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Making Multiculturalism.

Sophie Watson, Sociology Department, Open University, Milton
Keynes, MK76AA. UK

Abstract

Urbanists seeking to undermine or challenge pessimistic accounts of prevalent racism and anti-migrant feeling in cities have articulated and mobilised discourses of everyday multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, multicultural drift, rubbing along and transculturalism. This paper, through a range of ethnographic methods, explores these notions in a locality of Camden, North London, arguing for the notion of 'making multiculturalism' as a way of emphasizing how everyday multiculturalism is situated and plays out in specific local socio-cultural and historical contexts. In so doing it considers the extent to which the locality follows the perceived trend in many globalized cities towards the acquisition of habits or capacities for diverse individuals to share space with relative harmony and tolerance. Second, it seeks to explore what are the elements and components of everyday multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism or conviviality assembled in this space. Third, it asks the question - how are these multicultural settlements disrupted and fractured?

Keywords

Multiculturalism, Conviviality, Cosmopolitanism, City, Migrants, Public Space

Urbanists seeking to undermine or challenge pessimistic accounts of prevalent racism, dystopia, fear of strangers, dissonance, hopelessness, urban anxiety, have sought to mobilise different and less pessimistic accounts of co-existence of different others in the city, drawing on a rich terrain of theoretical work, as well as empirical studies to support their claims. In this vein discourses of everyday multiculturalism (Wise and Velayutham 2009), cosmopolitanism (Noble 2013; Kendall et al.2009), multicultural drift (Watson, & Saha 2013), conviviality (Gilroy 2004; Amin 2008), rubbing along (Watson 2006), transculturalism (see Meer, Modood and Zapata-Barrero 2016) have been articulated. Each denotes different framings of an urban world that is not as divided or segregated on racial/ethnic grounds as some politicians, the media, and also theorists would have us believe. This is not simply an academic endeavor or gesture, rather, for many it is seen as a political strategy to reframe and refute negative discourses which in part construct the very world that they aim to describe. Fear breeds fear, and anxieties breed anxieties, as it were, with often-disastrous effects: the unknown stranger becomes the cause of all evil (Kristeva 1991). The referendum in Britain on the EU, and the ways in which migration was deployed by the leave campaign as a politics of fear and xenophobia is a case in point.

As a contributor to these debates, I was motivated by a concern with how much the current swathe of Islamophobic and anti-migrant expressed sentiment in the public sphere, described real shifts on the ground or was having detrimental effects on the micro-politics and textures of urban localities where many people

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across different ethnicities, including white, live and work side by side. The locality selected for such an enquiry was an area that had revealed growing tensions, resentments and nostalgia for an idealized and romantic past of a homogenous community some ten years ago, as long-term residents witnessed a rising number of migrants from South Asia, parts of Africa and the Middle East (Watson and Wells 2005; Wells and Watson 2005). The area, often referred to as Queen’s Crescent which is the market street bisecting its heart, in the Gospel Oak ward of the London borough of Camden, has a particular socio- spatial arrangement that is unusual amongst studies of inter-cultural, trans-cultural or multi-cultural mixing ((Wise and Velayutham 2009, 2014; Noble 2013; Hall2015;Hall,King,and Finlay 2016). Though similarly inscribed by complex local and transnational crossings and settlements, it is bounded by some of the richest housing in London, recently designated the super-rich by Webber and Burrows (2015). Observing the changes over the last decade as a local resident, with careful attentiveness to material, visual, physical signs and shifts, and casual conversation on the street (see Back 2015), my initial sense was of an apparent growing and ‘successful’ everyday multiculturalism as described by the contributors to Wise and Velayutham’s (2009) edited collection. However, I was curious to examine this impression in more depth, and excavate what might lie beneath the surface, or not, of the apparent harmony.

There were three specific research questions that motivated the research. First, to what extent did the locality follow the perceived trend in many globalized cities (Khoo 2010; Radice 2009) towards the acquisition of habits or a capacity for diverse individuals to

share space with relative harmony and tolerance – variously termed conviviality, cosmopolitanism and/or everyday multiculturalism. For Gilroy (2004) convivial culture describes the lively everyday interaction of ordinary people of different ethnicities in parts of British cities, where the notion of conviviality moves away from fixed notions of race and identity. Watson (2006) grounds this concept in the everyday and often fleeting encounters between different others in the interstitial spaces of the city, while Wise and Velayutham (2014) put the term to work empirically by asking what is its texture, consistency, content and what practices, dispositions and ideas underpin it? Cosmopolitanism, for Noble (2013, 167), eschewing its application to a privileged elite offers a way of ‘reorienting debates about the formation of dispositions that are conducive to convivial intercultural relations’, but he extends this rather abstract formulation to the notion of ‘cosmopolitan habits’ which he sees as a ‘web’ or ‘an assemblage of feelings, attitudes and practices that coalesce as a disposition’ (168). This can only be understood, he suggests, (see also Kendall, Skrbis, and Woodward 2009) by analyzing the situated conduct of humans. Everyday multiculturalism is defined by Wise and Velayutham (2009,3) as the ‘everyday practice and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter’. Each of these terms inflects and informs the notion of making multiculturalism deployed here.

