



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

**University of Leeds  
Human Rights Journal**

Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2016

**University of Leeds**  
**Human Rights Journal**

*A Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Journal*

## University of Leeds Human Rights Journal

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*Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2016*

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## Letter from the Editor

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Dear Readers,

It is with great privilege that I welcome you to Volume 4, Issue 1, of the University of Leeds Human Rights Journal. I have had a great year working alongside an excellent team, and I must begin by thanking them for their sustained commitment to producing another high quality volume. To the Managing Editor, Creative Advisor, Peer Reviewers, Graphic Designer and Online Co-ordinator: thank you for your outstanding work ethic, without which we simply would not have a journal that we're all incredibly proud of and excited to share with all the students at the University of Leeds.

As the only undergraduate journal of its kind in the country, the HRJ has provided a unique platform for academic research, alongside the opportunity for students to submit creative pieces, since 2012. I have now been a member of the Editorial Board for two years; in that time I have had the privilege of reviewing some of the best academic work the students of Leeds have to offer. As I graduate this year, I have full faith that the journal will continue to flourish.

This year's journal consists of work from students of History, Languages, Politics, Philosophy, Sociology, Dentistry and English. Our pieces take us across the globe – from Israel to America and from Saudi Arabia to Uganda. I am also delighted to publish some fantastic creative pieces, including an interview, alongside some inspiring photography and poetry. The peer reviewers had a difficult task narrowing down submissions but this stands as testament to the talent and motivation of the students here at Leeds. We thank all of our contributors for their fantastic submissions. We were overwhelmed by both the quality and quantity of the work we received this year.

The funding for this year's journal was generously provided by the Faculty of ESSL and the Faculty of Arts. I speak on behalf of the Editorial team and contributors when I thank the aforementioned Faculties.

I hope that you enjoy reading this journal as much as we have enjoyed collating it.

Positions for next year's Editorial Team open at the end of May. Please contact us at [hrj@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:hrj@leeds.ac.uk) if you are interested in applying.

In solidarity,

**Jane Eagles**

*Editor-in-Chief, 2015-2016*

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## Friendship and Censure - Saudi Arabia and the role of Anglo-American foreign policy

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*Benji Bown*

*This essay will examine the relationship of the British and American governments to the state of Saudi Arabia in order to point out certain features of Anglo-American foreign policy in general, especially in relation to countries that abuse human rights. The goal is not to prescribe an alternative course of action, but merely to point out inconsistencies in the official story that citizens of the world are told about foreign policy - inconsistencies which could be seen to point to a fundamental duplicity on the part of countries like Britain and America with regards to foreign policy. Finally, questions will be raised about the motives and intended goals of that foreign policy, questions that result from the information examined in the bulk of the essay. These questions end the essay rather than beginning it - the point of the piece is to lend the questions a sense of urgency, not to embark on the long and complicated task of answering them (although the author's initial inclinations about how to do so may inevitably be gleaned along the way). Thus the essay is not making an argument as such, beyond arguing that these questions are in desperate need of fresh attention.*

We are all told a story about foreign policy. Part of that story is about human rights. This essay will explore inconsistencies in the story told to the citizens of Britain and America by their respective governments insofar as that story concerns human rights. Though our past as global super-pirates is sometimes sheepishly acknowledged in passing, our present role is now professed to be that of a shining global beacon of Western liberal values - and nothing is a more important part of Western liberal values, the story goes, than human rights. Foreign policy, we are told, plays a part in this - our relations, diplomatic or otherwise, to other governments are at least partly determined by how well we judge that they behave towards their citizens and neighbours. It is the contention of this essay that if this story is true then there are certain patterns in events that are in serious need of explanation. These patterns are numerous, but this essay will focus on Anglo-American relations with Saudi Arabia for two reasons. Recent developments, outlined below, make the Saudi example a particularly pertinent one at the time of writing. Furthermore, the Middle East has been a recent common target for Western moral condemnation, especially in Britain and America. Examining our relations to the region's key Sunni power might help to highlight the strange duplicity of that condemnation.

On 2nd January 2016,<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr was put to death<sup>2</sup> by order of the supreme court of Saudi Arabia. Nimr al-Nimr was a prominent Shi'ite cleric in the Sunni-controlled kingdom, and had been a thorn in the side of the establishment for years. He had repeatedly called for free elections, and believed that unless the Shi'a majority<sup>3</sup> of the oil-rich Eastern part of the country were

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<sup>1</sup> Sources differ as to whether the date was 1st or 2nd January.

<sup>2</sup> The method is also uncertain - we know that on that day 43 people were beheaded and 4 shot, but sources differ as to which method Nimr al-Nimr was subjected to.

<sup>3</sup> The Shi'a are a majority in this region, but a minority in terms of the country as a whole.



treated more equally, the region should secede from the kingdom altogether.<sup>4</sup> Charged by the Saudi state with “foreign meddling” and “taking up arms against the security forces”, his sentence was seen by many as politically motivated and part of an entrenched system of Sunni/state repression of the country’s Shi’a minority’s voices.<sup>5 6</sup> The charge of “taking up arms” was especially curious, seeing as he explicitly and publicly repudiated violence as a weapon, calling instead for the “roar of the word” as the only acceptable alternative.<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International denounced the trial process itself as “deeply flawed”, since none of the known eyewitnesses to Nimr al-Nimr’s crimes were called to testify.<sup>8</sup> Quite apart from any principled rejection of the idea of capital punishment, the feebleness of the charges and his reputation as an anti-state agitator show that his execution is clearly reprehensible - an obvious instance of brutal state repression. Accordingly, his execution, along with those of the 46 others executed that day, was roundly condemned by many human rights organisations, as well as supra-national political bodies like the European Union and the United Nations.<sup>9 10</sup>

The response of Western governments, however, was less clear. News of the executions went public in Britain on the 2nd January, and yet David Cameron’s perfunctory statement was issued on the 4th, days after the denunciations by Hilary Benn (the shadow foreign secretary) and Tim Farron (the leader of the Liberal Democrat party).<sup>11 12 13</sup> The White House’s response was tepid, focusing on the potential consequences for regional sectarian tensions (a legitimate concern). It stopped short, however, of explicitly denouncing the

legitimacy of the actual sentence.<sup>14</sup> No pre-emptive diplomatic intervention had been forthcoming, even after a fifteen-party petition by human rights NGOs to the US Secretary of State (the letter was written months before the execution, allowing ample time for a response) and there were no real diplomatic consequences either.<sup>15 16</sup> These lukewarm reactions, vastly less courageous than the response of independent pressure groups like Amnesty International, are just the latest in a long tradition of tolerating human rights abuses committed by one’s geo-political allies. This toleration is usually dressed up in a thin veneer of concern. Almost a year before January’s mass executions, for example, Prince Charles visited Saudi Arabia, supposedly to raise concerns over the imprisonment and flogging of the blogger and activist Raif Badawi. Badawi, designated a “prisoner of conscience” by Amnesty International, was a vocal but peaceful critic of the regime, who had never called for violence.<sup>17</sup> The prince later said that he had received a “friendly” response.<sup>18</sup> Unsurprisingly, Badawi’s imprisonment continues. Indeed, the word “friendly” may point to the real problem. It is often difficult, we all know, to condemn our “friends”, here defined as “those from whom we stand to gain”, since that is the most likely basis for friendship between countries with little else in common. If our friends’ actions prove to be consistently and immutably egregious, however, we might reconsider our friendship. At that point, condemnation presumably becomes easier. The unwillingness of Britain and America to stop treating countries like Saudi Arabia as friends opens them up to the charge of double standards: they are willing to truly condemn the

4 Reuters, Watching Bahrain, Saudi Shi’ites demand reforms <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-shiites-idUSTRE71L33820110222>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

5 Independent, Sheikh Nimr al-nimr Profile: A ‘Holy Warrior’ who called for elections in Saudi Arabia <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/sheikh-nimr-al-nimr-executed-a-holy-warrior-who-called-for-elections-in-the-saudi-kingdom-a6793656.html>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

