitable progress towards the future, or as a loss of an idealized past seen as more authentically ‘local’.

- Inequalities and differences: Interviewees linked community cohesion to racism, terrorism, class division, cultural difference, family life and gender dynamics. But they often found these issues difficult to confront directly, for example, some used the term ‘middle class’ to mean ‘white’ (and middle class); or talked about the ‘white working class’ but not about ‘working class’ as a broader group or interest; others referred to cultural differences in attitudes to gender without always considering gender itself as a concern for community cohesion policy.

- Selves: Though interviewed in their professional capacity, many interviewees discussed cohesion with reference to their own identities, experiences or intimate relationships, perhaps to suggest a more ‘authentic’ understanding than they might have through their professional status. For example, people emphasized that they understood discrimination and inequalities because they had experienced homophobia; or because they had grown up in a poor family; or because they or someone close to them had experienced racism. Many noted that in their current professional position, they might not expect community cohesion to apply to them – but that outside the office, perhaps it did.

These findings suggest it is difficult to talk directly about community cohesion and the questions at its heart – of identity, belonging, difference and power. Many people find it difficult to articulate a political position when employed as a politically-neutral bureaucrat. They also struggle with how to do this without taking away the voice of the oppressed by speaking for them. There still seems to be a lingering fear of causing offence which carries echoes of the bruising debates about anti-racist programmes in 1980s local government. For example, Ruth, a ‘white middle class person’ herself, suggested:

'It's more comfortable, if you're a white middle class person, talking about cohesion... whereas if you're... talking about race equality and race justice, it's much more obvious that you're not on the receiving end of injustice and race hate... so your ability to talk about those issues is questionable.'
My research helps us to understand how community cohesion policy is used within government despite the many contradictions and confusions within it, which have been pointed out elsewhere in the critical literature. By looking at ways that people within government translate, interpret and negotiate the difficult subjects at the heart of community cohesion debates – including their own personal disagreements with aspects of the policy itself – my research helps us to understand how government and policy actually works, and thus how we might change it. As well as looking at official documents, we need to think more about how individuals, their feelings, ideas, relationships and political and ethical commitments – both as professionals and as private individuals – produce and use those official documents.

In terms of advancing race equality, such an approach helps us to understand why (sometimes problematic) policies are created and enacted. Changing the language of the debate can change the ways we think about it, but it does not necessarily erase the power of memories or histories of conflict, any more than language in itself can remove inequalities of power, wealth and respect. In some ways the language of community cohesion provides opportunities to avoid confronting these difficult questions, but my research shows that it can equally be used to challenge them.

References


SECTION II: CONTESTING MUSLIMS

4. (Dis)locating Muslims in Britain Today
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The figure of ‘the Muslim’ has emerged as the key problem category on Britain’s racial and ethnic landscape. A number of events, beginning with the ‘Rushdie Affair’ in the late-1980s through the ‘northern riots’ in 2001 and then the attacks on the twin towers and London bombings have fuelled the emergence of discourses around the ‘Muslim community’ as a ‘fifth column’ or as the new ‘folk devils’. This discourse is usually popularized by highly gendered images of angry, bearded men and obscure, shrouded women set against the familiar urban backdrops of Finsbury Park or inner-city Bradford – giving a sense of the phenomena as something immediate and present day. However, the experiences of the ‘Muslim community’ also reflect older discourses about racialized minorities in the UK and are shaped by the local profiles and histories of Muslims across Britain today.

The introduction of the religion question in the 2001 Census made it possible to map Muslim presence in the UK along with trends in age, gender, geography, education, employment and housing. Recent estimates put Britain’s Muslim population at 2m – around 3.3% of the total UK population – of which around half live in London and with the majority of the rest being concentrated in the Midlands and the north of England (Travis, 2008). In demographic terms, Muslims can be mapped on to areas of Pakistani and Bangladeshi settlement in the UK. Thus, many policy and academic discussions about disaffected youth, oppressed women and religious extremism tend to reduce Muslims to the socioeconomic and demographic conditions of their corresponding ethnic groups; similar to the way earlier ‘community studies’ about ‘blacks’ and Asians tended to reduce them to essentialisms about family, culture and crime. The figure of ‘the Muslim’ has also been imbricated in recent debates on liberal multiculturalism, faith schools, preventing violent extremism and the role of women (and what they wear) in public. At the same time we have witnessed the emergence of right wing activities couched in new language – Islamophobia – and the enveloping effects of the ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis, prompting analyses that suggest we are in a new moment with regards to pluralistic identities in the UK.

The topic of ‘Muslim identity’, then, sits uneasily in the tradition of theorizing about ‘race’ and ethnicity. On the one hand much of the discussion, particularly in the arena of policy, tends to locate the figure of the Muslim in terms of essential characteristics derived from socio-economic and demographic facts. While on the other hand, in more popular discourses, ‘Muslim identity’ is subjected to a synchronic analysis in relation to dominant discourses about ‘the end of multiculturalism’, securitization, ‘parallel lives’ and ‘good versus evil’ – giving the impression of more amorphous Muslim identities. Both these approaches are challenged by articulations of Muslim identity in local spaces.

The Local Shape of Things

My research focuses on a number of spaces in the city of Birmingham to consider what role these might play in the processes of identity construction in the lives of the city’s Muslims. Birmingham has had an important place in discussions about racial and ethnic relations ever since post-war immigration to the UK. Earlier discussions about discrimination (Rex and Moore, 1967), community and political organization (Solomos and Back, 1995) and urban unrest (Benyon and Solomos, 1987) have pervaded impressions about black and minority ethnic life in multicultural Britain. Today, Birmingham has the largest number of Muslims of any UK local authority (approx 14% of the city’s one million population) and has been at the forefront of much popular and policy attention.
relating to this group in recent years. This past and present is shaping a distinct new settlement in which histories and patterns of earlier ‘black’ and Asian settlement intersect with contemporary realities to produce unique articulations of a local Muslim identity.

Through depth interviews and participant observation I am discovering the complexity of identities and the role particular spaces play in the way people articulate their Muslim identity. One of the spaces where I have been interviewing people and observing events is an ‘art gallery’ run by local Muslims in the inner city. This unique space hosts events and performances across a range of art forms including music, graffiti, poetry, fashion and a ‘speakers corner’. Amidst the varying events schedule, two Muslim women are consistently present running a stall selling freshly cooked ‘cup cakes’. These women have become synonymous with the art gallery events; attracting their own following. Their stories reveal the complexities of Muslim female identity today.