My second research question is what constitutes the elements of these terms and to suggest the line of argument that emerged-how is everyday multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism or conviviality made and what are its components? Third, what is the assemblage of forces fracturing these achievements in living

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across differences in the city that many of us want to celebrate, defend and encourage?

This research was based on a range of ethnographic methods committed to Back’s (2015, 821) notion of ‘cultivating a sociological sensibility (which) allows us to remark on what is otherwise passed over as unremarkable’. Twenty local people were selected for interview who represented key positions in the community including the Chair and Secretary of the Queen’s Crescent Community Association (QCCA), the council officer for the market redevelopment, the manager of the local library, the heads and governors of the local schools, the editor of the Kentish Towner, a local architect, the Chair of the community garden, the police, the Chair of Gospel Oak ward, members of the residential associations, the leader of the mosque. Several shopkeepers and traders representing a range of businesses from tailoring, grocery, halal meat, to the newsagent, off-licence and fruit and vegetables were also interviewed. All interviews were transcribed. In addition a focus group was held with the local police group, police were accompanied on the beat, I participated at several community meetings and events, and visits to the area over several years, including on market days, were recorded in diary notes.

Introducing Queen's Crescent.

Queen's Crescent? It's a microcosm of society. Darian – mini cab driver.

Queen's Crescent describes the part of Gospel Oak ward, which is bounded by Prince of Wales Road on the Southern end, Mansfield Road on the Northern end, Malden Road on the West and Grafton Road on the East, dissected in the middle by the Crescent itself which contains the market and main shopping area. The ward is predominantly made up of social housing (50%), with 28% owner occupation, and 20% private rented and 2% shared/other accommodation (Census 2011) constituting the remaining half. In the 1960s row upon row of old terrace housing was torn down to make way for housing that was seen as cutting edge and ahead of its time, winning architecture prizes for its designs (Young 2016). By the 2000s much of the housing was

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run down and dilapidated, used by Camden council to house the large number of migrants and refugees accepted into the borough. These estates are bordered by terrace housing which has become increasingly gentrified over the last two decades, with average house prices in 2016 well over £1 million. The locality itself is cut off from the rest of Kentish Town by the railway, with only one road entering the area from the main high street.

A report by the Gospel Oak partnership (2016) points to the relative deprivation of the area that contains the two most deprived LSOAs (geographical areas of around 1500 people used for processing data) out of a total of 133 LSOAs in Camden. Nevertheless there is a great disparity between the wealthiest and the poorest parts, for which the Index of Multiple Deprivation indicators reveal both income and employment deprivation in the Queen’s Crescent part, where older people and particularly children are disproportionately affected. Estimates in mid-2011 suggest 43% of children in Gospel Oak are living in poverty. Fewer people of working age in Gospel Oak are economically active compared to national figures.

The Gospel population has a white majority (56.0%). Of the minority ethnic groups, the largest group is Black. 10.0% of residents identify themselves as being from a Black background (of which most are Black African), 9.2% from an Asian background (largely Bangladeshi) and 4.0% from a mixed background. 3.5% describe their background as Chinese or Other. Reported crime rates are low (60 per 1000 persons,

1 compared to 399 per persons in Holborn) dramatically reduced
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3 from a decade earlier through concentrated police strategies and
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5 local activism, as we see shortly. Nevertheless the image of the
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7 area remains highly negative, particularly in the local press. A
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9 letter to the Camden New Journal from Chris Fagg, chairman of
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11 Gospel Oak Safer Neighbourhoods Citizens Panel, to the local
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13 newspaper described a packed *'public meeting of Gospel Oak*
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15 *residents (which) condemned negative reporting on Gospel Oak*
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17 *by the Camden New Journal, and supported their local police*
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19 *team..., Kiln Place residents in particular were outraged by the*
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21 *tone of the CNJ report which seemed to suggest that local*
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23 *policing was invisible. They had nothing but the highest praise for*
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25 *Gospel Oak Safer Neighbourhoods TeamFar from the CNJ's*
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27 *preferred image of a deprived ward shivering in fear, the meeting*
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29 *showed Gospel Oak to be a thriving community, fully able to*
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31 *tackle its challenges with vigour and confidence'* (Camden New
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33 Journal 2016).
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40 Making Multiculturalism.