6 Amnesty International, Saudi Arabia: Appalling death sentence against Shi’a cleric must be quashed <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/10/saudi-arabia-appalling-death-sentence-against-shi-cleric-must-be-quashed/>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 European Union External Action, Statement of the HR/VP Federica Mogherini on the executions in Saudi Arabia [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160102\\_01\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160102_01_en.htm)

10 Press TV, Sheikh Nimr execution is against international law: UN <<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/01/03/444376/Saudi-Arabia-Sheikh-Nimr-alNimr-UN-Zeid-Raad-alHussein-Qatif-Riyadh/>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

11 Independent, David Cameron accused of turning “blind eye” to mass executions in Saudi Arabia <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/saudi-arabia-executions-david-cameron-nimr-al-nimr-mecca-a6794436.html>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

12 Telegraph, Iran supreme leader says Saudi faces ‘divine revenge’ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudi-arabia/12077919/Saudi-Arabia-beheadings-highest-in-two-decades.html>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

13 Guardian, Farron calls on Prime Minister to do more about death penalty abroad <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2016/jan/02/middle-east-condemns-saudi-execution-of-shia-cleric-live#block-5687e63ae4b096b9dad43fc0>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

14 United States State Department, Press Statement on Saudi Executions <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/250934.htm>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

15 Shia Rights Watch, NGOS URGE SEC. KERRY TO ACT IN CASE OF SHEIKH NIMR AL-NIMR <<http://shiarightswatch.org/ngos-urge-sec-kerry-to-act-in-case-of-sheikh-nimr-al-nimr/>> [accessed 6th February 2016]

16 The letter, which gives more detail of Nimr al-Nimr’s arrest and imprisonment, can be accessed here: <[http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015.11.20\\_IRF-Sheikh-Nimr\\_Final1.pdf](http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015.11.20_IRF-Sheikh-Nimr_Final1.pdf)>

17 Amnesty International, Saudi Arabia uses capital offence of ‘apostasy’ to stifle debate <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2012/12/saudi-arabia-uses-capital-offence-apostasy-stifle-debate/>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

18 Guardian, Prince Charles raises Raif Badawi case with Saudi king <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/10/prince-charles-raif-badawi-saudi-king>> [accessed 6th Feb 2016]

actions of any country (true condemnation here defined as explicit and public moral judgement and concomitant sanctions of some kind), but not if that country is their ally.

The list of Saudi Arabia's human rights abuses is massive, and can only be silhouetted here. Its women are among the least free in the world, never permitted to work, study, travel, or vote without permission from a male relative.<sup>19</sup> There is effectively no intellectual or political freedom,<sup>20</sup> as shown by the examples above. Its education system is designed to do nothing but drench its subjects in ultra-conservative Wahhabi doctrine which views all non-Wahhabi people (even other Sunni Muslims) as kafir, or infidels. Unbelievably, some of the country's compulsory school textbooks are reprinted by ISIS and used to educate the youth of occupied Iraq and Syria.<sup>21</sup> Domestic abuse against woman and children was only criminalised in 2013, and levels of child abuse are astronomical: one in four Saudi children are thought to suffer from abuse.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Saudi Arabia is not as prosperous as many people believe. While enjoying a global reputation as a wealthy country, its wealth is confined largely to the House of Saud itself, and its vast inequality is often ignored - unemployment is high and the percentage of the population living below the poverty line is estimated to be as high as 25%.<sup>23</sup> The Kingdom's strict laws are enforced by the "Mutaween" or religious police, who are rabid in their adherence to the Saudi interpretation of Wahhabism. In 2002, the Mutaween prevented dozens of girls from leaving a burning school, since they were not accompanied by a male relative or wearing proper "Islamic" clothing. This resulted in the death of fifteen of the girls and the injury of fifty more.<sup>24</sup>

The allegiance of the British and American governments to those of countries like Saudi Arabia is especially worrying in the light of

our knowledge of the White House's full awareness of the threat often posed by such countries to the those countries themselves. In 2015 Daniel Benjamin, the White House's former Counterterrorism Co-ordinator, wrote in an article for Foreign Policy magazine that:

*"A solid line of causation from the slaughter in Islamic State-controlled Iraq and the tragedy of 9/11 traces back directly to Saudi evangelization and the many radical mosques and extremist NGOs it spawned."*<sup>25</sup>

Although this was written after leaving the White House, it seems implausible that he made this discovery only after leaving the government and focusing on academia. It therefore seems very likely that his opinion is shared by the American State Department. Even earlier, in 2010, Wikileaks published a classified memo signed by Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, which proved that she (and presumably therefore the relevant parts of the White House) knew that "donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."<sup>26</sup> It is clear, then, that the White House is under no illusions as to the link between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic militancy. America condemns these groups with vitriol on the basis of their human rights violations, yet it maintains a relationship of co-operation and allegiance with Saudi Arabia. Even if the White House put the link down to private actors in Saudi Arabia rather than the state itself, there would still be various measures it could take to tackle the situation head-on: the freezing of overseas assets of these actors, or, along with allied countries, putting pressure on the government to crack down on terrorist funding by ceasing foreign direct investment. At the very least, the American people would surely expect the public declaration of the views expressed in the Wikileaks cable. The absence of all

19 United States State Department, 2010 Human Rights Report: Saudi Arabia <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154472.htm> [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

20 The mechanism of this repression is subtle: in theory, it is not criticism of the state but criticism of Islam which is forbidden. In practice, however, this amounts to the same thing, since what counts as Islam in Saudi Arabia is dictated by the particular brand of Wahhabism pioneered by the House of Saud. The government's actions are thus by definition definitively Islamic. Thereby the dearth of free religious expression becomes a form of political totalitarianism.

21 Whatsupic, Isis will use Saudi schoolbooks for Students who Study in Territories it Occupies in Iraq and Syria < <http://whatsupic.com/life-culture-world/1409416650.html> > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

22 Arab News, Child Abuse: We and the Americans < <https://web.archive.org/web/20100715052845/http://arabnews.com/saudiarabia/article81402.ece> > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

23 Guardian, Saudi Arabia's riches conceal a growing problem of poverty < <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/01/saudi-arabia-riyadh-poverty-inequality> > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

24 BBC News, Saudi police 'stopped' fire rescue < [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/1874471.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1874471.stm) > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

25 Foreign Policy Magazine, The King and ISIS < <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/10/the-king-and-isis-saudi-arabia-egypt-iraq/> > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

26 Wikileaks, TERRORIST FINANCE: ACTION REQUEST FOR SENIOR LEVEL ENGAGEMENT ON TERRORISM FINANCE < [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09STATE131801\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09STATE131801_a.html) > [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

this, given the United States' clear knowledge of the situation, raises the question of whether the American government prizes its good relations with Saudi Arabia over the safety and security of its people.

The analysis becomes even more alarming when it becomes clear what "good relations" consist of. Not content with refraining from enmity, the governments of Britain and America have entered into a positive and full-blooded partnership with Saudi Arabia in many ways. Take Britain as an example. One instance was Phillip Hammond's attempt to enter into a £5.9m contract with the Saudi prison system, providing analytical and security-related services.<sup>27</sup> Another was Britain's only material response to the January executions - a continued increase in our arms sales to the Saudi state. This would presumably be used in the war in Yemen (about which a House of Commons committee recently noted there is "overwhelming" evidence that the Saudi military has violated international humanitarian law).<sup>28 29</sup> A last example should suffice to show the painful irony of the situation. In 2015, classified documents were leaked which proved that the UK, in full knowledge of Saudi Arabia's human rights record, had attempted to strike a vote-trading deal with the Saudi state in order to both get elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council.<sup>30</sup> The latter fact alone is enough to shatter the idea that the British government's desultory criticisms of the Saudis' human rights record are authentic and whole-hearted, and suggests that the UK might be prepared to do rather too much in order to stay "friends" with the House of Saud.

