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Building a better Britain?

Karel Williams

In early December the Treasury announced a £375bn infrastructure investment plan, with three quarters of the funding coming from the private sector. In a BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme interview the chief secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander, explained that Canadian and Australian pension funds were here to help with worthy social projects such as extending the runway at Birmingham airport. In the Treasury's spin this was a win-win story because "after years of neglect our infrastructure ... needs renewal". It is worth pausing a while to deconstruct yesterday's news because there's a backstory here about failed assumptions and broken promises, which helps to explain the mess we're in.

Privatisation was about a promise of investment. Whenever state assets were sold off, the promise was that the newly privatised firm would tap the capital markets to bring in investment which the cash-strapped state could not provide. This is how Vince Cable and the government argued Royal Mail privatisation was necessary and beneficial. The rationale was much the same in the 1980s floats of BT and British Gas or the 1990s privatisation that broke up British Rail.

The promise of private capital expenditure was not delivered, except in water. That was a special case because new regulations made investment in clean up mandatory and the regulator allowed the companies to charge the consumer and put the cost on the bill. Elsewhere, the private operators were investment- and risk-averse corporates under pressure to deliver shareholder value: their business model was not to bring in investment that would lower return on capital but to extract distributable cash from the legacy infrastructure that they had inherited from the state.

The sound you hear in the background after privatisation is the giant sucking sound of value being extracted by pipe and cable utilities who have failed to renew our infrastructure. The results are most obvious in telecoms. BT is bidding for sporting rights against Sky, yet not investing in the

replacement of old copper wire, so we have the compromise of fibre-optic cables running only to street cabinets in towns, not to people's homes, and no working plan for delivering rural broadband. Currently, rail is the only utility where large-scale new investment is going in and that is because not-for-profit Network Rail can issue state-guaranteed private bonds.

So, privatisation has brought us unsustainability and growing problems about national security. Second-rate broadband provision is bad for competitiveness and worsening problems in energy supply have worrying national security implications. We are ill prepared for cold weather when we have a fortnight's back-up gas storage, and in electricity, there are questions about whether the clapped-out generating system can keep the lights on. That is why a desperate government is bribing the French firm EDF to construct a new nuclear power station at Hinkley with extravagant guaranteed electricity prices.

More broadly, the infrastructure plan shows that the government has learned nothing about how Thatcher-style privatisation does not work in capital intensive utilities. The infrastructure plan includes more of the same with the sale of 40% of Eurostar, a student loan book and bits of this and that. But selling assets will not get the government out of its current fix on infrastructure investment. The furore about energy prices shows consumers won't pay and the government can't pay, so where is the investment going to come from?

The infrastructure plan shows that the answer is to bring in a second set of private-sector players (mainly pension funds and insurance companies) who will now provide the fixed capital investment. But this comes at a price, because the funds will add a second set of financial claims on the revenue stream coming from household consumers of utility services, whose bills will effectively include one charge for operator dividends and a second charge for interest on fixed capital investment.

Maybe it wouldn't be too bad if the pension funds and insurance companies were British, because then what comes around goes

around. Inside our national economy, the double extraction would be a transfer from all households that consume utilities towards the minority of retired households. But in the government's £375bn investment plan only £25bn will come from six British insurance companies. So it is retired Ontario and Melbourne teachers who will benefit.

We need an alternative plan for infrastructure that recognises some basic realities. First, regulate privatised operators on the assumption that they are both extractive and investment averse so their margins should be modest unless they can prove they are taking risk. Second, rearrange domestic financial flows so that British pension funds can invest directly in infrastructure including social housing. Most British pension funds are earning no more than 5% from paper investments, why not get that from building something useful?

Note: An earlier version of this article appeared in *The Guardian*, Comment is free, on 5th December 2013

In this issue:

The Hidden Musicians of Black British Jazz	p2
Urban (In)Security	p3
The social life of big data	p4
Peacelines: Constructing the urban terror imaginary	p5
Unpacking Post-colonial Relational Entanglements in the Brazilian Amazon	p6
Welcome! New recruits at CRESC	p7
CRESC Conference	p8

The Hidden Musicians of Black British Jazz

Mark Banks, Jill Ebrey and Jason Toynbee

In the UK, music is widely promoted as an exemplary 'creative' industry. Yet, within this hyperbole, jazz has been largely ignored. Our forthcoming report *Working Lives in Black British Jazz* suggests that this neglect is both economic and cultural.