Other happenings suggest how Muslims cannot be pinned down in the way that earlier racialized communities were in terms of their socio-economic conditions alone. Nor can their presence be mapped according to patterns of settlement, segregation, crime and community. Instead, more discreet happenings, symbols and spaces work to organize a local form of Muslim subjecthood that defies much popular, policy and academic characterizations of marginal, gendered and politicized identity. Take, for example, the recent scandal about ‘spy’ cameras in predominantly ‘Muslim neighbourhoods’ in the City. This episode was another in the history of altercations between local ‘black’ and Asian communities and the police, while also about targeting a racialized community in new and not so new ways. A sophisticated web of overt and covert cameras were positioned as rings around two predominantly Asian areas in the inner city. One of these, Sparkbrook, was the focus of early studies about race and racialization in the UK (Rex and Moore, 1967), informing much of the impression of Asian life in the area. For the authorities this represented how and where Muslim identity is inhabited. However, for young Muslims the camera zones became parts of the city they actively worked to by-pass in their daily routines. The attempt to fix a spotlight on ‘the Muslim’ was hotly resisted through rejection of these zones, while other spaces, not seen as marked as Muslim/Asian areas were legitimized though presence.

Such local scenarios help to challenge mappings of the ‘figure of the Muslim’ and the ‘Muslim community’ that have permeated public and policy discourses over the past decade. In the examples above local Muslims subverted dominant narratives about ‘Muslim women’, the ‘Muslim community’ and the threat of religious extremism. They challenged official mappings and assumptions about the way Muslim identity is inhabited in inner city Birmingham. Old associations of ‘Asians’ with Sparkbrook that are mapped onto Muslims in those areas were disrupted by the movement and networks of Muslims that organized a unique conception of Muslim subjecthood in and beyond a racialized space.

It is not sufficient to read off Muslim identity from the socio-economic conditions of their corresponding ethnic groups, as has been the case in much policy focused discussions. Yet at the same time the category ‘Muslim’ is not a wholly new one born from recent sensational events. An ethnographic approach with a focus on everyday happenings and the local spaces in which they unfold can help illuminate how young Muslims position themselves in relation to the frames of gender, ‘race’, ethnicity, citizenship, etc. that are seen as determining ‘Muslim identity’. Such an approach, while offering a new way of conceptualizing identity, can also help further debates about difference and its accommodation in an increasingly precarious, ‘post-multicultural’ and ‘post-secular’ world.

References


Feminism… is hailed as the ultimate weapon of the British middle class hegemony and is at its most pernicious one where Muslim women are concerned. (Afshar, 1994: 145).

The UK’s counter-terrorism agenda has had a profound effect on the UK policy landscape. The 2005 London bombings prompted a broad range of policy responses from the New Labour government in its ‘War on Terror’. One of these was the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda (or ‘Prevent’). Prevent’s specific focus was on ‘stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists’ (HM Government, 2008). Local authorities and the police were granted funding to work with local communities in order ‘to build resilience’ against extremism. One of the things they were encouraged to do, according to a ‘Whitehall source’, was to give ‘the silent majority a stronger voice in their communities’ (Winnett, 2008). Women and young people were specifically mentioned and nationally two government advisory boards were established: the National Muslim Women’s Advisory Group (NMWAG) and the Young Muslims Advisory Group (YMAG).

The Prevent agenda was widely criticized for ‘demonizing’ Muslim communities and suggesting that all Muslims were potentially terrorists. I analyse this process of demonization through the lens of gender by analysing policy documents, political speeches and parliamentary debates alongside in-depth interviews with key policy actors. It situates initiatives and projects funded through Prevent within broader debates on Britishness, community cohesion and multiculturalism and alongside other policy debates associated with Muslim women.

I focus on some of the projects which were locally funded (ranging from arts’ groups to drop-in centres) as well as the work of NMWAG which oversaw a number of initiatives to ‘empower Muslim women’ at a national level. These included a role modelling project to raise the aspirations of Muslim girls as well as initiatives on theological interpretation, and increasing Muslim women’s civic participation.

I analyse the role of social policy in articulating anti-Muslim racist discourses by focusing on the way in which Muslim women are portrayed in social policy. Muslim women are simplistically seen only in relation to patriarchy in their ‘communities’ whereas other factors, such as class, ethnicity, citizenship status, region, as well as patriarchy and racism in wider society, which might also influence Muslim women’s position in society, are ignored. I challenge these homogenous and stereotyped understandings of the relationship between gender and Islam which are widely circulated even in the more liberal broadsheets. This study builds on earlier work about the place of minority women in British society, fighting racism, patriarchy and social inequality, and analyses contemporary policy discussions on multiculturalism and Britishness through the lens of gender and against the background of the War on Terror.

En-gendering Britishness

The association between initiatives to ‘empower Muslim women’ and Prevent is not immediately obvious. Instead, it is only intelligible through an understanding of a wider policy trajectory in which an imagined, essentialized Muslim community is pathologized. The Prevent agenda is heavily inflected with debates on Britishness and the alleged failures of ‘multiculturalism’. In such debates, Muslims are portrayed as threats to ‘our way of life’. The moral panic about Muslims, following urban unrest in northern towns in 2001 and the events of 9/11 and 7/7, has resulted in Muslims being constructed as the internal ‘Other’. The 7/7 attacks were deemed to be particularly shocking as the perpetrators were British born. Clear links have been made between those attacks and the presence of religious and ethnic diversity in Britain. In a 2006 speech on ‘The Future of Britishness’, Gordon Brown explained that because the perpetrators were ‘home-grown’; ‘this must lead us to ask how successful we have been in balancing the need for diversity with the obvious requirements of integration in our society’.

Tony Blair, too, attributed ‘home-grown’ terrorism to the failures of multiculturalism suggesting that, although:

We like our diversity... how do we react when that ‘difference’ leads to separation and alienation from the values that define what we hold in common?...
there is an unease... that our very openness,... our pride in being home to many cultures, is being used against us; abused, indeed, in order to harm us.

Such discourses are imbued with a powerful host/guest metaphor which has historically characterized UK immigration and race relations policy. Despite efforts by the progressive left to reclaim nationalism and patriotism, British nationality remains uniquely stamped by its association with its imperialist past, relying heavily on processes of exclusion and inclusion. These processes of exclusion and inclusion are clearly racialized, but they are also gendered. Muslim women and men are portrayed as threats to ‘our way of life’ differently. Whilst Muslim men are regarded as dangerous for their radical ideologies and their potential for political violence arising from disaffection, the Muslim woman, by contrast, has come to symbolize the dangerous consequences of ‘too much multiculturalism’. In parallel policy discussions, for example, the issues of forced marriage and honour related violence have become particularized to Muslim communities alone.

The ‘Imperilled Muslim Woman’

Although social problems have become erroneously associated with particular communities (knife crime and the African Caribbean community), the role of women in combating such crimes is not referred to explicitly. The association between empowerment and Muslim women, however, has a common sense appeal because of two primary factors. Firstly, the majority of Muslims in the UK are of South Asian origin and popular and longstanding stereotypes about South Asian women being submissive and in need of rescue abound (for example, the strategic use of sati or widow burning to justify imperialism in India). Secondly, there is a widespread presumption that women’s rights and Islam are always antithetical. The position of Muslim women in countries such as Iran and Afghanistan is extrapolated to all Muslim women around the world irrespective of geo-political and socio-historical specificities. In the UK, therefore, Muslim women’s religious affiliation alone, rather than their status in wider UK society (by virtue of their ethnicity, class, geographic location, citizenship status) is considered responsible for any marginalization in society. And by extension, it is only Muslim men who are patriarchal thus stereotyping Muslim men. I consider the political value of such stereotypes in the context of a wider counter terrorism agenda.