The list of cases of hypocrisy like the ones above is virtually endless, and can be extended to a myriad of other rights-abusing states. They call into question the driving motives of Anglo-American foreign policy, which, quite apart from national security

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27 Guardian, Saudi prisons contract: Gove and Hammond clash over deal < <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/oct/13/saudi-prisons-contract-gove-and-hammond-clash-over-deal>> [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

28 BBC News: Yemen Crisis: UK 'should halt arms sales to Saudi Arabia' < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35484097>> [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

29 International Development Committee, Crisis in Yemen < <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/international-development/ChairtoSoSregardingYemen.pdf>> [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

30 Guardian, UK and Saudi Arabia on 'secret deal' over human rights council place < <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/29/uk-and-saudi-arabia-in-secret-deal-over-human-rights-council-place>> [accessed 7th Feb 2016]

and prosperity, are generally purported to have something to do with improving the world as whole. But they also show that the following, more general questions are direly relevant: What should the relationship of our governments be to countries that abuse human rights?<sup>31</sup> Is it practical, given the potential consequences for our safety and security, to make enemies of every country with which we disagree? Can we tolerate the moral indecency of our current pretence? What is foreign policy for? Has it, in the end, got anything to do with human rights at all?

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31 Here it should be made clear that the author is aware of a greater hypocrisy, not within the scope of this essay: the contradiction between our condemnations (however cursory) of the human rights abuses of other countries, and our own human rights record. This greater hypocrisy does not, however, undermine the obligation of the West to react properly to human rights abuses, nor does it mitigate the hypocrisy discussed in this essay.



## Kenya

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### Clodagh Geoghegan

*This photo is of a woman in the Samburu County of Kenya holding a child. I partook in a project called Water Supply Project Kenya Red Cross Water and Sanitation. Our aim was to inspect the progress of a project aimed at improving water facilities in the village.*

*The photo depicts the very essence of the trip. I left feeling positive that the increased access to water would transform the lives of many in the area, particularly women and girls.*



## The Persecution of Love and Individuality: Criminalising same sex acts in Uganda

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*Kate D'Aloia*

*This piece consists of an interview with a woman forced to flee her home country of Uganda due to its severe anti-homophobic constraints – otherwise facing the death penalty. I volunteer at the largest charity that helps refugees driven from their homes and their lives due to persecution for one's sexuality, 'No Going Back', which is centered in Leeds. Here I had the opportunity to conduct this interview when writing Eva's statement for application to the Home Office for rights to remain in the UK due to the persecution she faces if returned to her home country. Part of the interview also discusses Female Genital Mutilation, and how this was a part of Eva's journey to discovering her sexuality. As refugee crises pertain importance over time, I feel cases such as Eva's that have been going on and will continue to go on for much longer, should be known. Beginning with an introduction to the issue of criminalised homosexual-acts; the piece then considers a condensed version of the interview put into narrative form, giving the victim a voice and the opportunity to tell her story. The piece concludes with a note on her current situation and the injustice of criminalising love. All quotations in the essay are her words from interview.*

'We never used the word "lesbian" to describe ourselves or even identified ourselves as that; for us, the word was associated with evil and sin, and we felt neither of these emotions'.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of Eva, who has been forced to flee her home and her life in order to escape anti-homosexual persecution at the hands of the government. She is currently living in Leeds, sleeping on the sofa in her brother's house. She volunteers at a Church in the city that has set up a café which cooks leftover food donated from local supermarkets, because here she can get a free meal without burdening her brother who barely has enough to feed his own family. Here she can talk to other refugees, who understand her situation and know how it feels to have been forced out of their country; forced out of their home; and forced out of their family. But this is not the way Eva's life always was. Just nine months ago, Eva was a marketing manager with a Master's degree and three children, and she has had no choice but to leave this life behind in order to ensure her safety.

Eva was raised and taught, in Church, that homosexuality was a sin. For Eva, admitting her feelings would make her an outcast, denounced by her family. For Eva, her romantic desires for her best friend were punishable by death. Can you imagine a world where love equals death? I'm sure that you have by now figured out that Eva's story does not come from the UK, where we live in freedom. Eva was born in the capital of Uganda, Kampala in 1972. In Uganda, Eva's 'sin' of being in love is punishable by death. Uganda is just one of more than seventy countries that have laws which criminalise same-sex acts – five of these also hold the death penalty.

Homophobia in Uganda has been widespread since the prohibition of sexuality in the 1950s. In February 2014, President Yoweri Museveni signed a law that furthered homosexual persecution. Not only were homosexual acts illegal under this law, but it also urged citizens to report and inform on suspected homosexual activity to the police, who beat and abused many for their 'crimes'. In August of the same year, the legislation was annulled due to a technicality that not enough MPs were present to vote for it.

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of those involved.

Running for the next general election for Uganda, candidate Amama Mbabazi, made history by being the first presidential candidate for the country to openly oppose homophobia. The election was held on 18th February 2016 and Museveni won by 60.62%. Mbabazi held the position of president previously to Museveni's election in 2011, and played an instrumental role in Uganda's liberation struggle from tyrannical governments. During his time in office he was largely popular. Yet, after making his statement he received just 1.39% of the vote. Although the laws have been loosened, homophobia among the Ugandan public is ubiquitous.

Eva's statement above describes her feelings about the first romantic friendship she formed, with the girl who she shared her dorm with at boarding school. Her refusal to acknowledge her feelings as even remotely homosexual at this time highlights how far homosexuality was condemned to her from a young age, before she even understood what the word meant, and before she understood her own sexuality.

Eva comes from a wealthy family who could afford to send her to a boarding school – giving her the luxury of education. Yet it was here that Eva describes her experiences of Female Genital Mutilation. As just a young and confused teenager at the age of sixteen, Eva describes her experience: 'In school, the girls had to take part in Okukyalira Ensiko. It was also called "The Pulling" and it is the act of elongating the labia minora through manual manipulation (pulling). It is carried out for the purposes of sexual enhancement later in marriage for the husband'. This is representative of sexual confusion and as well as what Eva calls 'painful' physical abuse to children supposedly boarding at a school to learn and be taken care of. But this type of exploitation can be the norm for girls and women growing up across areas of Africa.

When being made to carry out "The Pulling", Eva chose to be partners with her dorm roommate and close friend, Elizabeth, for the process. This was her first physical relationship, and the two formed a friendship. Yet, the drilling in of the immorality of her feelings still stopped her from admitting her sexuality and thus accepting her identity. Shortly after finishing school, Elizabeth was forced into an arranged marriage to a man. Eva managed to swerve the same fate for years, and used a desire for further education as an excuse to avoid the inevitable. From this moment of being coerced into a marriage deemed acceptable in her society, Eva's story of being forced to hide who she is reads as follows:

'In 1998 my family met with my husband's family and they negotiated a bride price and dowry of 20 heads of cattle and 50 goats. I had never met this man before and at no point during the family discussions was I asked if I wanted this. He was ten years older than me and acted like a typical Ugandan man. I soon learned not to argue with him because he would slap me hard for challenging him. The only emotion I felt towards him was that of being scared.

A part of married life was sexual intercourse. I was not interested in this, but I could not refuse him. I tried to make excuses as often as I could, saying that I was tired or I had a headache, but inevitably he would force himself on me and rape me. It was a silent rape; I could not say anything and had no one to speak to. Elizabeth was no longer there and society saw that sex was the husband's privilege. I never spoke out and endured his sexual groping of my body each time until he had finished. I had three children.

In 2000 we moved to Naguru. Due to our financial position, I was able to have a nanny to look after the children, and I returned to education. During my studies I met Linda. I decided to approach Linda and started a conversation after one of the school discussions. We immediately got on and soon after exchanged numbers. We met initially as friends; sexuality was never a topic of conversation. We spent more and more time together and slowly I let her into my life and feelings and we developed a close understanding of each other. I felt isolated in my own home. I had the children, but at the same time I needed someone to share my life; Linda became that person. The physical side of our relationship was born out of our emotional connection and I no longer felt alone.