The jazz economy is widely perceived as small and insignificant. Yet in terms of production, participation and employment, it ranks close comparison with both folk and opera, forms of music widely perceived to be viable and vital components of the UK music industry. Also, in terms of revenues, Mykaell Riley and Dave Laing estimated in *The Value of Jazz II* (2010) that the annual turnover of the UK jazz sector in 2008 to be in the region of £85 million, including over £30 million in music sales and around £25 million in ticket sales. However, rarely has jazz been the target of

largely 'hidden' economy, mainly taking place in small clubs, pubs, halls and arts centres, ranged across the UK, and rarely enjoying any mass audiences or media exposure. Evaluating the economic significance of jazz is therefore a complex task, and supporting its practitioners and audiences fraught with difficulty.

At the cultural level, the neglect of jazz is no less depressing. Jazz has long suffered from being seen as an esoteric or minority pursuit, one that falls somewhat unsatisfactorily between 'classical' and 'popular' music. And unlike folk, with its impression of being indigenously rooted in UK or British national history, jazz is still often seen as a cultural interloper – an American or African import, a form of music that is somehow alien or non-indigenous to the UK. As one of the musicians we interviewed suggested:

'...jazz comes from black America, so considered to be underground, the dark part of life and not considered to be high art. The Queen doesn't go to watch jazz...'

This cultural marginality has meant that jazz hasn't attracted its fair share of public subsidy or support. It was only in 1968 that the Arts Council of Great Britain first began to award small bursaries to

jazz musicians. Today, Jazz Services – Arts Council England's principal National Portfolio Organisation supporting UK jazz – receives a basic annual funding of around £300k to promote jazz and support touring musicians.¹

Our report makes a small contribution to raising the economic and cultural profile of jazz in Britain by choosing to illuminate the working lives of black British jazz musicians, building on our previous AHRC project *What is Black British Jazz?* The focus on black musicians is not simply a matter of social and cultural justice, important though that is. It is also to do with their vital contribution to the

making of a uniquely *British* jazz, one which reflects the cosmopolitanism of the contemporary UK. Black British musicians enrich jazz culturally and musically, and in their educational work show how jazz can be an empowering means of uplift and inspiration for black and white youth.

As for focusing specifically on musicians as workers, the purpose here was twofold; firstly to bring to light the everyday difficulties of surviving as a professional musician, a significant problem often overlooked in creative industry policy-making, and especially difficult for black and ethnic minority workers; and secondly, to augment the barely-established literature on the UK jazz economy – not only with further survey data, but more fully with some detailed qualitative accounts of working lives in jazz.

Amongst the many findings our research revealed:

- A rich history of jazz music-making amongst black Britons, reaching back to the earliest days of jazz itself;
- The provenance of modern and 'free' British jazz in and amongst post-war Caribbean migrants;
- The economic difficulties endured by contemporary musicians – with over 70% earning less than 20k per annum; jazz is 'precarious' labour exemplified;
- The persistence of racism and race inequality in the education system and music industry – resulting in restricted cultural and economic opportunities for black musicians;
- The continued vitality of community educational projects and DIY culture in black British jazz.

The report will be released in the spring, please contact one of the authors above for further details.

Photo by Javier Parra issued under a Creative Commons license; for details please see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/arteporro/>

¹ *Randomly, we might compare the support for Jazz Services with, say, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra which on its own receives around £2.5 million p.a.*



significant commercial or public investment to further stimulate production, or develop its audiences and markets.

A major part of the problem is that - notwithstanding a few established venues, labels and performers - the jazz economy is quite informal, diffuse and difficult to measure and map. Nonetheless, estimates have consistently shown that audiences numbers for jazz are equivalent to (and often exceed) audiences for art forms such as folk, opera, ballet and contemporary dance (see, for example, the *Taking Part Statistical Release*, DCMS 2012). Despite this jazz is a

Urban (In)Security

Francis Dodsworth

Passing through any major city one can hardly help but be struck by the ubiquity of security apparatus, from the watchful presence of CCTV in the streets, on buses or trains, to benches designed to deter tramps or skateboarders and occasionally even metal detectors at the entrance to public buildings. These securitised spaces are patrolled by an array of public and private security personnel who are able to regulate who can come and go in shopping centres and other privately owned places of public resort. Indeed, the impact of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design has led to the city itself being shaped in relation to security, with specially designed hallways and car parks, even housing. The city, in short, has itself become an agent in the fight against crime.