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44 In next part of the paper I argue that everyday multiculturalism,
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46 intercultural conviviality and urban cosmopolitanism, not only
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48 need to be explored in specific urban contexts to tease out their
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50 complexities as many writers have sought to do (for example, the
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52 edited collection by Wise and Veluyatham, 2009), but also that
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54 these describe situated settlements that are assembled and
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56 precarious, and open to disruption and fracture. Through the
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58 research in this apparently successful multicultural space, as
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articulated by all the respondents as the dominant narrative, I hoped to explore how multiculturalism is made, and what processes contribute to its fracture.

Habit

A recent special issue of *Body and Society* (2013 19(2&3)) explored the resurgence of interest in the subject of habit. Following Noble (2013), I suggest that the notion of habit might be useful in thinking through how intercultural conviviality as living with differences – works in practice in particular places. There is a considerable literature on habit that Bennett et al. (2013) examine in their introduction to the issue, from which I draw several points of relevance here. The shift from a Cartesian/Kantian to the Ravaissou-Bergson-Deleuze way of thinking represents a shift from seeing habit as ‘automatic, unthinking repetition’ and a ‘negative counterpoint to the processes of self-making’ to a conception of habit where ‘human history, culture and freedom emerge out of capacities for change and adaptation that humans share with other forms of life, and indeed, with matter’(Bennett, Dodsworth, and Noble 2013, 7). For Grosz (2013), in the same volume, this allows a more creative view of habit that is open-ended and dynamic, looking to the future and its multiple possibilities rather than consolidating patterns established in the past. This allows for the possibility that entrenched negative responses and behaviours of already existing populations to newcomers-often embedded in nostalgic renditions of an idealized past (Watson and Wells, 2005,Wells and Watson 2005) might be differently configured. Noble (2013) usefully explores

such an idea through proposing the notion of 'cosmopolitan habits' which are the practices and capacities that people develop for living with differences in the city – 'the routinized "civic virtues" of intercultural life'. He thus argues for an observational methodology that attempts to understand how these civic and cosmopolitan virtues are enacted and performed in specific sites.

Turning to Queen's Crescent, what new habits and practices amongst the longer established mainly white residents, had emerged as the area diversified, and what were the indicators of openness and change in Queen's Crescent? Let us consider Larry's grocery store which extends onto the street on market days to a stall selling predominantly cakes and biscuits. The shop was established following the Second World War by the current Larry's father, and has been staffed almost exclusively by different family members all of whom live locally. Larry, father and son, have prided themselves on selling good low-price products that are competitive with the local supermarkets. When I first encountered the shop, it had a very traditional cheese and meat counter (blue cheese and sliced ham were its most exotic offerings), and sold an extensive range of traditional 'English' goods from tins, biscuits, flours and packet juices to toiletries and household goods. As Larry pointed out- it never sold newspapers or fruit and vegetables, since they did not want to compete with their old friends Bill the newsagent, and Jack of the fruit and vegetable stall. When the area started to change with gentrification at its borders, and in-migration of people from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, it wasn't trendy foods catering to the new middle classes that appeared on the shelves, instead an

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extensive range of rice, lentils, spices, sauces and pickles gradually pushed the more traditional English foods from their primacy of place. As a result the shop is always full of a diversity of shoppers from the locality and beyond, where they encounter friendly greetings from Larry and his family. As Larry (interview 2 February 2016 said

People want to come and live here, don't they? Have a better life. You can't blame them really. Where a lot of them come from they haven't got nothing...They all come in here. I mean a lot of them have been here, their mother and fathers are here so the daughters were coming when they were little babies some of them, now they're grown up with kids and I know all their kids.

Larry's strategy to include more diverse foods in his shop as the local population changed has contributed to a shift in the dispositions of those around him. In this sense changing matter – food- in this site has opened up possibilities for new intercultural convivial encounters and habits across differences, which has effects on the local community more widely.

As Sharma– a local Asian born resident- said: *everyone goes there- they are welcome in burkhas. Everyone loves Larry.*

Such conduct relates to another way in which situated multiculturalism is made. Hall and Smith (2015) have evoked the notions of urban care and repair (following Thrift 2005) and, drawing on Plummer's (2013) exhortation to sociologists to look for utopia in small daily acts of empathy and justice, to suggest that a politics of hope can be grounded in small everyday practices of everyday kindness and repair in the city. Using the

example of street cleaners and outreach workers for the homeless (Hall and Smith 2015) point to the importance of not only acts of physical repair but acts of social repair also, which have the potential to open up possibilities for a renewed politics of hope. Larry's small acts of modifying his stock to reflect the diversity of consumers, signaling an acceptance of difference, could perhaps be seen in this light. So also might the initiatives in the library (Pete interview 25.02.2016)) where the children's library is given over to a homework club, through the rearrangements of the space and computers, for the poorer and more excluded (often Somali) mothers and children. Another such space is the Dome that was built specifically as a sporting centre for young people. These acts of urban repair, care and kindness are, nevertheless, inscribed and enacted in relations of power, where some people can choose to perform them, while others cannot.