Linda and I self-identified as lesbians as a result of the anti-homosexual political rhetoric. We sat and read the media coverage of this topic and realised that we were not alone; knowing this made it more acceptable and we wanted to become part of the developing LGBTI movement in Uganda. In 2012 we both decided to join Fem Alliance. We attended socials and meetings and we felt a sense of belonging. The organisation is aimed at empowering its members politically, socially, economically, and culturally. Fem Alliance also helped us to be together in one place where we could laugh, celebrate, connect, feel, and have fun together. I felt that Fem Alliance also helped create an awareness of the cultural and societal discrimination against LGBTI people. The very public homophobic social and governmental movement against Fem Alliance made meetings very difficult and I have to admit that even though I believed



in what the movement stood for, I decided to stay at home. Linda and I continued to meet about three times a week. On occasions I would manage to have a night away from the family home and we went to Entebbe Resort, which was not far from where we lived, but it let us spend time together as a couple, even though not publically.

My life and Linda's changed forever on 3.6.2015. It was a Wednesday and I had gone to Linda's house at around 10 am. We had had breakfast together and after went back to bed and watched some TV. We started to make love together, but were interrupted by someone knocking at the door. We ignored the knocking, but it continued, growing louder. Shortly after the knocking was accompanied by a female voice telling us to open it. Then the door was forced open. The lock lasted just a few moments under the force. The violence was targeted immediately at Linda. When I heard the lock break, I immediately grabbed my clothes and started dressing. Linda let out a cry as she received a blow and I heard people smashing items in the hall. Over the noise the most distinct word was 'abasiyazze': which translates to lesbians. I realised that my life was in danger. The only escape route I could think of was through the window. I pulled open the window and jumped out. While I was running I heard them shout 'balibabiri (there are two)'. When I was leaving I could hear Linda screaming and pleading with the mob 'woowe temunzita' - 'don't kill me'.

From the house I ran to the neighbouring town of Katwe where I had two friends from work, Faith and Joyce. I did not tell them what had happened, as they did not know about me being a lesbian. I was afraid of how they would react. When I arrived at their house I did not have anything with me, only a small bag, in which I had thrust a few of my possessions in the few seconds I had. It was only at this point I realised that I had left my mobile phone in Linda's bedroom. Because I feared for my life, I stayed indoors for four days.

On Sunday evening I telephoned a friend, Jane, who I had initially met at university. I knew that I could tell her the truth because she was also a lesbian. She understood my anxiety and immediately offered to help me as best she could. On Monday I went to Jane's and she gave me some money so that I could survive.

After I had collected the money, I returned to Faith and Joyce's house. Immediately following this, they told me that police officers from Mutundwe constabulary were looking for me and they had come to the house. This shocked me, as I had no idea how they had tracked me down to that address. My friends denied knowledge of

my whereabouts; however, I could tell it had shaken them.

Following the police visit, rumours had begun to spread and their neighbours told them they should not help a person like me. I was becoming more and more convinced that my life was in danger. To avoid any future police visits, I decided that I would leave the house very early in the morning every day and come back late every night, so if the police did attend they would not find me. On those days I went to Salama Road, as I knew it was a busy place and I would not attract any attention; I was just another woman having tea.

One day I went to collect water at the tap. There was a woman there, who told me that I should die and I had no right to live. It was a severe attack and she pushed me and spat at me, which upset me a lot, as nothing like this had ever happened to me. This was not the only incident and I became more and more scared of the potential threat of mob violence. The worry inside me grew and grew and I knew that the risk of violence or murder from the public was high. I eventually went to the police in Katwe and reported the threats I received. It was my thought that I was not known to the Katwe police and therefore I would be safe; however, on reflection, this assumption was very misplaced.

I arrived at the police station in Katwe and was arrested immediately when I gave my name. Four police officers, two men and two women, took me to a cell where they beat me with their batons. They thrust a police file at me, which contained evidence: mine and Linda's phones and some pictures of my relationship with Linda. I knew that I would never receive any protection from the police.

The next day the police came to my cell and told me I was being released on police bond for two days. Jane had been informed by Faith of my arrest, and she took me to her house. I reported back to the police station as instructed and was detained until around 4pm. The police instructed me that I was to return again for further questioning. It was at this point that I decided I had to leave Uganda.

When I came back from the police station, I sent an email to my cousin who lives in the UK. In the email I told her that my life was in danger and asked for her help.

During this time, my husband and his family called a meeting with my family regarding my conduct. During this meeting he disowned me and our children. He stated that the children were my products and that at least one of the children would turn out like me and that

the children were a constant reminder of me and my actions and brought shame on him and his family. In the meeting he asked my family for the return of my bride price. Jane tried to mediate for the benefit of my children and offered to take them. She sent them to her mother who lived in the countryside. Sadly the children have stopped school, as there are no funds to support them and their father has not had contact with them since the meeting. Since this happened I have only managed to speak to my children once on the telephone and this was facilitated by Jane in September.

As I had a UK multiple entry visit visa in my passport I knew I was able to leave as quickly as possible. Jane helped me buy a ticket to fly to the United Kingdom. I had no other valid visas in my passport and I knew that I could seek protection here from the persecution I was facing in Uganda.

I arrived and my cousin came to pick me up. I was exhausted from everything that had happened, but I asked them to take me to the Home Office in Leeds to claim asylum the next day. I went to the Leeds Home Office, accompanied by my cousin to claim asylum. On reaching the Leeds Home Office I provided my passport identification, but was told that asylum claim cases are dealt with in Croydon. I was given some materials and documents and made a telephone call to book a screening appointment.

In August my cousin returned to Uganda for a brief visit. Following her return the relationship between us changed. It was clear that during her visit she had been told about my situation. On 27th August 2015 at just after 9pm, my cousin's husband told me to leave his house. I did not say anything and packed my bags. The following day I went to the Home Office in Kirkstall and reported that I am no longer able to stay with my cousin and asked for accommodation.

I identify as a lesbian. I refuse to deny who I am. I could not openly conduct a same sex relationship in Uganda, if I was returned. I firmly believe that if I was to be returned to Uganda I would be at risk of serious harm, or death, as I would not be able to rely on or ask the state to protect me as a lesbian. It is clear that with criminalisation of same sex acts that I am by default a criminal because of my sexuality. The risk is further compounded by the widespread homophobia throughout Uganda and the persecution of the LGBTI community.

I want to openly show who I love in public without the risk of persecution; I do not want to live discreetly. I am proud of who I am.'

Eva is currently awaiting the decision from the Home Office as to their decision to grant her asylum. She has had no contact with Linda since she was forced to leave Uganda.

If we cannot inform the backward-thinking minds of those who create and implement such rules of restricting and constraining freedom in society, we, as a free society, must show support and aid our fellow humans in any way possible.

As the response to Syrian refugees has been heart-warming and encouraging steps forward for our country, we must remember that persecution affects so many more people who we can help in similar ways. Living in a society that has the liberty of individualism and the right to be an individual, we can help spread these rights to everyone. We must not neglect any individual who we can help to live a life as freely as we live our own.

Let us help others who suffer persecution just for being the person who they are. Being an individual should not be a limited privilege; surely that is one of the most basic human rights of all.