But does all this security apparatus make us more secure, or make us feel more secure? There is some evidence that better domestic security systems and car alarms have reduced rates of burglary and vehicle crime, but despite overall crime rates falling (whatever that might signify)² fear of crime remains high. Indeed, in her book *Ground Control* Anna Minton suggests that the privatisation of public space and securitisation of the city has intensified public fear about crime and produced a sense of dislocation. The riots that engulfed London and many other English towns in the summer of 2011 might seem to bear this out. Indeed, the riots in London were only one of a series of periods of urban disorder that have erupted across northern, southern, eastern and western Europe, from Sweden and the Baltic States, to Paris and Athens. Many scholars see such events as symptoms of the social dislocation produced by neo-liberalism and globalisation. The deliberate policy of undermining the security provided by the welfare state in the name of 'flexibility' has produced groups of 'urban outcasts' in the words of Loïc Wacquant, or a new 'precariat' in the language of Guy Standing. From this perspective the securitisation of the city is a piece of 'security theatre' designed to demonstrate the capacity of governments to deal with intractable and international problems of which they are themselves the cause.



In order to try and understand how the securitisation of the city is shaping social life, Urban Experiments has launched a new programme of research into the subject. This project seeks to engage with contemporary developments by providing an historical perspective which does not assume that the present day is uniquely marked by security anxiety. There have, after all, been concerns with crime and disorder as major 'social problems' since the eighteenth century; the projection of social anxieties onto 'urban outcasts' and the 'dangerous classes' is, as Geoffrey Pearson showed us a number of years ago, one of the great continuities of modern history; Clive Bloom has demonstrated that riots have been a recurrent feature of London life; and moral panics and media-driven crime scares have existed for as long as there have been newspapers. Judith Walkowicz's classic *City of Dreadful Delight* illustrates very well the sensationalism around the Ripper murders in late nineteenth-century London and the connections between these crimes and contemporary social anxieties. More recent work by Peter King and Esther Snell, published in *Continuity and Change* in 2007, and an edited collection by David Lemmings and Clare Walker on moral panics in eighteenth-century England, show that sensational crime has been central to newspaper reporting throughout the modern period.

If there is nothing novel in urban insecurity *per se*, however, this does not mean that there is nothing distinctive about its



particular manifestation in the present. The specific configurations of security technology, practices and culture nonetheless form a distinct 'assemblage', one that requires detailed study to understand. Two of the most penetrating studies of the distinctive nature of our contemporary security apparatus are provided by Harvey Molotch and Sophie Body-Gendrot. In his book *Against Security* Molotch studies in depth and in detail the practical and precise ways in which our attempts to provide security are often counterproductive, dysfunctional and alienating and suggests some ways that we might modify our behaviour as a society to better achieve our goals. Sophie Body-Gendrot, meanwhile, has produced a detailed, comprehensive and carefully researched study of the ways in which the government of our cities, and thus our cities themselves, are being transformed by particular configurations of risk and risk management.

In order to push forward our research in this area and to generate new conversations around the subject, Urban Experiments is organising a one day conference at the Open University's Camden office, 27 June 2014, on the subject *City Materialities, City Securities*, which will explore the relationship between the urban assemblage and the securitised city. In order to begin the discussion this conference will be preceded by lectures from Professor Body-Gendrot (Paris Sorbonne) and Professor Molotch (NYU), to be delivered the night before, Thursday 26 June, 18.00 at the Royal College of Physicians in London. Anyone interested in the subject is encouraged to attend what should be a fascinating and productive pair of events. Attendance is free, but places are limited, so you are encouraged to book in advance by emailing CRESC-OU-events@open.ac.uk