This process of pathologizing Muslim communities can be demonstrated in the conflation of different policy concerns. For example, policy texts on Prevent also refer to what are described as ‘cultural practices’ such as forced marriage and female genital cutting and gendered violence and homophobia. By drawing attention to these references I want to be clear that my research is not about defending cultural relativism, i.e. that it is alright for Muslims to do something because it is their ‘culture’. Nor am I trying to suggest that it is racist to draw attention to the issues that some Muslim (and non-Muslim) women face. My objective is to draw attention to the complicated ways that contemporary forms of cultural racism arise in particular historical contexts; my concern is that misogyny is generalized to all Muslim men and consequently, all Muslim women are seen as victims of their ‘culture’ (whereas by contrast, gendered violence, for example, against non-minority women is never explicitly attributed to ‘culture’).

Conclusion

I argue that New Labour’s social policy discourses around community cohesion and Britishness are gendered and discursively produce cultural racism. Within dominant nationalist discourses in the UK, the assumed generalized inferior position of Muslim women, a position attributable solely to the patriarchy of Muslim men, is presented as evidence of the presence of an inassimilable Other. Within that Other, Muslim women are portrayed as in need of rescue and empowerment. As well as perpetuating anti-Muslim racist stereotypes, such policy discourses, focused on religious affiliation alone, also obscure continuities with earlier racisms as well as other axes of social division in society, such as class. The consequences of framing social problems with reference to religion alone and perpetuating dehumanizing stereotypes of the ‘oppressed Muslim woman’ will have negative effects on the very women that such initiatives purport to assist. This may be through increasing incidents of racial violence, as evidenced in Europe with incidents of ‘burka rage’ or through increasing discrimination in employment.

References


SECTION III: CREATING DIASTORA SPACES


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Introduction

The space of Club 49 in the West End on a Wednesday night is temporarily transformed into a South Asian hip hop night in which the artists, producers and fans stake out a space in this club. The music on rotation includes hip hop chart music as well as the ‘hybrid’ sounds of bhangra and Bollywood beats and instrumentals fused with ‘urban’ beats of hip hop and R&B. The use of Asian instrumentation, including the tabla, sitar, and dhol drum, are common. On these nights young people come together in different way that are surprising and challenge our assumptions about living with difference in ways that we imagine and assume is the ‘right’ kind. The scene and the convivial encounters at these club nights present a challenge to those who consider multiculture as having failed in Britain (Gilroy, 2004). This sense of failure is often based on monolithic conceptions of Britishness and limited understandings of how people construct and practise belonging. In the current climate, broader understandings of Asian and minority youth have often been understood through this myopic lens. The everyday conviviality of these club nights disrupt these narrow relationships between difference, culture and nation.

Wandering back upstairs I think about how this night defies the often negative representations of Asian youth as ‘dangerous’, fundamentally ‘alien’, portrayed as belonging to a culture incompatible with Western values. It also challenges the opposite perception of Asians as the ‘model minority’. Both sets of representations rest upon the assumption that Asian cultures are hermetically sealed, impenetrable and mysterious bounded formations. These perceptions of Asian cultures have formed the basis for the ways in which certain Asian youth have become seen as a ‘significant ‘problem’ in the UK especially since the 2001 riots, and the image of the dangerous Asian male figure becoming sharper still after 9/11 and 7/7 (Alexander, 2000, 2004). These views undergird the arguments made by policymakers that Britain’s minority groups were living parallel lives in geographical spaces marked off by ethnicity. Yet these Asian club nights illustrate how the fears of Britain’s minorities living ‘parallel lives’ are largely exaggerated. Rather than being homogenously inhabited, such geographic spaces contain and perform complex multicultures that cut across space and ethnicities. Therefore, views on the actual lived experiences of multiculturalism as manifested within these club nights defy dominant perceptions of the ‘other’ as separate, segregated and alien and impossibly different.

British Asian Cultural Production – Bhangra and Beyond

South Asian diasporic popular music in Britain contains a rich history that reflects the diverse migratory routes of the South Asian diaspora. The first wave of British South Asian diasporic music production emerged out of the bhangra scene in the 1980s. Bhangra nights at clubs became popular along with the often spoken about live ‘daytimer’ gigs. Towards the early 1990s, a new generation of bhangra remix artists came onto the scene who were interested in fusing the dhol beats and sampling vocals with hip hop, reggae and R&B styles of music (Dudrah, 2007).

Previous academic work such as in Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma’s (1996) Dis-Orienting Rhythms focused on South Asian cultural production within a British context. This included work on the 1990s Asian bands known as the ‘Asian Underground’. Much lauded for its ‘hybrid’ sounds and a
the virtual spaces of the Internet. Further, the ‘desi’ scene explicitly draws from the global, migrating syncretic sounds of hip hop and R&B and often makes explicit connections between a ‘desi’ set of experiences and specifically African American histories in the US against racial discrimination and economic hardships. Therefore, the connections that are being made and sustained show us that the scene is both highly local and specific and is also globally oriented, establishing connections outside of nation-state boundaries.

Moreover, the ‘desi’ scene speaks from many different political locations. This confounds the notion of youth cultures as providing oppositional forms of resistance against a ‘mainstream’. The explicit references to US based hip hop suggests the conscious practice of developing shared diasporic outlooks or experiences. Yet it also signals how commercialized hip hop gets consumed as a globalized form of popular culture. In this sense, the contemporary Asian urban music scene embraces the materialism often celebrated in hip hop. Unlike many of the earlier ‘Asian Underground’ bands that claimed a subaltern status and oppositional politics, the emergence of this mainly middle class Asian music scene has precipitated a change in how identity politics is enacted. Practices of consumption have eroded the notion that identity determines a kind of politics. The Asian ‘desi’ scene has carved out a new space in an attempt to bring Asian cultural production towards the mainstream and shift its politics and position away from the margins.

Thus, forms of South Asian popular music articulate the polyvalent Asian diasporic voices through the different kinds of claims and ‘place making’ and challenge the narrow perceptions of Asian identities as either culture or nation bound. These artists continue to offer up radically different versions of diasporic musical forms that light up different paths to how culture ‘travels’ and how diasporic identities are made and re-made within London’s everyday multicultural landscape. This music scene and other forms of cultural production are access points into convivial practices of everyday multiculture (Gilroy, 2004).