## Mosaic Mural Project

Charlotte Carter

*Enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27 is that 'everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits'.*

*To me, the arts and culture is an integral part of our society, it is an expression of our values and ideas, and it is something that everyone should have the chance to be a part of, however they like. Equally, we should strive for a cultural democracy that encourages a broadening of access to cultural production and celebrates diversity in the arts.*











## The Mosaic Mural Project: A Reflection

*I started at Basis Yorkshire (formerly Genesis Leeds) in July 2014, as a Year in Industry placement student. Basis Sex Work project, one of the three constituents of Basis Yorkshire, works with adult female sex workers in Leeds. They offer a broad range of services, to include twice weekly outreach, drop-in service and sexual health and safety advice, as well as support and advocacy on varying social issues that sex workers face.*

*The mosaic mural project was born out of a desire to involve the service users of Basis in a creative process and to produce a mural with them collaboratively, alongside the staff and volunteers at Basis. Providing a platform for the women Basis works with to reflect in an inclusive space and have an opportunity to come together and do something creative felt really important; especially alongside the invaluable holistic support service that Basis provides. We held workshops with some of the women, and with the support of London-based craftivist Carrie Reichardt began to piece together some ideas for the imagery that we wanted on the mosaic. At every turn, this project was collaborative, participatory and strived to be inclusive.*

*The imagery produced in the mosaic embodies a series of voices and representations of the lived experiences of sex workers, as well as the international plight to end violence against sex workers, symbolised by the red umbrella. As a piece of public art, it strives to engage its' audience with some of the social issues faced by sex workers, as well as challenging negative stereotypes.*

*Many hands came together, united in support and solidarity to mosaic the voices and experiences of some of these women onto that red brick wall. May it stand as symbolic of the continuous fight for social justice and access to protection and safety for sex workers, and for their human rights to be championed.*

# A critical exploration of the Black Lives Matter movement and its relationship with Hip Hop in the US.

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Abigail Smith

*In the US context, political antiracism movement's from slave rebellions to freedom marches have played a powerful role in moulding the racial consciousness for centuries. They have continually provided a platform in which black activists can unite and campaign for equal human rights. The most recent example today is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Its forceful opposition to the systematic and oppressive actions of the state, reflects the large-scale problem of racism that still continues to infect US society. As an all-encompassing and global call for action, critics have argued that the BLM agenda is intrinsically linked to black cultural expression. This opens up the discussion surrounding Hip Hop in particular, and whether black artists in the US today still create music that is politically engaging. Can it be said that Hip Hop is intrinsically a political tool to educate and mobilize? Or is it simply just another cog in the wheel?*

Racial profiling, brutality, and deaths of black African Americans at the hands of the police mark the persistent and virulent nature of racial inequality in the 21st Century. Black life is still 'systematically and intentionally targeted for demise'<sup>1</sup>, marking the civil rights struggle as an uninterrupted phenomenon with the eruption of Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in 2013. In response to relentless rhetoric surrounding American exceptionalism that remains inherent within US neo-liberal politics, followers of the campaign are fuelled by anger. Black African Americans especially are in a 'state of protest'<sup>2</sup> against this institutionalised racism and 'endemic (state) brutality'<sup>3</sup>. Seen to many as a rejuvenated form of previous Black Power movements, BLM evolved to oppose the way racism is viewed globally; It acts as a powerful lense to see and erase the perpetuated myths of a post racial America. There has always been an intrinsically historical link between antiracism movements and music; their connection is an undeniable feature of the cultural expressions and resistance patterns of the African Diaspora<sup>4</sup>. Black popular music in particular, has arguably always reflected a broader social, political, and cultural movement<sup>5</sup>. The lyrics are often inscribed with powerful and politicised messages, thus it is utilised by activists as a unique form of expression for galvanizing support. It is extremely important to note that the two – black activism and Hip Hop – are not separate entities; they mutually coexist. Moreover, Hip Hop successfully acts as a 'useable past' in which to further tackle socio-political issues<sup>6</sup>. It has the capability to connect and console individuals by increasing solidarity within the black African American community who continue to face of the very 'real and tenuous'<sup>7</sup> racism that plagues US democracy.

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1 Garza, A. (2014) A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement by Alicia Garza. The Feminist Wire.

2 Ibid.

3 Day, E., (2015) #BlackLivesMatter: the birth of a new civil rights movement.

4 Redmond, S. (2013) Anthem: social movements and the sound of solidarity in the African Diaspora. New York University Press.

5 Reeves, M. (2008) Somebody Scream!: Rap Music's Rise to Prominence in the Aftershock of Black Power Somebody Scream!: Rap Music's Rise to Prominence in the Aftershock of Black Power.

6 Miller, M. (2015) K(no)where to go: Hip Hop, Black Life, and Flowing in a Post-Everything Moment. October Dialogues 2015: Black Lives Matter. October 28th. Nottingham.

7 Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006) Racism without Racists: Colour-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States. P.1



Firstly, in order to contextualize the movement, this essay will analyse the sociohistorical backdrop of black freedom struggles in relation to the current contemporary objectives of the BLM movement using the work Richard Iton<sup>8</sup>. By applying focus to three main issues raised in the BLM agenda - the devaluation of black life, police brutality, and intersectionality - this essay will highlight how Hip Hop in particular has been utilised as a tool for activism throughout the ages. Additionally, drawing on Adorno and Horkheimer's theory of the culture industry as one example, this essay attempts to recognize the varying positions taken on the purpose and responsibility of Hip Hop. Using the works of Shona Redmond and Monica Millar as a theoretical framework, this essay suggests that Hip Hop to a large extent assists the black activist call for global human justice; it is an essential feature of what Paul Gilroy states as the 'Black Atlantic'<sup>9</sup>.

As noted by Richard Iton in the *Black Fantastic* (2008), all forms of culture in the post-Civil Rights era can be read as politics. Disenfranchised from all societal arenas, people of colour globally 'reimagine'<sup>10</sup> their interests through cultural symbols; Hip Hop is one of many creative mediums that evolved for this purpose. Similar to other music forms like jazz, rhythm & blues, and rock & roll Hip Hop arose in the late 20th Century as a social force by commodifying the aims and concerns of the Civil Rights movement. As an identity it is multifaceted, and its exact purpose throughout history has been widely disputed. It has arguably established a self-perpetuating reputation as a cultural movement<sup>11</sup>, placing itself in a notorious realm oppositional to all things politically and culturally mainstream<sup>12</sup>. Hip Hop transgressed its original form as a marginalised subculture to something much bigger. Although it is often held to disproportionate expectations, it penetrated the dominant music industry and became

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8 Iton, R (2008) *In Search for the Black Fantastic: Politics and Black Popular Culture in the PostCivil Rights Era*. (Transgressing Boundaries).

9 Gilroy, P. (1993) *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and the Double Consciousness*

10 Iton, R (2008) p5

11 Rabaka, R. (2013) *The Hip Hop Movement: From R&B and the Civil Rights Movement to Rap and the Hip-hop generation*

12 Watkins, S,C. (2005) *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture and the Struggle for the soul of a Movement*.

a 'poetic soundtrack to contemporary black life'<sup>13</sup>. This arguably still resonates today.

As a political art form, Hip Hop acts as an interdisciplinary form of academia<sup>14</sup>; It combines several subject matter from history, politics, and sociology etc. Over time it began to offer a different framework for viewing black identity. It is a platform used by black African Americans to express discontent with the structures and also to educate. Its linkage to the political sphere is extremely complex and has been utilised in several ways by black African Americans marginalised by contemporary racist capitalism. It is for this reason that critics debate its larger responsibility and future destiny. It is clear that Hip Hop has engaged in a dialogue with the BLM movement and arguably does in several ways address the issues raised by the radical organisation<sup>15</sup>. It can be seen as a continuation of efforts made by the 'Hiphop generation'<sup>16</sup> of the post-Civil Rights era. Correspondingly, it acts as a platform of expression.

As a political antiracist organisation, BLM is an intersectional and rapidly expanding movement whose aims are prioritizing black life. Its deep roots act as a global bridge engaging worldwide action and interlocking various social groups campaigning for justice; It goes beyond where no social movement has reached before. BLM emerged following the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman (Florida) proceeding the shooting of young African American teenager Trayvon Martin. Their main focus is the eradication of police brutality and systemic violence experienced by black African Americans throughout the US. What originally started as a hashtag, significantly spiralled into a worldwide protest. Social media outputs like Twitter have revolutionised the activist framework exposing the persistent images of artificial progress.