For further information on this project contact francis.dodsworth@open.ac.uk

² For the pointlessness of recourse to 'overall' rates of crime see the excellent comments by Richard Garside at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies:
<http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/making-sense-crime-trends> and
<http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/property-crime-violence-and-recessions>

The social life of big data

Camilla Lewis and Yannis Kallianos

In January 2014, we began a new research project about big data and urban waste management in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA). The aim of this project is to explore the role of big data as an integral component of socio-technical systems designed to promote re-cycling and to minimise the use of landfill sites. Our research in Manchester feeds into a larger project on 'Socialising Big Data' which involves a network of researchers from a number of different institutions (CRESC Manchester, Goldsmiths' College, Warwick, Anglia Ruskin and Lancaster Universities). We are comparing three fields of data use and practice among EU statisticians, genomic scientists and waste management practitioners. The research will also contribute to the CRESC 'Infrastructures of Social Change' research group who are exploring infrastructures as analytical and epistemological tools for understanding social change. By adopting an 'infrastructural perspective' we explore how big data works at different scales and across different contexts. The project seeks to examine the possibilities, limitations and expectations which are emerging around big data and is also exploring how collaborative methods can further our understanding of the interplay between data, technology, knowledge and materiality in processes of social change.

Big Data

In recent years the fields of business, government and academia have seen the introduction of new forms of data. Broadly speaking, 'big data' refers to the vast quantities of information which are constantly being collected by new technological devices. They include, for example, data which is generated and stored at every card transaction, from internet searches and from geolocation data which is made available by mobile phone networks. The turn to 'big data' analytics has raised complex issues of behaviour change, risk management and harm prevention which are framed in terms of data collection, mining, aggregation, visualisation and synthesis. While many commentators have re-iterated the need to respond to the 'data deluge,' this project takes an alternative approach. Our research seeks to develop a 'social literacy' about big data by exploring the movement of data across different sites. We hope to explore the successes and failures of the turn to data in ways that recognise their



constitution in diverse social practices and specific situations.

The field of waste management is in a process of transformation. Waste was once processed through a relatively simple landfill disposal system but now it is sorted for incineration, recycling and re-use through a highly complex, multi-tech waste management system. Local authorities obtain data on the tonnages of waste they collect in order to calculate the total sum of waste which is being recycled and diverted from landfill. The tonnages of recycled materials and residual waste are reported to Defra, at the national level and the EU. Financial incentives are awarded to local authorities which are able to divert waste from landfill and penalties can be incurred by those which under perform.

Collaborative Research

Our research seeks to examine the 'social life' of big data within the GMWDA. Through an ethnographic approach, we explore how data is produced, stored, analysed and interpreted. We are also looking at how data moves across different sites tracking the ways in which data moves across the nine districts in the authority and between the GMWDA and their partners in Defra and the EU.

In May, we will hold a workshop, called a 'collaboratory' in which members of the GMWDA and their partners from other waste management sectors, and from other cities, will discuss working with big data alongside social scientists. A 'collaboratory' is a method of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral

engagement for exploring the range of meanings and implications of the turn to big data across different practical settings. The purpose of this event is to experiment with and develop new methods and ways of productively engaging across our domains of concern. We will experiment in co-producing insights and ways of thinking about big data and will explore the following questions: What are the possibilities and challenges of working with big data in urban waste management? What can be counted and measured using big data? How is big data analysed? What cannot be counted in big data? How are big data sources different to other types of data?

Waste management in Athens

To complement this study, a parallel research project is being conducted in Athens which offers a radically different context of waste management practices. Contrary to Manchester, where big data has taken on a primary role in driving recycling and waste policies, in Athens, waste is predominantly sent to landfill. We plan to draw comparisons between Manchester and Athens in order to explore the contrasting role of data, and the impact of EU directives on waste management.

For more information please see the following:
 'Socialising Big Data' project website:
<http://sloddo.wordpress.com/projects-2/socialising-big-data/>
 CRESC 'Infrastructures of Social Change' website
<http://www.cresc.ac.uk/our-research/infrastructures-of-social-change>

Peacelines: Constructing the urban terror imaginary

Niall Cunningham

There is probably nothing material that better embodies the Northern Ireland Troubles in the public mind than the so-called 'peacelines' which divide highly-segregated Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods across urban Northern Ireland. The most famous example is that which bisects West Belfast, a colossal structure up to 18 metres high cleaving apart the Catholic Falls and Protestant Shankill districts. In an ironic manifestation of the 'peace dividend', the wall has become a 'must see' attraction for visitors to the city. Yet the Falls-Shankill peaceline is not simply a relic of past conflicts, it is a stark comment on contemporary social realities in the city and across Northern Ireland more generally.