Further, these everyday forms of multiculture often become overshadowed by ‘official’ policy and media perspectives on multiculture. Yet these ordinary interactions often demonstrate the complexities as well as the banalities of these interactions which point to how multiculturalism is actually lived out. Thus a closer examination of the

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\text{vehicle for the expression of ‘radical’ identities, many of the bands of the Asian Underground articulated a celebratory globalized ‘outernational consciousness’ of diasporic connections that went ‘beyond skin’ in the words of Nitin Sawhney within this new electronic music scene. Highlighting these connections also acted to centre existing notions about Britishness. Many of the groups within the Asian Underground were engaged in a cultural politics that set out to challenge dominant conceptions of ‘Asianness’ and ideas about difference. These groups opened up a space for the expression of alternative ways of being Asian and British beyond the hegemonic categories available.}
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Asian music and cultural production has expanded, diversified, extending across a broad range of genres and styles since the days of the Asian Underground. My ethnographic work focuses on contemporary South Asian urban cultural production that emphasizes the significance of the everydayness of these Asian music spaces. I conducted a 15-month ethnographic study of participant observation and interviews in which my main field sites were located through three Asian club nights in East, West and Central London. An exploration of the Asian urban scene through ethnography opens up discussions of how young Asians within this scene negotiate their positioning of ‘race’, class and gender and deal with contemporary forms of racism, stereotyping and Islamophobia. I focus on this scene to highlight the importance of Asian cultural production to British popular culture and towards the expansion of notions of belonging and multiculture. New identities are produced through the connections made below and beyond the level of the nation-state.

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\text{‘Desi’ and Re-imagining Asianness}
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The use of the term ‘desi’ which originates from the word ‘desh’ to mean ‘of the homeland’ is a term used to connote someone of the South Asian diaspora. The appropriation of the term ‘desi’ to describe contemporary British Asian musical formations gestures toward a more trans-Atlantic South Asian youth culture from cities such as New York, Toronto and Delhi, thus working within an ‘outernational’ frame of connections (Gilroy, 2004). So, while the desi urban music scene is locally ‘placed’ within London, especially West London, it also envisions and takes up a much wider space that includes other cities, nations and
South Asian urban music scene offers new insights into the lived experience of identity, community and ethnicity, alerting us to the gap that exists between official discourses on multiculture and the everyday practice of ‘race’, culture and cohesion.

**Conclusion**

Drawing attention to new South Asian spaces and places of belonging, community and identity throughout the city brings a fresh perspective on how and why people come together that reaffirms the continuing existence of conviviality apparent in everyday urban multiculture. The production of these spaces challenge how discourses on ‘race’ and culture are often constructed as stable, fixed identities often tied to space and place. Everyday practices of multiculture in and through space show us that people are indeed constrained by discourses and structures of inequality but that they also live beyond these discourses and are not determined by them.

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Scholars have claimed that the character of migration and ethnic diversity in the UK, and particularly in London, is changing. According to Vertovec (2007), the increasing arrival of newcomers is developing a ‘super-diversity’ context in which migrants and their communities are socio-economically, territorially and legally differentiated, with smaller and more scattered flows and forms of incorporation. Latin Americans are one of the fastest growing groups. Among them, those newcomers that form the largest groups (i.e. Brazilians and Colombians) have had more attention from social researchers than long-settled smaller migrant groups (e.g. Chileans, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Bolivians, etc.) that have remained relatively unexplored. Emphasizing the notion of ‘counting’, I want, paradoxically, to claim that small long-settled Latin American migrant groups matter because of their qualitative significance. Specifically, through the case of the Chilean Diaspora, I will claim that looking at less populous migrant groups can help us understand new terrains of belonging in consideration of Britain’s increasingly intricate ‘diversity’. This poses new challenges and questions for the social sciences as well as for policy research in these fields.

Chileans in the UK: Context and Further Research

Long-settled Latin-American migrants made their way to the UK mainly during the 1970s in the context of the proliferation of repressive governments and low levels of economic development in the continent. Particularly in the case of the Chilean Diaspora, the military coup of 1973 entailed the forced departure of thousands of people; among them around 2500 exiles arrived in Britain between 1974 and 1979, becoming the first Latin American group that appeared in relatively important numbers during the 1970s. The literature suggests that more middle class exiles arrived in Britain, but that an important number of working class refugees also came here. London had the largest concentration of Chileans exiles, along with cities like Sheffield and Birmingham which also were important places of settlement. Later arrivals, return movements and intergenerational growth make it difficult to estimate their size today.

Regarding the whole Chilean population in the UK, the Census 2001 counted 6957 Chileans, among which 1826 were from the second generation. Given the increasing arrival of newcomers during the last decade and, potentially, the presence of undocumented migrants, those figures might under-represent their actual number. As a whole, the Chilean ‘community’ mostly lives in London and it is scattered throughout the city with some degree of concentration (and, overall, congregation) in South London, notably in the borough of Lambeth – this is also an area of predominantly working class Latin American settlement.

While long-settled Chileans principally came to London as political forced migrants, the newcomers’ reasons for movement are largely identified as economic. This distinction appears to bring both practical differences, such as the access to work permits and to social benefits (from which newcomers are largely excluded), and ideological controversies, reflected in the way that they are habitually perceived (e.g. long-settled, political, middle class and ‘deserving’ migrant vs. newcomer, economic, poor and ‘undeserving’ migrants). In relation to this last aspect, research about other Latin American communities (Sveinsson, 2007; James, 2005) suggests that the lack of contact between long-settled migrants (particularly middle class) and newcomers is often based on stigmas and perceived threats regarding helping and relating with ‘undocumented migrants’. Furthermore, these studies suggest that less populous migrant groups perceive the largest ones (e.g. Colombians) as homogenizing threats to their ethnic identity and their nation-specific uniqueness.

Given the diverse transformation of London’s multi-ethnic context, of the country of origin, and, with this, of the Chilean ‘exile community’ itself, it seems pertinent to ask how the Chilean Diaspora develops spaces of belonging in present day Britain. Even though I will only fully explore these
questions during my research, I want now to attempt to give tentative answers and open new questions in this arena.

Community Formation in Multicultural London

Regarding their social configuration, so far long-settled Chileans appear to be internally differentiated and also to distinguish themselves in relation to other migrant groups. Firstly, I want to argue that despite internal differentiations Chileans converge through diverse performances (e.g. sports, dance, music, routines, etc.) in the re-creation of identity references and forms of belonging in a multicultural city like London. Secondly, through these performances, they engage, to some extent, with their wider social context; that means, with newcomers from Latin America and with the broader London scene. In other words, nowadays we can observe different forms and degrees of interaction amongst Chileans, as well as between them and their wider social environment.

For example the Chilean Football League, which started during the days of the Chilean dictatorship and was established by first generation working class exiles, is nowadays an intergenerational space, in which some Chileans congregate independently from their socio-economic background and political standpoints. Furthermore, what used to be a ‘mainly Chilean’ activity, which appears nowadays as a sort of a Pan-Latin-American event, which has gradually opened its doors to other migrants from South America. Likewise, events such as the ‘Chilean Earthquake Appeal’ – a fundraising event which developed in March of 2010 following the Chilean earthquake – gathered together people from diverse generations and nationalities, including musicians and dancers from Bolivia, Cuba and Peru, as well as newcomers and ‘locals’.

Even though the quality, distinctiveness and nature of such forms of interactions are aspects which still have to be investigated, these social configurations, I argue, contest the idea that ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nation’ are the main (or unique) means by which communities of belonging are formed. A focus on those kinds of performances suggests that neither ethnic identities nor communities of belonging are simply given or fixed. Rather, they are made and re-made on an ongoing basis.