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13 Boyd, T. (2003) *The New H. N. I. C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop*. P. xvii

14 Owunna, M. (2015) *These 6 Rappers Are the Defining Voices of #BlackLivesMatter* & Watkins, S,C. (2005).

15 Billey, A. (2015) *The New Anthems of Resistance: HipHop and Black Lives Matter*

16 Rabaka, R. (2013) .



Drawing on some aspects of the Pan Africanist agenda, and the socio-economic thought of the revolutionary figure Malcolm X, BLM reiterates the notion that 'we live embedded in the aftermath of slavery'<sup>17</sup>. American democracy is 'shielded by colour-blindness'<sup>18</sup>. Racism is minimized, and issues of race are institutionally labelled as a predominantly 'black' problem; black African American communities are characterised as regressive for living in the past. The US has its first black President (Barack Obama), yet black African Americans still face poverty and oppression disproportionately compared to their white counterparts on all strata's of society, the workplace and education system are two examples. Consequently, BLM raises the issue that there is a devaluation of black life that stems systematically from the false hopes of American democracy; a state of artificial advancement is perpetuated by white supremacy. Attempting the 'decolonisation of racial mindsets'<sup>19</sup>, BLM reiterates the work of academics like Derrick Bell (1988). It is only when black life is harnessed to white capital that it is made to matter; they are commoditized like slaves.

In his direct response to the shooting of unarmed African American teenager Michael Brown, artist Jcole released the piano ballad, Be Free. Produced for an exclusive performance on the David Letterman show, the song directly supports the focus of BLM on the devaluation of black life. The song poetically alludes to the black desire for equal treatment, Cole states 'All we wanna do is break the chains off...all we wanna do is be free'. This imagery of modern day slavery is a direct commentary on the way in which black African Americans feel shackled by racism and marginalisation. Additionally, Be Free addresses the idea of minimal change in US race relations. He sings that Obama 'was stifled by the system'...'they let a brother

steer the ship and never told him that the ship was sinking'. Hip Hop here therefore does address the problems raised by the BLM movement highlighting it as a 'social force'.<sup>20</sup>

Leading on from the devaluation of black life, BLM raises the issue more specifically on police brutality. Statistics from the Mapping Police Violence Database<sup>21</sup> show that Police departments across the US disproportionately stop and search, incarcerate, brutally assault and kill black African American citizens<sup>22</sup>. In 2015 black African Americans were three times more likely to be killed by police officers than white people<sup>23</sup>. This is not a new phenomenon, with the help of advancing communication technology, this discriminatory and abhorrent system of oppression is now exposed online, becoming increasingly visible globally. BLM rapidly spiralled from a moment to a worldwide movement following events in Ferguson. Images of 18 year old African American teenager, Michael Brown, lying dead in the street for four hours shocked the globe. He was shot several times, despite being unarmed, by police officer Darren Wilson who later went unindicted by the Grand Jury. The campaign labels such acts as a consequence of a systemically violent state<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, the slogan and gesture 'Hands up, don't shoot' or 'Don't shoot' has become as a sign of solidarity expressed at activist protests; it is a widely used metaphor for the movement.

Tributing this event that will remain in the history of US race relations, artist The Game released a very compelling song named, Don't Shoot. The song directly addresses the issue of police brutality raised by BLM, stressing that black men are 'stole by the system'. Commenting on the abuse of police power, likening it to addictive substance abuse, The Game's verse stated that they are 'killing teens...they killing dreams'. The song powerfully encourages

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17 Berry, D.R. (2014) #BlackLivesMatter Till They Don't: Slavery's Lasting Legacy.

18 Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006) P.1

19 Bell, D. (1988) White Superiority in America: Its Legal Legacy, Its Economic Cost. P.13.

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20 Boyd, T. (2003) P.12

21 Police Violence Report (2015) Mapping Police Violence Website (Accessed 11/03/2016).

22 Jacobs, D. (1998) The Determinants of Deadly Force: A Structural Analysis of Police Violence. *The American Journal of Sociology*. Vol 103(4).

23 Ibid.

24 Day, E., (2015).

resistance; it challenges other Hip Hop artists to use their talents to speak up about injustice. In an interview for the Rolling Stones Magazine, The Game stated 'We care and are inclined to take a positive approach to resolving an issue that has existed since the beginning of mankind'<sup>25</sup>. This song supports the idea that Hip Hop does in fact very successfully address the problems raised by BLM.

During the creation of BLM and throughout its crystallization as a reputable organisation, inspiration has been drawn from a myriad of social movements in attempt address the 'capitalist...patriarchal... (and) racial colonial world system'<sup>26</sup>. The activist framework draws on feminist, LGBT and Pan African agendas<sup>27</sup>. It is useful to utilise Kimberly Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality<sup>28</sup> here as a lense to analyse these aims of BLM. The very influential term describes the way that racism and sexism readily intersect<sup>29</sup>, a notion in which BLM activists raise awareness of. This essay focusses on the intersectional oppression of women as historically their experiences are overlooked. BLM campaigns to remodel this trend of prioritizing one social issue; an act they argue will pave the way for true justice and equality.

Under the title 'Herstory', a particular segment of the campaign raises awareness of the erasure of queer, disabled and Trans black African American women and the hetero-patriarchal nature of previous movements<sup>30</sup>. On social media especially the hashtag '#sayhername' has be utilised as a slogan. They emphasise the double discrimination and unique police brutality faced by black women in the US. Not constricted to a local context, BLM are making the world aware of the violent stories of black and also transgender women killed at the hands of the police; Sandra Bland, Mya Hall, Alexia Christian, Meagan Hockaday and Natasha Mckenna are all examples.

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25 Weingarten, C. (2014) Hear the Game, Rick Ross, Diddy and More Join Forces for Ferguson on 'Don't Shoot'

26 Grosfoguel, R, Ramone, L & Christou, A. (2014) Racism', intersectionality and migration studies: framing some theoretical reflections. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. Vol 22(6).

27 Ruffin, H. (2015) Black Lives Matter: The Growth of a New Social Justice Movement.

28 Crenshaw, K. (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *The Stanford Law Review*. Vol 43(6)

29 Ibid

30 Garza, A. (2014).

Artists have voiced their anger with the marginalisation and violence faced by black women worldwide. Janelle Monae & Wondaland's revitalised song: 'Hell You Talmbout' in particular addresses the intersectional nature of BLM. In the Chorus they call out the names of several black African American men and women who have been victims of brutality, chanting 'Say his/her name'. It is a compelling example of how Hip Hop music is often created to 'channel the pain, fear, and trauma caused by the ongoing slaughter'<sup>31</sup>.

Shona Redmond in her 2013 book comments on how the movement of music functions politically as a form of 'rebellion, revolution and future vision'<sup>32</sup>. Using her concept of anthems as interdisciplinary cultural histories to chart Diasporic music making, it is clear that some Hip Hop songs predominantly become the anthems of political resistance. Looking at Kendrick Lamar's song 'Alright' specifically, it cannot be disputed that it has become an anthem for the BLM movement. The lyrics indicate the clear relationship between Hip Hop and the issues raised by the BLM. Kendrick directly changes subject positions as a male rapper by quoting the predominant female character in the prize winning, *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker; he says 'Alls my life I had to fight'. By borrowing this quote he emphasises to his audience the power of intersectionality in the current black freedom struggle, highlighting the importance of anti-racism and feminism for effective change<sup>33</sup>.