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement an increasing amount of academic and popular attention has come to focus on peacelines. Despite the fact that Northern Ireland is some fifteen years on from the establishment of a new consociational political dispensation which has brought nationalists and unionists together in a devolved power-sharing executive, and notwithstanding the fact that for many, the Troubles would seem to have been substantively 'resolved', the number of peacelines has increased significantly. During the Troubles the existence of these defensive barriers was easier to justify in the face of the threat posed by paramilitaries, but in a time of nominal 'peace', they often appear to outsiders as socially retrograde and anachronistic.

Another reason for the attention that peacelines garner is that they are always features of 'interface' areas. These interfaces are the contested spaces on the margins of segregated Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods, where some of the worst disturbances in Northern Ireland have occurred since the 'end' of the Troubles. The last few summers have been marked by increasing levels of serious and sustained unrest in interface areas around the Ardoyne, New Lodge and Short Strand often arising out of conflicts over the routing of Orange parades. There can be no doubt that interfaces were, and remain, areas of violence and tension between the city's nationalist

and unionist populations. There also seems little to contest in the idea that peacelines augmented fear and mistrust between sundered populations and stymie economic development by stigmatising host communities. Yet critically, new research under Theme 5's banner suggests that the relationship between peacelines, interfaces and political deaths during the Troubles needs to be re-assessed through the dimensions of both time and space.

In recent years, a body of academic literature has emerged which has deployed Geographical Information Systems (GIS) techniques to map the location of fatalities occurring as a direct result of the Troubles.



These have accurately identified that deaths tended to occur in areas which were highly-segregated, deprived and in proximity to peacelines. Such analyses therefore raise profound questions about the role of peacelines in understanding the geography of the political conflict, and potentially about the instrumentality of these security interventions in influencing patterns of violence. However, there exist two fundamental problems in assessing the relationship between peacelines and patterns of conflict fatality. At a geographical level, Belfast's ethnic geography is so complex that much of the city can be seen to lie within reasonably close proximity to a peaceline or interface. When analysed at a much closer spatial resolution, the data suggest that while death rates were high in proximity to peacelines they actually increased with distance, peaking some 200 to 300 metres

away from the structures. While the distances might appear insignificant, against what Bollens has described as the city's 'hyper-segregated sectarian and peaceline geography', these distances frequently represent the difference between the cores and edges of tightly-clustered neighbourhoods like the Falls and Shankill. This directly echoes the influential anthropological work of Allen Feldman, who found that it was actually within these cores (or 'sanctuaries' as he termed them), that the Troubles increasingly played out over time.

The relationship between deaths and peacelines becomes more problematic when the temporal element is factored in. The majority of victims during the Troubles died towards the early period of conflict, with 1 in 6 deaths occurring in 1972 alone. Yet the majority of peacelines were built in the period from 1995 on, a time when the peace process was well advanced and the overall number of conflict deaths was long past its peak.

These findings have clear policy implications in the light of current political moves to remove peacelines. There is little doubt that the barriers are a profound obstacle to social and economic progress in Northern Ireland. However, debates around their removal need to be based on a closer reading of the spatial and temporal evidence which suggests that contrary to the current consensus, they did not act as the primary arenas in which people died during the conflict. It may well be that peacelines merely deflected patterns of fatality to deeper within the sanctuaries but this is clearly an area that requires further research.

These findings will shortly be published in *Political Geography*. See: Niall Cunningham & Ian Gregory, 'Hard to miss, easy to blame? Peacelines, interfaces and political deaths during the Belfast Troubles', *Political Geography* (in press).