In order to explore this, I use both biographical and visual methods. Biographical methods present communities of belonging as narratively actualized in relation to diverse contexts of life; visual representations demonstrate that ethnicity and race are not fixed, by presenting them as re-created by materialities, practices and forms of social interaction whose effectiveness is given by their assumed and perceived ‘ethnic significance’ (Knowles, 2003: 67-68).

Finally, I aim to overcome the bounded study of specific ‘ethnic groups’, by including the broader social context with which Chilean exiles interact (see Knowles, 2009); that is, newcomers, other migrants (whether long-settled or not) and even ‘locals’ with whom their lives intersect in the development, re-creation and re-signification of belonging in Britain today.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, we need to critically assess how we approach and understand migrant communities. Given the inter- and intra-community differences that have been mentioned, as well as the seeming emergence of new transnational Latin American spaces, not only does using the homogenizing notion of ‘others’ to label less populous migrant groups as a whole become problematic, but also trying to study ‘communities’ as bounded, homogeneous and
unified (ethnic) collectivities is difficult. We need to be attentive to both emerging social fields and the form of community that emerges with them. This aspect is also important for policy social research which more often than not focuses on bounded ‘ethnic communities’, as if they were living in relatively isolated worlds.

Moreover, as it has been suggested elsewhere (Sveinsson, 2010), policy makers can gain a great deal by considering the experience of settled migrant communities: how they have faced and fought racism and discrimination; how they embrace (or not) both their cultural heritage and, at the same time, engage with their country of settlement; and how they ‘live’ (and not only how they talk about) London’s diversity. Furthermore, policy researchers need to interrogate the possibilities and opportunities that connecting newcomers with long-settled communities can imply – for example, the relationship that Chileans have with people from their own or other ethnicities or countries in view of their commonalities and also their divergences.

All in all, London’s migratory complexity should be taken seriously by incorporating ‘difference’ (and not only ‘sameness’) as a way of understanding how migrants develop their terrains of belonging within the UK. Here, diversity should not merely be understood as a source of problems (e.g. lack of solidarity), but also as an opportunity for new scenarios of collective engagements.

References


SECTION IV: POST-RACIAL BRITAIN?

8. Antiracist Futures: Bridging Activism and the Academy
Joshua Paul
Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Racism without Race

Culturalist racism such as that espoused by the British National Party (BNP) presents a serious challenge for antiracism. Recently the BNP has exploited economic hysteria to scapegoat immigrants with calculated sophistry; its ideologues have appropriated the liberal affirmation of difference; and they have also employed the fear of mixture to secure the preservation of their ‘threatened’ community, which is:

… set to become a minority well within 50 years. This will result in the extinction of the British people, culture, heritage and identity.

(BNP Manifesto, 2010: 6)

Here the Far Right represents itself as the guardian of authentic British values and culture. It also recasts itself as the deserving recipient of state welfare (BNP Manifesto, 2010: 11–12). In short, the BNP reverses classical antiracist discourse by co-opting anti-racism and appropriating the preservation of difference (Taguieff, 2001). Although making difference absolute, the BNP keenly leaves behind racial hierarchy even affirming the damaging impact of outsourcing on industrializing countries (BNP Manifesto, 2010: 71). With the political certitudes of what anti-racism is now overturned, a crucial question emerges: ‘How can anti-racism distinguish itself from and effectively combat this new racism?’

Such racism without ‘race’ is also manifest in New Labour discourse and practice. The Labour Party manifesto devotes an entire section to ‘Crime and Immigration: Strengthening Our Communities, Securing our Borders’, suggesting links between crime and immigration. Echoing the BNP’s neo-racist rhetoric Labour summarizes its immigration policy as a ‘system that promotes and protects British values’ (Labour, 2010: 42). Hailing its achievements in border management it cites reductions in asylum seekers and the redirection of resources to the deserving and genuine (Labour, 42: 2010).

The State of Anti-Racism

Contemporary anti-racisms struggle to effectively resist these expressions. For example, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) is currently campaigning to amend legislation to categorize Muslims as a ‘race’ deserving of protection from racism (FAIR, 2010). Anti-racist agitation for the legal proliferation of ‘races’, whose unequal relations must be state regulated, validates the commonsense beliefs of the ‘real’ world that structure and reproduce social relations in racialized form. This anti-racism promotes equality while simultaneously re-inscribing the racial characterizations which stem from the very racism it challenges. Such contradictions deserve ethical and political consideration.

Other joined-up governmental approaches simultaneously contest racism, class and gender inequalities. Aware of the complexity of oppression, the joined-up approach calls attention to the problems of maintaining a structural analysis. Speaking on Powellism, Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, described racism as politically superficial: ‘Historically we are diverse, open-minded, and anti-racist. But every now and again we forget our true character. And 20 April 1968 was the start of a 40-year aberration for which we have since paid dearly’ (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). Phillips situates racism as aberrant, a position which colludes with conservatism and places racism on the political periphery. But by reducing its causation to isolated ‘bad apples’ racism is trivialized, volumes of historical evidence are denied and fundamentally racist social and economic structures left untouched. Such narrow analysis has minimal anti-racist impact and mutes substantive questions of social justice and political and economic power.
Rethinking Anti-racism

For many critics it is anti-racism's continued reliance on 'race' that impedes the development of a genuinely progressive alternative. Mired in reified premises, 'race' unwittingly supports mythical ideas of being and group solidarity. Such 'solidarity' sidesteps the challenge of building the dialogue necessary to create lasting cohesion. More dangerous still, 'race' invokes naturalism as a means to form a hollow solidarity based on arbitrary traits. For example, the Camden Black and Ethnic Minority Alliance furnishes solidarity from and bases its political platform on racial membership alone without exploring the political values, socio-economic standing or immediate concerns of its diverse constituents. Continued usage only reinforces the iniquitous common-sense meanings of 'race' and (re)produces the category on which racism relies.

Through patient reflection on these issues, some scholars on the left have advanced a 'post-racial' perspective. Post-racialism advocates jettisoning the category of 'race' because it is both analytically useless and politically vacant. It refocuses on the political and ethical implications of 'race' by exploring not what 'race' is but what 'race' does. Offering an empirically informed theoretical critique, post-racialism shows how even constructionist versions of 'race' make the category appear real through the circular logic of biology. While rejecting 'race' as a biological concept, constructionism still uncritically accepts 'race' as concretely apprehensible. 'Race' is treated as an independent cause instead of the effect of complex socio-political and economic relationships. But in spite of its theoretical sophistication and ethical insights, post-racialism remains largely abstract and divorced from public policy. And with civil society and political culture structured around the practical currency of race, these remain glaring omissions in post-racialist politics. My investigation will empirically explore this central paradox: 'Can post-racialism develop a critique of the theoretical efficacy of “race” which also proves capable of grappling with its practical social function?'