The research in Queen's Crescent revealed a third dimension of how multiculturalism as situated everyday practice is assembled- and that is the role of state institutions and their representatives. Crucial in this environment were the police and the schools. First, the police. In the mid-2000s, Queen's Crescent had an infamous reputation as a site of violence, drugs and crime, born out by the police reported crime statistics, and promulgated through the press. An Observer article (2000) detailing a killing in the locality described the extreme effects of the replacement of the traditional economy with a drug economy on *'Queen's Crescent market, which is almost landlocked by railway lines and road-blocks..Ron.. told me about an old neighbour and schoolmate of ours who was*

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jailed a couple of years ago for the murder of another local in what was described as a disagreement over drugs. Before the case came to trial, the main witness, who refused police protection, was also shot dead. Jesus, I thought, that's the kind of thing that happens in The Sopranos, not Kentish Town...."Queen's Crescent has become a no-go area,' said another former resident".

This image of the area as dangerous, violent and drug fueled persisted through the first decade of the century, constituting a perception that inward migration had contributed to its decline. In a letter to the Camden Journal Celine, secretary of the Haverstock Ward Safer Neighbourhood Citizen Panel referred to the alarm amongst local residents at the growing number of serious attacks on shopkeepers and residents and the 'totally unacceptable anti-social' behaviour, except amongst the police themselves (CNJ 2006). Sharma, a local resident and campaigner around many local issues including 'local safer neighbourhoods' (interview 21.03.2016), described the atmosphere:

I can pinpoint the time when things were going really, really bad. That was in 2004/2005. I noticed ... I'm half-Indian and I was always very brown in the sun.... I remember coming out of my house and just feeling very ... certain white elements would look at you and.... I just felt like they were more antagonistic towards people who weren't white.

From 2008 a series of new strategies were initiated involving the appointment of new police to the area to work with key

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3 individuals, of whom Sharma was one. One initiative was to
4 increase police presence locally as a route to getting to know the
5 community and to becoming involved in local activities, such as
6 bike workshops for teenagers. As a result reported crime figures
7 fell. Sharma:
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14 *I could tell the sergeant, I could talk and then I could make a*
15 *complaint. I had an argument with an inspector on the phone, he*
16 *wouldn't have it any other way and I said no this is wrong. 'All I*
17 *can do is apologise.'*
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22 Jim (interview 30.01.2016) is the main constable for the area. He
23 described the different strategies for local policing from Safer
24 Neighbourhoods to the more proactive neighbourhood policing
25 team. From this interview, a focus group with three other police, a
26 walk through the neighbourhood and a day shadowing, it was clear
27 that the strategy to be involved on the ground, had produced both
28 detailed local knowledge, and strong connections between the
29 police and different members of the community, which had
30 contributed to the reduction in recorded crime over several years
31 (which reflect some shift, even if reported crime statistics should
32 be subject to some scrutiny). Jim:
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45 *Two-and-a-half years ago.... the youths that were 16 then were*
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47 *pain in the bum. Two years later they've moved on, they've*
48 *moved on very fast. Our process is about nipping those guys in*
49 *the bud and not letting them get control of little areas and streets*
50 *because they really do think they control it once they get hold of*
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it, and it's very hard to let them go. For me on team it was through the power of the law.

Of relevance to the argument here, was Jim's insistence on the lack of racially based abuse and crime in the locality, the misplaced use of the notion of Islamphobia, and the difficulty of changing the entrenched image of the area as unsafe and riven with division. Jim:

Right, well the demographics haven't changed. They're exactly the same. There's more migrants actually. It makes me laugh that ... it's just individuals getting on with their bloody daily lives out there... Well the perception doesn't seem to have changed. I find it quite irritating to be honest. I can't nail it down. ... if they got a handle on the market and it was better, it would break that barrier that people from there (across the notional borders) might come here instead of bugging off up Highgate to some farmers' market, but there's the invisible barrier to walk past from their red-brick Victorian places into grey, austere, sixties shitty rat-runs.....I'll bring in the hate crime stats – we haven't bloody got any. Why? We haven't got any!

And finally: I really dislike this Islamophobia. I don't see any problem going on. Other problems, and it's across all cultures with all age groups. There's no ripping off of burkas and I'll tell you what, if there's a ripping off of burka in here... if someone makes an allegation of a crime...I'll go and get a crime report. If it's a hate crime, no matter what type, I have to immediately inform the Chief Inspector.