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The Falls-Shankill peaceline at Cupar Way.
Photograph by Martin Melaugh, reproduced by kind permission of CAIN ©
(www.cain.ulster.ac.uk)

Unpacking Post-colonial Relational Entanglements in the Brazilian Amazon

Antonia Walford

In a so-called 'post-colonial' era, how do the contours of its violent encounters set limits to what can be created for the future? And how might those contours be changing? These are the questions being explored in a new project with seed-funding from CRESC. The aim is to understand 'post-colonial' relational imbroglios and find better ways of thinking about the possible interventions of anthropologists and social scientists in such complex mosaic situations.

The small city of São Gabriel de Cachoeira in the north of the Brazilian Amazon sits at the convergence of two rivers, the Uaupés and the Negro. The region is known as the Alto Rio Negro, and is home to 17 different Amerindian ethnicities and 23 languages. Despite the heterogeneity, the myriad different groups maintain relations with one another through marriage and exchange of goods and beautifully crafted ceremonial items. In October last year, I spent 2 months in São Gabriel, conducting preliminary research into how Western scientific knowledge and practices relate to and interact with those of the indigenous Amerindians.

Such relations are both implicit and explicit, and widespread. For example, as indigenous education systems are created in the region, the relationships between Western and Amerindian knowledges are being carefully explored; whereas when natural scientific researchers arrive in the region to conduct research, this relationship has until recently been relatively taken for granted. During the six weeks I spent in São Gabriel, I spoke to a diverse collection of people from very different worlds: indigenous intellectuals, indigenous researchers, NGO workers, scientists, park rangers, indigenous politicians, indigenous teachers, doctors, missionaries, and kumua or shamans. I wanted to understand how relations between these very different worlds are being forged, broken, and re-forged, in everyday life in the region, and what that means for the ways that those worlds are changing.

Although the project focuses on these relations as they are understood and lived today, we cannot understand what is happening now without taking into account



the long and often violent history of contact with the brancos, or “whites”.

Anthropologist Christine Lasmar describes how in the 17th century indigenous people were captured and sold into slavery by Portuguese colonizers, and suffered terribly during a series of epidemics that swept through the region as a result of this first contact. In the 19th century, merchants arrived in the region, attracted by the possibility of exchanging market goods for forest resources such as rubber, enslaving entire families in a brutal peonage system.

However, what lingers most painfully in the memories of the Amerindian people I spoke to is the arrival of Salesian missionaries in the 20th century. The missionaries declared that they would save the indigenous people from the exploitation of the merchants; they brought with them ‘healthcare’ and ‘education’ and, of course, Christianity. They ordered that the ceremonial houses, or *malocas*, be torn down so that they could build ‘nuclear family’ houses; prohibited the male initiation rites and the use of adornments; and drove away the powerful shamans. The school was a central aspect of this domination, and the missionaries created a generation of young indigenous religious educators, recruited from their villages at 6 or 7 years old and sent to study at the mission schools. There they lived under a regime of rigid discipline, and were

forbidden from speaking their native languages. This has left a lasting effect on the elder members of the indigenous communities, many of whom went to mission schools.

As the control of the Salesian missionaries waned in the 1980s, an indigenous political movement was

gaining momentum, and in 1987, the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Alto Rio Negro (FOIRN) was created to fight for indigenous territory rights – with the support of a Brazilian NGO called the Instituto Socio-Ambiental (ISA), and several prominent Brazilian anthropologists. This they achieved in 1996, when the Brazilian government granted permanent ownership of 5 indigenous territories, with a total area of 100,000 km². Indigenous education in recent years has become a main focus for indigenous intellectuals and politicians not only as a way to equip people to deal with the brancos, but also as a means of “revitalizing” (*revitalizar*) their culture, which they fear is being lost forever. The people of the Alto Rio Negro are therefore turning to such efforts at so-called “inter-cultural dialogue” as a necessary means to protect themselves and what they hold dear.

The research is just beginning, and therefore far from conclusive. But understanding the equivocations, convergences, overlaps and misunderstandings between Western science and indigenous knowledges as this dialogue develops is clearly crucial for indigenous ‘living well’, or *bem viver*. It is also, however, vital for understanding how Western knowledge itself is being transformed through such relational entanglements, and what that might mean for future engagement in the region.

Welcome!

New recruits at CRESC...