Post-racialism: What It Is and Isn’t

It is crucial to distinguish post-racialism from the neo-conservative discourse of colour blindness and the declining significance of ‘race’ prevalent in the USA but increasingly expressed within the UK. Colour-blindness suggests that post-racialism is attainable if practically adopted through ‘race-neutral’ social policy and legislation. Contemporary racial inequality, if acknowledged at all, is understood as the outcome of non-racial dynamics. Racialized stratification is thus rationalized as the product of market dynamics and imputed cultural limitations. Commensurate with this logic, the coalition government has suggested making English language fluency a prerequisite for immigrants seeking to move to or remain in the UK. This perspective denies the role of institutional discrimination in producing inequality and instead attributes poverty and exclusion to the failed language skills of immigrants. In its myopic liberal individualism and myth of meritocracy, this rhetoric only perpetuates racial inequality and leaves structural and institutional forms of racism intact. Worse still, it actually codifies racism with ostensibly ‘race-neutral’ legislation such as the revival of police stop and search. A comprehensive UK legal study published in 2007, however, demonstrated that the use of the powers against black people is grossly disproportionate (Bowling and Phillips, 2007: 9). Statistics revealed incontrovertible evidence of unlawful racial discrimination with black people being six times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people.

Post-racialism is distinguished from colour-blindness in three important ways. First, it presents an analytical framework capable of understanding and explaining diverse and changing racisms. Second, it champions having a political debate predicated on a democratic process instead of racial parochialism. Further, it appreciates human experiential plurality and the necessity of negotiating political associations across lines of identity. And finally, post-racialism foregrounds ethical considerations by encouraging us to reflect on the justifications for our anti-racist politics.

Post-racialist scholars have examined the ethical and political problems of anti-racism and have even proposed alternatives. Robert Miles suggested that ‘race’ be excised and that the analysis concentrate on racism. His paradigm, however, remains hampered by a definition of racism which is narrowly limited to an ideology signifying biological traits as the criterion for group membership (Miles, 1993). Crucially, as demonstrated above with the BNP, neo-racism has shifted to the grammar of cultural difference and undesirability. In neo-racism the notion of biologically determined racial groups is explicitly...
rejected. Also Miles’ intervention, in the last instance, reveals itself to reduce all subordination to a class perspective. Paul Gilroy (2000, 2004) also renounces ‘race’ as a concept and calls for a genuinely democratic humanism. But can humanism be conceptually redeemed if its birth within the very same colonial, imperial Europe that profited from Atlantic slavery makes it inextricably tied to the divisive history of ‘race’? And what is the practical and anti-racist scope of democratic humanism? Brett St- Louis offers a third way of attempting to understand ‘race’ both as real and unreal (St-Louis, 2002). St-Louis puts forth a weak constructionist sense of racial identity as the basis for an ethically responsible usage of ‘race’. St-Louis, however, preserves ‘race’ and in failing to dismantle the concept, his work, like the position of FAIR, repeats the error of maintaining a category whose malignant effects he wishes to eradicate.

Towards a Post-racial Politics

My project investigates those anti-racisms which disavow ‘race’ and imagine political organizing and social analysis without recourse to the category. In short, it studies the activism which desires to abolish racism by devising new ways of thinking through and beyond the racial premises from which much current anti-racism springs. Through focus groups and interviews with policy contributors (Runnymede, EHRC) and anti-racist activists (Institute of Race Relations, New Beacon circle) I will critically evaluate the efficacy of their theoretical frameworks and practical activism.

While the research remains in an early phase, I will conclude with some speculative remarks. I expect discussions of the inevitable practical problems of how anti-racism can remain politically effective without the customary concept of ‘race’ to be particularly illuminating. The dilemma haunts post-racialism and concisely captures both the futility of ‘race’ and its utility as a political resource. I also think that exploring the practical challenges involved in implementing a post-racial politics will unearth fruitful data. Much of the literature refrains from outlining a coherent politics precisely because of the daunting task it represents. Equally true, far too much activism remains theoretically unsophisticated and entrenched in reification. If post-racialism is to successfully refute charges of being impractical and apolitical it must venture into the world of concrete political engagement. It must offer a politics capable of coherently presenting ideas and stimulating activity.

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The Government’s vision for education is centred around the belief that deregulated, directly funded schools will freely innovate to produce higher standards and promote social mobility. Education Secretary Michael Gove’s initiatives include a vast expansion of academies and a pupil premium for disadvantaged students, positioning a market-model of education as an effective means of addressing social inequality. How to shape the nation’s future citizens and understand the relationship between education, race, class and social mobility remains a highly contentious issue in political and academic debates.

Many current debates focus on how ethnicity and class affect educational achievement and connect to wider deliberations on the place of ‘race’ in modern Britain. Trevor Phillips, head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, recently announced in Prospect magazine that institutional racism has lost its meaning. In the same issue, Tony Sewell claims black boys underachieve in school not because of racism, but because they perceive themselves as victims, adopt a poor attitude and ‘wallow in self-pity’ (Sewell, 2010). In line with the controversial speech delivered by Katherine Birbalsingh during the 2010 Conservative party conference, Sewell thinks black boys are not properly disciplined by teachers who fear accusations of racism. London deputy headteacher Birbalsingh, who later resigned her teaching position, commented on the Today programme that ‘children want to be controlled’ and that black children did not underachieve mainly because of institutional racism, but because of low teacher expectations (Birbalsingh, 2010).

Despite dismissing ‘race’ as a factor affecting life chances, an array of research highlights its continuing impact. Ethnic minority students, except those of Indian or Chinese origin, consistently perform worse than their white counterparts at GCSE level, yet this is often undercut by the media’s focus on the underachievement of white working class boys (Gilborn, 2009). School exclusion rates differ according to class, race and gender; boys are 3.5 times more likely to be excluded than girls, while pupils who receive free school meals and black Caribbean students are also three times more likely to be excluded. Education’s failure to promote social equality is more complicated than teachers simply being scared to enact discipline or black boys consumed by self-pity. These explanations ignore the complex intersection of race, class and gender and the impact of wider social inequality.

Ethnicity and Education
Throughout the 1990s the Conservatives shifted education policy away from addressing ethnic and social inequalities towards a discussion centring on nationhood, culture, identity and heritage where race remained a covert, but implicit topic. Market mechanisms were introduced into education under the premise that competition and decentralized financing would boost achievement levels, yet higher attainment occurred alongside increasing inequality as middle-class parents manipulated the system. New Labour heralded education as the key to a socially-mobile meritocracy, with Tony Blair famously announcing ‘education, education, education’ as the party’s top priority. In response to continued underachievement in urban deprived areas, Labour embarked on the academy schools programme in 2000 which aimed to transform these areas by cultivating self-regulating, aspirational citizens through education. Part of Labour’s public–private finance initiative, academies were inspired by the Conservative’s City Technology Colleges and US Charter Schools and purported to ‘break the cycle of underachievement in areas of social and economic deprivation’ by ‘establishing a culture of ambition to replace the poverty of aspiration’ (Adonis, 2008; DCSF, 2009). This approach did not address structural inequality, but explained underachievement as a cultural failure of communities lacking the attributes for success. Academies are free from the control of local authorities and are not required to adhere to the national curriculum. In September 2010, 277 academies were open under the New Labour model where a sponsor contributes at least three million pounds and determines the school ethos. The coalition government has radically expanded the programme, pushing through legislation in July.
2010 that invited all schools to become academies. The rapid conversion of existing schools means that 442 academies are currently open as of February 2011. Outstanding schools can now convert without an application process and will become exempt from routine Ofsted inspections.