The significance of statutory institutions was not restricted to the police alone. The two primary schools, Carlton and Rhyl, played a different, but equally important role. According to the head teachers (interviews 4.05.2016) tolerance of cultural difference was core to the curriculum, and any talk or actions considered racist by students, was squashed immediately. Saura- a school governor at Rhyl drew attention to the positive impact of these practices imparted from the children at school back to their home environments. Non- government organisations in Queens' Crescent played an equally important role in making everyday multiculturalism. Here the Queen's Crescent Community Association, an independent charity founded in 2002, was particularly important, running youth programmes, language classes, lunch clubs for older people (mainly white), sports activities and employment services, which according to Mehmet (interview 16.03.2016), its director, were accessed by a diversity of populations:

We got funding from everywhere to make sure that young people were having a safe space and engaged in positive activities. The problems the young people had and the reason why they were out on the street is because they had nothing to do. Out on the street they were exposed to different groups of young people, they were exposed to different things - be part of a gang or get into dealing drugs or get into crime, that was the only things to do on the street. If they weren't, they would be a victim... I think what we did was create an environment where they actually didn't have to be part of that and so they were exposed to different kind of positive workshops around guns, around crime.. raising

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awareness around what their rights were, because sometimes black young people particularly were victimised by the police and we started telling them what their rights were and I think that helped them a lot.

Of equal importance also have been the many voluntary organisations associated with particular ethnic groups, such as the Somali women’s association, which are increasingly at risk of closure as the impact of the cuts to local authority expenditure take effect.

Materiality, Infrastructure and design

Strategies to promote and enhance interaction in public spaces are not new. Sennett’s (2010) call for flexible boundaries as opposed to borders spaces designed to translate Jacobs’ (1961) notion of eyes on the street to create safe spaces, or lower tech, banal designs, rather than over specified high tech designs (Lownsborough and Beundermann 2007) have long been proposed to encourage community cohesion and inter-ethnic interaction (ibid, 13). Sharma (interview 16.03.2016) recognized this:

They wanna reduce the area, they wanna make less walkways but they don’t understand in their idiotic, simplistic minds the more you build up and enclose, the less people are gonna keep an eye on what’s going on down on the ground, right? This is what happens and it’s been proven.

Fortier (2010, 18) takes this further in questioning the ways in which the ‘community cohesion agenda relies on strategies of

governance that seek to design particular kinds of behaviours such as mixing, which are imagined to be neatly dispatched if the design conditions are right. In this research, the materiality of the space also mattered; several respondents emphasized the problems associated with segregated spaces of the 1960s urban designs the one hand, or the potentialities of certain more open public spaces of convivial inter-mixing such as the market on the other. The police were particularly attentive to the negative aspects of particular spaces:

Police focus group (22.02.2016)

Wendling itself is OK but the way it was designed in these fantastic sixties designs is not good for us, the way it links on. It's a pain in the arse, the architecture round here. It's such rat runs... we can't get police cars in there.

Bob (journalist Kentish Towner interview (29.01.2016) explained the persistence of the (negative) image of the area in terms of its impermeable boundaries- the railway track on one side and the two main roads on the North and South ends of the locality. Negative affect, distrust, fear and antagonism, expressed in a study of the area over 10 years ago (Watson and Wells, 2005, Wells and Watson 2005) was articulated through the trope of feeling trapped and cut off- as mirrored in the lay out of the streets- but these feelings appeared to have dissipated by 2016.

Finally, the infrastructure of the Queen's Crescent shopping street bears many resemblances to the transactional economies which assemble local/transnational network occurring in marginalized

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city streets (Hall,King,and Finlay 2016). In her study of the migrant infrastructures streets in Birmingham and Leicester Hall, King, and Finlay (2016 2) found a richness of urban livelihoods which emerged from the ‘complex interplay of constraints and circumventions’, that translated into a dynamic and changing city space, constituted in relations of subordination and resistance. Hall,King,and Finlay (2016) identifies the textured ways in which the translocation of dispositions and spaces from different parts of the globe recombine in new sites to form diverse economics and new urban migrant infrastructures which meet diverse needs of the local populations. In these processes, she suggests, the economic, social and spatial processes involved cannot be separated but are mutually implicated and enacted in daily transactions. What is offered is ‘a partial promise to the newcomer, a space of relative autonomy and invisibility, to obtain a foothold in the city’ (15). These same processes are evident in Queen’s Crescent. As an indicator of diversity- 44 languages are spoken at the local school, Rhyl, (head teacher interview). Though impossible to evidence in this research, the diversity of languages heard on the street is remarkable. In the last decade, the number of white English owned shops has declined dramatically, as halal butchers, vegetable and fruit shops and cafes take their place. A particular infrastructure, where shops rent out the pavement space for the erection of makeshift tables for the display of goods, constitutes a further informality of the sector, where migrants with minimal capital can construct a new business. These are spaces where the commerce and trade enacted is constituted by, and constitutive of, intermingling on an hour-by-hour basis. On every

street visit, the shops were full of customers, and shoppers and traders were engaged in chat, banter and laughter. A description of this as a cosmopolitan and convivial space would be hard to dispute. One Afghan fruit seller (interview 02.02.2016) when asked his view of the street said:

Nice, good place. Friendly people. I like it here. Friendly people, no argument too much. ... Different nationalities, Bengalis, most of them is Bengalis and Somalis. The white people are most friendly...They have good manners.