Claire Hyde

Claire Hyde joins us as CRESC's new Centre Administrator from the *Centre for Construction Innovation (CCI)* at the University of Salford where she worked as the Office Manager/Project Manager for over six years. As well as managing the operations for the Centre, Claire was also responsible for coordinating ERDF funded projects and was integral in the organisation of the closure of CCI with the conclusion of the Centre's funding.

Claire's main priorities whilst at CRESC will be the preparation of the 2014 conference and she will also draw upon her experience in assisting with the completion of CRESC, while supporting our on-going research initiatives.



Domenico Di Siena

Domenico Di Siena is an architecture and urban planning researcher and PhD candidate from the Technical University of Madrid, Urban and Regional Planning Department. His research interests span concepts such as the Shareable City, Commons, Social Innovation, Collaborative Culture, New Media, Collective Intelligence, Open Innovation, Sharing Economy and Network Thinking. At CRESC he is using these concepts to study how local communities mediate the interaction between digital technologies and space.

Prior to his research career Domenico was a member of the *Ecosistema Urbano*, a Spanish architecture firm, from 2008 to 2011. He was also a consultant in 2011 for the ConectaDEL program of the *Inter-American Development Bank* and is a partner at Cercamia, an IT startup promoting a new alternative currency in Spain.



Camilla Lewis

I joined CRESC in January as a Research Associate on the Big Data and Urban Waste Management project. For this project, I am carrying out ethnographic research with the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority. In collaboration with the authority, I am exploring the ways in which data is handled and utilised at different stages of the waste management process. The research I have undertaken so far has been enormously varied. It has involved carrying out interviews with data analysts and also spending time on the bin wagons, observing how waste is collected and disposed. The subjects of big data and waste are new areas of interest to me, but I am enjoying building on my experiences of carrying out ethnographic in the city. In 2013 I completed a PhD in the anthropology department at the University of Manchester. My thesis was an ethnography of East Manchester, an area of the city which has undergone repeated waves of urban redevelopment. My research explored long-standing residents' responses to urban change and focused in particular on the themes of community and social class. I am greatly enjoying the opportunity of work within a team of researchers at CRESC and am looking forward to reporting my findings back to the larger research team on the 'Socialising Big Data' project.

Annual Conference, 2014: Power, Culture and Social Framing

Wednesday September 3, 2014 - Friday September 5, 2014, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester

What is social and cultural change? How are the public agendas for framing change set? What do they conceal? How do they reproduce inequalities? And how might they be contested? These are the core questions for the 2014 CRESC Conference.

'Epochal' theorising will not do. Structures are real, but the extent to which they reflect simple patterns is limited. Instead we need to ask well-theorised and ambitious questions about particular institutions, networks and practices and their changing intersections with power and inequalities. In the final CRESC conference we are seeking theoretically informed and empirically-grounded contributions that explore change, power and inequality, ask how these are framed, and explore how dominant framings might be contested. We invite well-theorised empirical submissions in any area including the following:

• Finance and the economy

What kinds of mechanisms sustain the power of business elites? How do these work? How can we reveal the undisclosed that sustains financial and business power? And how can we reframe issues in ways that allow public discussion of alternatives?

• National culture and 'soft power'

Technical change, privatisation and transnationalism are changing the character of national 'soft power', but what mechanisms are at work in this transformation? How do they harden inequalities, nationalisms and racisms? And where are the possible sites of resistance?

• Cities

Cultures and social divisions grow out of the power-saturated material realities of the city, but how do these processes work? What tools do we need to understand the interrelations between urban cultures and materials? And how might we open up spaces to alternatives?

• Infrastructures

Infrastructures reflect state decentralisation and fragmentation, but what are the material politics in play? How does power circulate between political, business and cultural elites, experts, and diverse publics? How might we explore and reframe the shifting character of political power?

For further details please visit:

<http://www.cresc.ac.uk/events/annual-conference-2014-power-culture-and-social-framing>



• Participation

The idea of 'participation' includes some and excludes others, so how and where are boundaries drawn, and who or what is being counted in or out? How do policy models frame their questions in ways that obscure exclusion and inequality? What assumptions do they depend on and how might alternatives be articulated?

• Class

Social stratification has an important cultural dimension, so what tools do we need to understand this? How do cultural distinctions re-articulate and obscure power and class inequalities? And how do processes of cultural stratification operate in the life course and between generations?