Due to the concentration of academies in ethnically mixed, working-class inner city areas, these institutions directly relate to formations of race and class in urban spaces. A new book, *Academies and Educational Reform* (Leo, Galloway and Hearne, 2010), concludes that middle class families are starting to accept academies after hearing they have higher standards of behaviour, better test scores, and nicer buildings; there are now two applications for every place. The research applauds the more diverse, socially mixed intake created and suggests that working class kids perform better at these schools while middle class students do as well as they would elsewhere; however, it does not detail what cultural or social outcomes are produced by these mixed institutions or how they are dynamically created. Diane Reay’s (2007) research in London comprehensives examines how the cosmopolitan middle classes find some ethnic minority, working class children attractive because they allow them proximity to multicultural identities and serve as a buffer between other working class and middle class groups which are seen as less desirable. How race and class are produced and intersect one another through educational institutions is a complex process that merits more careful scrutiny.

Quantitative research frequently focuses on outcomes without investigating the experiences and processes leading to those outcomes. Research needs to interrogate policy’s social and cultural effects, but predominantly relies on qualitative data or interviews with policy administrators while the impact that these institutions have on students, their families and the surrounding community goes unexplored. My research will move beyond test scores and audit reports to examine how this educational approach relates to students living in urban deprived areas, many of whom come from ethnic minority or working class backgrounds. It will explore how one high achieving academy operates on a daily basis by examining how young people negotiate its educational approach and move between their school, home and peer groups. Rather than simply assessing what the academy does and why, this research seeks to examine what effects this educational approach has on formations of race and class – a question difficult to explore through quantitative analysis alone.

The Urban Academy

My research is based at Beaumont Academy1 which is located in a London borough where unemployment is twice the national average, half of housing is socially rented and over 100 different languages are spoken. Forty per cent of Beaumont students receive free school meals and over two thirds come from ethnic minority backgrounds, yet students have achieved such outstanding test results that the school is heralded as a blueprint for urban educational reform. It operates under the ethos ‘structure frees’ and is run by Mr Stanton, a headteacher who believes that class – not ethnicity – predicts student success. However class is seen as a condition that can be transcended because it’s ‘about attitude to life as well as a financial position’, reflecting Sewell’s comments about academic success depending on adopting the right attitude. The school operates a strict behaviour policy instituted through the repetition of routine and tight regulation of time and space.

Headteacher Mr Stanton calls Beaumont ‘an oasis in the desert’ and thinks that ‘...children who come from unstructured backgrounds, as many of our children do, and often very unhappy ones, should be given more structure in their lives’. Structure is seen to discipline the body and mind as children assemble twice daily in alphabetized silent lines patrolled by teachers who ensure students face the front with bags off shoulders and uniforms correct. Pupils march to lessons in silent lines and recite the academy reflection before each lesson begins; this creation of uniformity and order is seen to provide safety and stability for students from ‘unstructured backgrounds’. Mr Stanton explains that ‘urban children’ have different requirements than their suburban, middle class counterparts, adding that ‘you can be a lot more relaxed and free and easy in a nice, leafy middle class area where the ground rules are clear before they come in, where children go home to lots of books....’ Through teachers acting as ‘surrogate parents’, children are pushed to succeed academically. The school occupies an ambiguous position: by showing that children from marginalized urban spaces can achieve, it disproves raced and classed discourses, but it relies on these discourses to justify its disciplinary structures. Low student expectations are eradicated through structure; however, the type of structures and the ways they are instated have social and cultural implications.

The research is being conducted over a two year period using a variety of qualitative methods. An

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1 All names of organizations and people are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
ethnography will be compiled through participant-observation at the school on a weekly basis. I will be tracking a group of 20 young people from years 9 and 11 throughout the year, meeting with them either individually or in groups and engaging them in a range of participatory research activities in addition to formal interviews. I will also be conducting interviews with 20 parents and drawing on 20 teacher interviews already completed. The richness of data from immersion in the field for an extended time period will afford a detailed look at how policy plays out through the lives of children, parents and teachers. The research will seek to explore how race and class are being reiterated, re-ordered and lived both with and against the concerns and motivations of policy. More broadly, it will examine how this educational approach relates to modes of governance and citizenship.

In Conclusion
Rather than focusing on Sewell’s image of black boys as self-proclaimed victims wallowing in self-pity, it would be more relevant to consider how many ethnic minority students occupy economically deprived, culturally devalued positions where race and class intersect. These positions are shaped by larger inequitable structures, yet Gove’s aspirational policies emphasize the self-made individual without addressing the highly unjust framework that many students must work from and within. Although diversity may be a more widely accepted concept, declaring race as irrelevant does not sit easily beside a host of statistics indicating otherwise – a growing familiarity with diversity is not synonymous with the advent of equality. Birbalsingh’s assertion that children like being controlled is seemingly validated by Beaumont’s ‘structure frees’ ethos, as many students will be the first in their families to attend university after receiving outstanding exam results. However we must explore what cultural and social norms implicitly rest within structures, how issues of power and value work through them, and how this relates to raced, classed identities. The focus of these policies on individual attitudes as the determinates of success reflects the ideals of a neo-liberal meritocracy where race and class do not simply disappear, but are reformulated into new hierarchical structures.

References


APPENDIX
Biographical Notes on the Contributors

Carolina Ramirez Cabrera worked in the Universidad Diego Portales in Chile, and completed a MA in Social Research, before starting her PhD in the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths, University of London. Combining visual archives, biographical in-depth interviews and fieldwork she is exploring Chilean forced migrants’ fields of belonging within the UK. Her research interests are Chilean and Latin American forced migrants; diaspora and transnationalism; social memory; ‘home’ and belonging; as well as biographical and visual methods.

Ajmal Hussain is a PhD researcher in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics. His research is concerned with contemporary Muslim identity and how this unfolds in everyday scenarios in inner-city Birmingham. This piece draws from an ethnography being carried out over two years, which engages all the senses to capture the way a particular Muslimness is cultivated in and around a racially marked part of the city.

Malcolm James is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics and a Fellow of Goldsmiths College, University of London. His PhD research is based around three East London youth clubs and explores how young people make their lives in dialogue with racism and migration. Over the last decade Malcolm has published work on ‘race’ and racism, migration and xenophobia, young people and structural inequality. Malcolm is also Editor of the online journal Critical Contemporary Culture.

Hannah Jones is completing a PhD in Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. She previously worked in local government policy for several years and has conducted research on economic development, local government partnerships, voluntary and community sector organizations, and international sustainability reporting. Her research interests include community cohesion, inequalities and discrimination, and processes of governing emotion, affect, identity and belonging. Hannah holds degrees from the University of Oxford and the University of Edinburgh, and has been a Visiting Scholar at New York University.