Hip Hop as a genre is extremely complex, and consists of several subcategories that do not always tackle the issues raised by BLM. Gangster Rap is one example. Popularized in the 1980s, Bell Hooks argues that Gangster Rap is used as a spectacle of white media outlets, commercialised to criminalise and hyper sexualise blacks<sup>34</sup>. Gangster rappers according to Hooks, do not utilise their fame

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31 Raymond, L. (2015) New Janelle Monae Track Wants You To 'Say Her Name'

32 Redmond, S. (2013).

33 Peterson, J. B. (2015) A Song, a Slogan, and a service. *October Dialogues 2015: Black Lives Matter*. October 28th. Nottingham

34 Hooks, B. (1994) Sexism and misogyny: who takes the rap?

to fulfil their socio-political responsibility; they promote crime, violence, profanity, vandalism & drug abuse. Employing Adorno and Horkheimer's theory of the Culture Industry<sup>35</sup>, it can be argued that some artists in the music industry cease to be themselves. Commercial hip hop and rap culture are 'simultaneously a cog in the wheel of the culture industry'<sup>36</sup>. In particular the themes explored in Gangster Rap revolve around anti-black myths of inferiority, hyper sexuality, rhythm and black athleticism<sup>37</sup>. This criticism, nevertheless, does not detract from the powerful and creative resistance exemplified by the artists explored in this essay.

In conclusion, critically analysing BLM highlights the diverse ways in which human rights struggles are becoming more globalised. The campaign raises issues of worldwide inequality, combining aspects of gender, sexuality and class. It is very clear that the campaign has become more than a political movement, it is inseparable from black popular cultural expressions. Black diasporic traditions, dictate the relationship between anti-racist agendas and music. The historical origin of Hip Hop most defiantly places itself at the centre of the movement.

Not all Hip Hop creations address the issues raised by BLM, making it difficult to comment on the genre as a whole. Nevertheless, to reiterate Iton's point, all forms of culture can be seen as politically engaged post-civil rights. Therefore, the analysis of the three songs – as a small representation of the industry – emphasise that black activism and Hip Hop are caught in a larger wave of creative expression. Hip Hop directly challenges the ways that black people are 'intentionally left powerless (by the) state' and 'deprived of basic human rights'<sup>38</sup>. Mainstream tracks from popular artists and underground songs, always have and will arguably always to some extent reflect a 'digital, intersonic Diaspora'<sup>39</sup>.

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35 Adorno, T. W. (1991) *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on Mass Culture*

36 Rabaka, R. (2013) p.5

37 Ibid.

38 BlackLivesMatter 2015 (Online website) 'Who We Are'

39 Miller, M. (2015)

## A Secular Confession On Behalf of Humanity

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*Eleonora Tibbs*

*The poem encapsulates the idea of wrong doing and the concept of “sin” within a secular society. The speaker within the poem makes reference to five predominant religions and concludes that, despite there not being a divinity to judge him, if they were to see race as “another” it would be a sin against humanity. By excluding religion, the speaker’s only moral compass is to do what is compassionate and fair to another person, no matter their race, religion or where they have come from. This poem was inspired by the refugee crisis that was met with resistance and fear mongering that happened in many areas of the west. It is to promote complete inclusion of those who have come to our country for help and the members that make our society an inclusive, multicultural one.*

**The bread of flesh, my lips have not met.  
No sugar or rice has been given in  
my name and dough stays whole at week’s sunset.  
Friday’s long noon does not rest on my shin,  
and I have lived my life in more ways than  
eight. With only a push off the slippery side  
into the stream of life in which I swam.  
Random chance let me be my moral guide.  
My honesty came from telling deceit  
my kindness from hurt and lies. I am a  
good person, of this I know; yet the heat  
of sin burns through this bed in which I lay.  
No kindness nor love to any brother,  
will redeem me; race once meant another.**

## How does the concept of intersectionality help us theorise vulnerability and risk to specific forms of violence?

*Sofia Bodger*

*To date, the United States (U.S) has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, at 737 people per 100,000.<sup>1</sup> African Americans constitute almost 1 million of the 2.3 million imprisoned population and currently 1 out of 3 African Americans between the ages of 18 to 30 is in jail, prison, probation or on parole.<sup>2</sup> The disproportionate incarceration of black people in America; alongside racial profiling, police brutality and violence, has severely hindered the black community and illustrates the institutionalised racism, intersectional oppression and systematic injustice existing in the U.S today.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in order to discuss how the concept of intersectionality helps us theorise vulnerability and risk to specific forms of violence, this essay will focus within the context of U.S incarceration rates and explore why a specific intersection of gender (male), race (black), class (lower-economic) and age (18-30) experience heightened vulnerability to police brutality and imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, it will argue that America's violent policing measures and discriminatory criminal justice system (CJS), act as a racially oppressing force, as if 'colorblind' to the racial disparity in imprisonment and intersectional oppression experienced by the black male population.<sup>5</sup>*

Intersectionality is used as an analytical sociological tool, in order to theorise identity and differentiating forms of oppression.<sup>6</sup> The concept was first coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a feminist and critical race theorist and is defined as the idea that women (in particular black women), can experience “oppression in varying configurations and degrees of intensity”.<sup>7</sup> Crenshaw focuses specifically on black women as intersectional subjects (1991); which also reinforces the criticism that gendered discourse is often associated with women.<sup>8</sup> The notion that “cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society”<sup>9</sup> is genderless and therefore refers to the socially constructed forms of oppression, such as race, gender, class and age, which ultimately interact to produce a social and racial hierarchy.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this essay will employ criticisms of intersectionality, such as the necessity to broaden the paradigm and focus on all ‘actors of society’ rather than solely women.<sup>11</sup> In doing so it will firstly construct a critical analysis of the intersectional oppression black men face in America, therefore, illustrating how their multiple forms of identity interact and result in their vulnerability and risk to specific incidences of violence. Secondly, it closely examines the proliferation of police presence in black communities and draws upon ‘Operation IMPACT’ as a case study. Next, it seeks to investigate the historical prejudicial constructions of black masculinity and discusses the role of the CJS in the history of lynching. Finally, it will draw upon the ideology of ‘colorblindness’, to help understand the mass incarceration of black men in America.

1. BBC, ‘Half of the World’s Prison Population of about Nine Million Is Held in the US, China or Russia.’, BBC (BBC News, 20 June 2005). <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/06/prisons/html/nn2page1.stm>> [accessed 16 March 2016]
2. NAACP, ‘Criminal Justice Fact Sheet’, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 2009 <<http://www.naacp.org/pages/criminal-justice-fact-sheet>> [accessed 17 March 2016].
3. Stevenson, Bryan, ‘We Need to Talk about an Injustice’ (Google+, 2012) <[https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan\\_stevenson\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_talk\\_about\\_an\\_injustice?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en)> [accessed 17 March 2016].
4. Hancock, Ange-Marie, ‘Trayvon Martin, Intersectionality, and the Politics of Disgust’, *Theory & Event*, 15 (2012) <[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory\\_and\\_event/v015/15.3.hancock.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v015/15.3.hancock.html)> [accessed 17 March 2016].
5. Alexander, Michelle M., *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2nd edn (Jackson, TN: Distributed by Perseus Distribution, 2010).

6. Nash, Jennifer C, ‘Re-Thinking Intersectionality’, *Feminist Review*, 89 (2008), 1–15
7. Ritzer, George, *Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics*, 2nd edn (Maidenhead: McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2006), p.56.
8. Mutua, A, ‘Multidimensionality Is to Masculinities What Intersectionality Is to Feminism’, *Nevada Law Journal*, 13 (2013), 341–68.
9. Ritzer, p.204.
10. Collins, P.H. 2000. Gender, black feminism, and black political economy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 568(1), pp.41–53.
11. Hancock, p. 249.