A similar socio-demographic shift has occurred at the Thursday and Saturday markets where the traders have shifted from a white majority to a very diverse group of Bangladeshi, African, and Middle Eastern people. This street market has thrived and declined in succession over the last decade, following strategies of investment or neglect. The most recent initiative to run the market and to build it up from a bedraggled row of stalls, was undertaken by the Queen's Crescent Community Association in 2014, who offered free pitches for 3-6 months for startups, training support, and the provision of infrastructures- tables, electric points. For two years, the market flourished under their management, with an impressive mix of stalls selling organic bread and fish, to Indian take away food and cheap household goods. But a decision by the council not to renew the contract led to its immediate deterioration once again in late 2015- a decision which arguably diminishes the opportunities for inter-cultural conviviality.

Unmaking multiculturalism- Fracturing conviviality.

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Inter-cultural conviviality is a precarious settlement that can be fractured with frightening speed when conditions change. As witnessed repeatedly in recent years, a terrorist attack carried out by an individual or group identified as Muslim, can destabilize an urban environment formerly characterized by easy ‘rubbing along’ or everyday multiculturalism, and be deployed by forces of conservatism to shore up racist views and strategies. I have argued so far that once it is ‘held’ in place, everyday multiculturalism requires active maintenance, attention and engagement, a reconstitution of entrenched habits and a politics of urban kindness (Hall and Smith 2015), which will be different in each and every context. This calls on urban researchers and activists to attend to the potentialities for rupture, for fractures, for disruptions to what may seem unremarkable - the ebbs and flows in the textures of daily urban life. These may be specific to a locality, and most often are, or suggest wider socio-cultural trends that can undermine what seems to be settled in place.

Though the research here revealed that an everyday multiculturalism had been constituted and held in place through different actors in Queen’s Crescent, which would have been unimaginable just a decade earlier, it also revealed emerging or hidden vulnerabilities beneath the surface. This research identified three rather different ways in which the apparent multicultural harmony might be threatened. First is the question of culture, and how this concept is understood and mobilized with particular effects. In her book *‘Multiculturalism without Culture’*, (2007) Phillips discusses the homogenous and reified versions of

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3 culture that are deployed by dominant groups to describe different
4 ethnicities, and thereby to hold them in place as 'other'. Ang
5 (2014, 1188) develops this idea to argue, in the context of
6 Chinese identity, that we need to analyse how 'changing historical
7 circumstances, geopolitical relationships and social and political
8 locations' shape the variables associated with such identities.
9 Though racist comments of the kind made in earlier studies of this
10 area were absent (Watson and Wells, 2005, Wells and Watson
11 2005) nevertheless, unwittingly respondents make particular
12 associations between people of one ethnicity and their imagined
13 culture, which is both drawn from their experience, but also
14 sometimes assumed on the basis of hearsay. Talking about the
15 community garden in Bassett Street, whose committee he chairs,
16 Roberto- a Spanish resident who defines himself as one of the
17 white middle classes, had distinct notions about the 'culture' of
18 the older Bengali women who did not see the value of the garden
19 in terms of collective ownership or community building (a point
20 reinforced in an interview with Saura). This was his account:

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22 *It was built by local residents and people who walked passed,*
23 *saw that it was happening and wanted to join in but by the time*
24 *that it was nearly finished people started appearing that wanted*
25 *growing spaces even though they hadn't done any work. They all*
26 *happened to be Bengali. It caused tension on one day because*
27 *basically what happened is that all the wooden frames had been*
28 *already allocated, all were filling in growing bags with soil and*
29 *they would do it themselves to claim. They would take a bag, put*
30 *it there, put a bag of soil there and put names like, 'This is*
31 *mine.'... It's the older generation of the Bengali community. Our*

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generation, like my generation, younger, they want to live according to British values but older generations that don't even speak the language,... Well the main problem is stealing. There's this issue with private property understanding, and cheating. There is one plot per household. They will try to get as many as possible.

Last time we had a collective action day ... I knew that they wouldn't show up unless I said something so for example I wrote, 'We're going to receive soil... We are gonna do it on the action collective day. If you're not there you're not gonna get soil for your box.' I wrote that because I knew there would be no volunteers unless they thought it was something for them to gain. So they showed up.

Clearly Roberto is describing events that took place. My point however, following Phillips (2007), is that once observed and articulated, there is a danger that notions of culture become fixed and hard to shift.