Helen Kim is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her thesis is on the London ‘desi’ urban music scene, ‘race’ ethnicity and diaspora. Her research interests include ‘race’ and ethnicity studies, diaspora and popular culture.

Christy Kulz is currently completing ethnographic fieldwork at a London secondary academy for her PhD in sociology at Goldsmiths College. The research was initially inspired by her experiences working with young people within an academy and her research interests centre around policy’s effects on social and cultural formations, particularly in ethnically diverse urban areas.

Sanjiv Lingayah is currently working on a PhD on discourses of national and Black and minority ethnic (BME) identities and the ‘reconciliation’ of diversity in contemporary Britain. He is based at the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics. He has worked for over a decade as an evaluator and researcher on social justice issues and formerly worked in research roles at London Metropolitan University and the think tank, New Economics Foundation. Sanjiv has particular research interest and experience in voluntary and community sector activity, including the organization and impact of BME social action.

Joshua Paul is currently completing a PhD at Goldsmiths, University of London. He holds degrees from the University of California, San Diego and City University UK. His research interests include: postracialism and nonracialism; multiculturalism; the ontology and epistemology of ‘race’; the ethics and politics of ‘race’; anti-racism and activism; utopia and the end of racism. As part of his doctoral project, he recently conducted extensive archival research at Columbia University and Howard University.

Naaz Rashid is a third year PhD student based in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics where she is working on the intersections of ‘race’, gender and religion. Prior to embarking on a PhD, Naaz worked in a variety of central government departments and is interested in research which critically analyses social policy from anti-racist, feminist perspectives.
Selected Runnymede Publications

Passing the Baton: Inter-generational Conceptions of Race and Racism in Birmingham
A Runnymede Report by Kamaljeet Kam and Kjartan Sveinsson (2011)

Widening Participation and Race Equality
A Runnymede Perspective edited by Debbie Weekes-Bernard (2011)

Achieving Race Equality in Scotland
A Runnymede Platform by Sir Jamie McGrigor, Robert Brown, Humza Yousaf and Johann Lamont with responses from Professor Kay Hampton and Ephraim Borowski (2010)

Financial Inclusion amongst New Migrants in Northern Ireland
Report by ICAR in collaboration with Citizens Advice Belfast by Julie Gibbs (2010)

‘Snowy Peaks’: Ethnic Diversity at the Top

Did They Get It Right? A Re-examination of School Exclusions and Race Equality
A Runnymede Perspective edited by Debbie Weekes-Bernard (2010)

Ready for Retirement? Pensions and Bangladeshi Self-employment
A Runnymede Financial Inclusion Report by Phil Mawhinney (2010)

Saving Beyond the High Street: A Profile of Savings Patterns among Black and Minority Ethnic People

Preventing Racist Violence in Europe: Seminar Report and Compendium of Good Practice

The Future of the Ethnic Minority Population of England and Wales

The Costs of ‘Returning Home’: Retirement Migration and Financial Inclusion
A Runnymede Report by Omar Khan and Phil Mawhinney with research assistance from Camille Aznar (2010)

Ethnic Profiling: The Use of ‘Race’ in UK Law Enforcement
A Runnymede Perspective edited by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson(2010)

Lone Mothers of Mixed Racial and Ethnic Children: Then and Now
A Runnymede Perspective by Chamin Caballero and Professor Rosalind Edwards (2010)

Seeking Sound Advice: Financial Inclusion and Ethnicity
A Runnymede Report by Phil Mawhinney (2010)

Mixedness and the Arts
A Runnymede Thinkpiece by Chamin Caballero (2010)

Labour and Cohesive Communities
A Runnymede Platform by the Rt Hon John Denham MP with responses from Professors Derek McGhee, Mary J. Hickman and Chris Gaine (2010)

Race Equality and the Liberal Democrats
A Runnymede Platform by Lynne Featherstone MP with responses from Professor Harry Goulbourne and Dr Claire Alexander (2010)

Conservatism and Community Cohesion
A Runnymede Platform by Dominic Grieve QC MP with responses from Professors Lord Bhikhu Parekh, Ludi Simpson and Shamit Saggar (2010)

A Runnymede Report by Phil Mawhinney (2010)

Making a Contribution: New Migrants and Belonging in Multi-ethnic Britain
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2010)

What Works with Integrating New Migrants?: Lessons from International Best Practice
A Runnymede Perspective by Zubaida Haque (2010)

‘Them and Us’: Race Equality Interventions in Predominantly White Schools
A Runnymede Perspective by Yaa Asare (2009)

School Governors and Race Equality in 21st Century Schools
A Runnymede Trust Briefing Paper by Nicola Rollock (2009)

Who Pays to Access Cash?: Ethnicity and Cash Machines
A Runnymede Report by Omar Khan and Ludi Simpson (2009)

Surrey Street Market: The Heart of a Community
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson, Franziska Meissner and Jessica Mai Sims

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 10 Years On An Analysis of the Literature
A Runnymede Report by Nicola Rollock (2009)

British Moroccans – Citizenship in Action
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Who Cares about the White Working Class?
Runnymede Perspectives by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2009)

Right to Divide? Faith Schools and Community Cohesion
A Runnymede Report by Rob Berkeley with research by Savita Vij (2008)

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Understanding Diversity – South Africans in Multi-ethnic Britain
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson and Anne Gumuschian (2008)

(Re)thinking ‘Gangs’
A Runnymede Perspective by Claire Alexander (2008)

Soldiers, Migrants and Citizens – The Nepalese in Britain
A Runnymede Community Study by Jessica Mai Sims (2008)

A Tale of Two Englands: ‘Race’ and Violent Crime in the Press
A Runnymede Perspective by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2008)
Runnymede Perspectives

Runnymede Perspectives aim, as a series, to engage with government – and other – initiatives through exploring the use and development of concepts in policy making, and analysing their potential contribution to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

About the Editors

Claire Alexander is Reader in Sociology at the London School of Economics. Her research interests are in the area of race, ethnicity, masculinity and youth identities in Britain. Her main publications include The Art of Being Black (OUP, 1996), The Asian Gang (Berg, 2000) and (Re)Thinking Gangs (Runnymede Trust, 2008). She is co-director of an AHRC funded research project (2006-2009) on ‘The Bengal Diaspora: Bengali Settlers in South Asia and Britain’ (www.banglastories.org) and a Trustee of The Runnymede Trust.

Malcolm James is a PhD student at Department of Sociology, London School of Economics and a Fellow of Goldsmiths College, University of London. His PhD research is based around three East London youth clubs and explores how young people make their lives in dialogue with racism and migration. Over the last decade Malcolm has published work on ‘race’ and racism, migration and xenophobia, young people and structural inequality. Malcolm is also Editor of the online journal Critical Contemporary Culture.

The papers in this Perspective came out of a London-wide two-day Race, Ethnicity and Postcolonial Studies (REPS) workshop for doctoral students, held in the summer of 2010 in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics.

Runnymede 360° is a national network connecting aspiring and established leaders in race equality. The network represents an exciting opportunity for individuals to interact with others passionate about race equality in order to improve their knowledge base, professional skills, connections and contribution to challenging racism.

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