This ossification and homogenized version of culture as applied to specific ethnicities, connects with my second point which draws on Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2015) contention that justice is always spatialised. This is helpful for thinking through the notions of everyday multiculturalism, conviviality and cosmopolitanism also. According to this conception of spatial justice, the fact that people can't cohabit in exactly the same space, means conflict arises between bodies that are moved by a desire to occupy the same space at the same time. This is ultimately also a question of power. In their efforts to counter discourses of racism, everyday

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3 multiculturalism, conviviality and cosmopolitanism are terms
4 which can sometimes appear as evacuated by power. Yet as
5 anyone involved in the debate is all too aware, people do not rub
6 along as equals, since they come into the public sphere with
7 greater or lesser capacities to act, capacities which are articulated
8 in relations of inequality and difference, which may be marked by
9 gender, class, race, age, disability and other such divisions
10 (Watson, 2006; Iveson, 2007).
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14 What emerged in this research, I suggest, is a different kind of
15 spatial justice, not one about bodies wanting to occupy the same
16 space at the same time, rather, what might be called a discursive
17 justice, where some voices feel entitled to be heard- have 'air
18 space' to coin a phrase- while others do not. I am not referring
19 here to the act of speaking on behalf of one's community to
20 represent their interests –sometimes in ways that are distinctly
21 gendered (Phillips 2007). Rather I am referring to the sense of
22 entitlement to speak about others, to make judgments or
23 observations, which only some members of the community feel
24 authorised to do. This sense of entitlement is imbricated in
25 relations of power. In this research my concern was to explore
26 who could mobilise negative and excluding discourses about
27 others? For 'true' conviviality no one representative of a group
28 would be more able to speak in negative terms about another- or
29 at the very least, there would be some reciprocity – each would
30 feel empowered to do so. It is difficult to disentangle the effects of
31 being a researcher from a majority social group, which
32 undoubtedly would have its effects. Nevertheless, the
33 interviewees who were long term residents, usually white, felt able
34 to comment on other people's cultures and habits, in ways that
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were not found in reverse. What was striking was that not one of the Muslim people interviewed, including the secretary to the local mosque, shopkeepers and traders, or active community members like Mehmet of the QCCA or Saura the school governor, made negative comments about white people, or about the way they were treated by others in the locality (with the exception of Saura referring to the mid-2000s). Whereas, as alluded to earlier, the ‘white’ respondents both made comments which defined other people’s cultures, and were more able to articulate local, contradictions or ambiguities. This is a question of power, both in the sense that some people from the Muslim community feel disempowered from speaking or raising their concerns to strangers, on the one hand, and because white people are often seen as individuals, while minorities are imagined as homogenous ‘groups’ whose ‘cultures’ are ‘fixed’ (Bonnett, 2008), and where ‘complex stories and individuals [are reduced] to single narratives and an undifferentiated group (Garner, 2012,460)

Jim’s comments are illustrative:

‘You can see the Muslim mainly Somalian who keep themselves very much to themselves, it’s quite hard to break into that. I’ve actually got a tasking off the Chief Inspector to integrate them a bit more. It’s difficult. Just down to the culture. They want to talk between themselves. There’s obviously a massive language barrier amongst lots of them especially the women. I have my own thoughts on it. I don’t believe in a lot of that women sit this side, men sit that side, ... we seem to think it’s perfectly alright ... it’s not.

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Back to Queen's Crescent.. the Islamic community, they don't bloody talk to each other! The old Bengali guys don't talk to the old Somali guys and never the twain shall meet from what I've been hearing. Absolutely different cultures and we just go and stick a big Islam thing and say that is Islam community, and this is where the sneaky ones come in the middle and go, 'I speak for the Islamic community.' What you on about?

They're not anti-police ..a lot of them are just ... decent people, but it's that obviously cultural barrier is just big. We can have as many training sites as you want ... you're still a bloke in a uniform and a bloke in a uniform in their country generally hits them on the head for not queuing in a straight line, or shoot them.

The third threat to intercultural conviviality (far easier to evidence) is the regeneration of the area. Between November 2015 and January 2016, Camden council enacted a public consultation on the regeneration of the Gospel Oak ward, the results of which included more open space, improved street environments and housing quality, safety, expansion of the mosque, extended youth services and support for the library. Despite the initiative, private public partnerships and development are rapidly making incursions on the commercial and housing space of the locality. As Robin of the QCCA explained, despite agreements for a certain proportion of social housing, in the majority of the developments, such as in Vicars Road, the bulk of the units are private selling at over £1 million- 'there's no concept of what they are doing to the community'.

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Robin (interview 24.05.2016): *I think there's an element of class cleansing. Gospel Oak is ... if you look at the health inequality between those across Mansfield Road and those on this side of the ward.. People here die 12 years earlier than those who die across the road, and I think you're going to see a massive change in that. It's an NW5 postcode, it's close to Hampstead Heath, so even if you compare the house prices between the two it's about £300-400,000 difference between them, so once you've redeveloped it and you put those fancy homes, it's going to bring it around to what the rest of the area is. So for the developers this is a perfect cash cow.. it's a goldmine*

And Sharma *What regeneration? That's not regeneration. The council want a carte blanche now, they want a clean way through to putting as much public land and property into private hands.*

David (interview 22.3.2016), a local architect, pointed to another trend in development following central government changes in permitted development which he suggested 'means development which doesn't require planning consent'. For him the most detrimental London- wide shift has been from commercial space to residential space:

'The Enders Lane workshops.. these are all classic 19th century blocks that should be different kinds of commercial use, providing a very high density of jobs because that arrangement pulls in lots of different businesses and kinds of workers, which then supports retail economy - places like Queen's Crescent.. so that's going or has gone from this area..the community investment programme is a slippery eel..its meant to be about the backlog of

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3 *maintenance..the crudest part is it involves a lot of sell offs..they've*
4 *done a show of reasonable governance so you've identified a*
5 *whole set of properties that are surplus to requirements.. and then*
6 *you sell them into an overprices property market and some of the*
7 *sites are workspace'.*
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14 At the micro end of the scale, but also detrimental, are Larry's
15 negotiations to sell his shop to Tesco to gain himself ' time to go
16 fishing' after a working life that began at 6 in the morning and
17 ended at 7pm at night. As Phillip of the QQCA (01.06.2016) put it:
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24 *Tesco's is moving in and the area's gonna change now because*
25 *once Tesco's moves in you're gonna then see other chain stores*
26 *or cafes, Costa and ... they will move in because the estate is*
27 *changing. You can see there's a lot of regeneration going on. The*
28 *percentage in terms of affordable housing is low and the council's,*
29 *according to their staff they've promised 50% but it's looking less*
30 *than 5% of social housing within those new developments and the*
31 *rents in the council housing have increased as well!*
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41 What these comments support is my argument that the physical
42 and social infrastructures underpinning the everyday
43 multiculturalism that has been constituted over many years are in
44 the process of being dismantled, through a drive for profit in the
45 capital's residential sector.
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51 Conclusion

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In conclusion, I have sought to argue that multiculturalism as a category for sociological inquiry has to be interrogated in its specificity and context. Multiculturalism is made not given, and its emergence and continuity is precarious, unpredictable, partial and contingent. The locality selected for the study was Gospel Oak, a traditional white working class area in Camden, North London, where a diversity of people have recently assembled from different parts of the world and are embedded in complex transnational and cultural networks. The concern was to explore how differences were being negotiated at a moment when discourses of anti-migrant sentiment were widely circulating in the public sphere. It sought to unpack how what appeared to be the ‘successful’ enactment of multicultural and intercultural practices was made, and held in place in this locality, on the one hand, and how such conviviality might be fractured. For me this is an important political question, as anti migrant sentiment fuels populist parties across Europe and beyond, and measures to restrict the movement of refugees and migrants at borders are increasingly restrictive and inhumane.

Through and exploration of everyday life, this article explored how ‘successful’ everyday multiculturalism, intercultural conviviality, and cosmopolitanism unfolds and settles in the day to day textures of learned habits and their disruptions, sometimes unremarkable acts of urban and social repair, in the policies and practices of institutions, and in the particular material and design infrastructures of place. The research confirmed the initial impressions of the area as a ‘successful’ multicultural space, where multiple populations rubbed along in apparent harmony. Respondents drawn across diverse ethnicities, including white,

1 reported few racist incidents or practices in the locality, neither did
2 they make racist comments themselves (in contrast to studies of
3 this area over a decade ago (Watson and Wells, 2005, Wells and
4 Watson 2005). However, the article also revealed that this
5 multicultural settlement was vulnerable to fracture, through
6 entrenched notions of culture where notions of ethnicity and
7 associated cultural practices were homogenized, through
8 relations of power, and through policies of urban regeneration and
9 development which were transforming the area in the interests of
10 private profit.
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12 In conclusion, this article has argued that urbanists concerned with
13 everyday multiculturalism might usefully adopt the notion of
14 making multiculturalism as a route to exploring and unpacking
15 what processes and practices hold a multicultural settlement in
16 place (or not) in specific socio-cultural contexts, thus drawing
17 attention to the active way in which multicultural spaces are
18 constituted, maintained and negotiated. It has done so in the spirit
19 of what Lancione (2016) refers to as a 'micro-political effort, a
20 minor theory' which is crafted to push our understanding of
21 received categories further. As such it has also contributed to a
22 now well-established and important set of literatures within
23 sociology, geography, cultural studies and other disciplines, which
24 extend and expand our understandings of multiculturalism,
25 intercultural conviviality and cosmopolitanism. In a world where
26 these are under severe threat from right-wing currents and politics
27 across the globe, it is increasingly important that academics take
28 such endeavours seriously.
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