Upon definition of intersectionality, a discussion of the prejudicial constructions of race (black) and gender (male) and thus 'black masculinity' is imperative, in order to address their interconnected nature and to gain an in-depth understanding of the violence black males are subject to, as a result of these constructions. Race, a contested term, will be addressed as a concept constructed by society, rather than biology.<sup>12</sup> As defined by racial theorists Omi and Winant, race is "an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle".<sup>13</sup> This definition shows how race continues to play a predominant role in the political struggle of black men. For instance, Bryan Stevenson, academic and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) states that "in Alabama, 34% of the black population have permanently lost their right to vote due to previous criminal convictions".<sup>14</sup> It is further projected that within six years the level of disenfranchisement within America will be equal to levels "prior to the passage of the voting rights act".<sup>15</sup> Race therefore, is established as a social construction determined by social, economic and political processes and barriers, which have the power to shape and change individual identity.<sup>16</sup> This deep-rooted construction of race permeates U.S society and structures the black political struggle we continue to see today, thus increasing the threat of, and vulnerability to, the everyday violence that black men face.

Another factor disproportionately affecting black communities, is the governmental strategy of 'Operation IMPACT', which funds the proliferation of police presence in areas with high crime rates.<sup>17</sup> However, it is the racial stratification apparent in the CJS and law enforcement measures, that subjects African American low income communities to racial profiling, 'stop and search' measures and

police brutality. Subsequently, 'Operation IMPACT' specifically targets the black community and in particular has led to the re-incarceration of many poor young black men, often on the grounds of minor incidents.<sup>18</sup> This targeted supervision ultimately acts as a force of oppression, creating mutual distrust between black men and the police<sup>19</sup> and increases the threat of violent incidences young black men are subject to,<sup>20</sup> examples of which will be addressed later on in this essay.

In relation to this essay's central thesis, the historical social construction of black masculinity and the multiple identities and stereotypes associated with it, is important to draw upon<sup>21</sup> in order to truly understand the vulnerability to different modes of violence black males are currently subject to. Historically, "African Americans were defined as animals",<sup>22</sup> and black males were seen as inherently violent beasts who must be controlled by the white race.<sup>23</sup> To date, society's construction of 'black masculinity' remains premised in the notion of racial hierarchy and dominance, as evident in the group's mass incarceration and disproportionate exposure to police brutality. Therefore, despite the ending of slavery and endless movements to stop racial discrimination, American society has failed to move away from a construction rooted in the enslavement of millions of black people.<sup>24</sup> America's legacy of racial hate can be demonstrated in the mass lynching of black men; a direct form of violence, which terrorized the black community and took place during the civil war until World War II.<sup>25</sup> The phenomenon occurred across the country and was predominantly used in order to repress and maintain control of black men, for fear that without racial hierarchy and white supremacy they would "relapse into barbarism".<sup>26</sup> The unequal race relations and black political struggle present today echo this era

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12. Malik, K. 1996. *The meaning of race: Race, history and culture in western society*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
  13. Omi, M. and Winant, H. 1994. *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960's to the 1990's* 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, p.
  14. Stevenson, p.1.
  15. Stevenson, p. 1.
  16. Omi & Winant, 1994.
  17. Ashton, P. 2012. *RETHINKING THE BLUES* [online]. [Accessed 17 March 2016]. Available from: [http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/rethinkingtheblues\\_final.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/rethinkingtheblues_final.pdf).
  18. Ashton, p.42.
  19. The Guardian 2015. *The real problem in Ferguson, New York and all of America is institutional racism*. The Guardian [online]. [Accessed 17 March 2016]. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/04/problem-ferguson-new-york-america-institutional-racism>.

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20. Stevenson, B. 2014. *Just mercy: A story of justice and redemption* - kindle edition by Bryan Stevenson. Politics & social sciences kindle eBooks @ Amazon. com [online]. Spiegel & Grau. [Accessed 17 March 2016]. Available from: <http://www.amazon.com/Just-Mercy-Story-Justice-Redemption-ebook/dp/B00JYVVVLY>.
  21. Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers.
  22. Ferber, A. L., 'The Construction of Black Masculinity: White Supremacy Now and Then', *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 31 (2007), 11-24.
  23. Ferber, p.12.
  24. Alexander, 2010.
  25. Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror* Equal Justice Initiative, 2015 <<http://www.eji.org/files/EJI%20Lynching%20in%20America%20SUMMARY.pdf>> [accessed 17 March 2016].
  26. Equal Justice Initiative, *Race and Poverty* (EJI, 16 March 2016) <<http://www.eji.org/raceandpoverty>> [accessed 17 March 2016].

of terror, whereby black men continue to be subject to state and quasi-state violence and are viewed as inherently aggressive; a construction which is yet to be confronted.<sup>27</sup>

Paradoxically, the CJS played a key role in the history of lynching, which exemplifies the ideology of white supremacy that dominated all sectors of society during this time, and arguably still remains today, although covertly so.<sup>28</sup> For instance, the CJS did not condemn white perpetrators of lynching's and failed to use official agencies of law enforcement in the investigation of black lynching's.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the EJI found that the lynching of black males, was often due to the skewed fear of interracial sex and sexual assault.<sup>30</sup> However, this view was further exacerbated by the CJS's failure to recognise the willing consent of white women to have sex with African American men, despite evidence of consensual relationships.<sup>31</sup> This ill-defined and exaggerated threat of black-on-white 'rape', allowed the state and institutions to kill without reason and without the requirement of 'legality' in lynching. This resulted in the lynching of black men on unmerited grounds, such as knocking on the door of a white woman's house or inviting white women to tea.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the injustice experienced at the hands of a system supposedly employing justice has corrupted the honesty of the system and has framed the institutionalised and systematic racism experienced by the black community today. Furthermore, the targeting of black men at the hands of the CJS during this time further complicates the matter of the intersectional oppression black men continue to experience by law enforcement officers.<sup>33</sup>

Although, forms of slavery and human trafficking continue to be practiced across the world, the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade are long gone and black life in America has improved

significantly since the days of lynching. Despite this, not enough progress has been made to prevent the trend of violence and racial inequality towards the black male population by the CJS and the police. In addition, the historic construction of black masculinity as 'uncivilised' and 'animalistic',<sup>34</sup> continues to stereotype black men in America and thus acts as a force of oppression, which is concealed in the fabrics of society through their mass incarceration and marginalisation.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, a direct link between the rise of capital punishment within the black community and America's legacy of racial subordination and terror, can be made. As argued by the EJ, "perhaps the most important reason that lynching declined is that it was replaced by a more palatable form of violence".<sup>36</sup> This new palatable form of violence is apparent in the disproportionate amount of young black men who are racially profiled, beaten or even killed by law enforcement officers. Furthermore, the sudden surge of media attention showing incidences of violence by the state, as well as recent riots and demonstrations across the U.S, sparked by the unjust and militarised killing of Michael Brown (aged 18)<sup>37</sup> marks a new era and recognition of direct state and quasi-state violence black young men are exposed to, as influenced by cultural and structural violence. However, the fact that 42% of inmates currently on death row are African Americans, despite only consisting of 13% of the population<sup>38</sup> demonstrates how the CJS remains thwarted by racial bias and ultimately reflects its failure to leave behind the racial violence of the past; a reason why the campaign '#blacklivesmatter', is so necessary in this day and age.

In 2015, 1138 people were killed by police forces across the U.S.<sup>39</sup> Yet again the number of African Americans killed this year is disproportionately high in comparison to other racial groups.<sup>40</sup>

27. Ferber, 2007.

28. Campbell, James M., 'The Lynching of William Parker: The Criminal Justice System at Work in 19th Century North Carolina', *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 7 (1982), 99–109; Wells-Barnett, Ida B, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (United States: ReadHowYouWant, 2009).

29. Campbell, 1982; Wells-Barnett, 2006.

30. EJI, p.9.

31. EJI, p.10; Jones, *The System Isn't Broken, It Was Designed That Way: A Critical Analysis of Historical Racial Disadvantage in the Criminal Justice System* I the Hampton Institute, 2013.

32. EJI, p.11.

33. Alexander, p.160: EJI, p.3.

34. Feagin, Joe R, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities and Future Reparations* (United States: Scholarly Audio, 2001).

35. Alexander, 2010.

36. EJI, p.21.

37. BBC, 2014.

38. Hartney, Christopher, and Linh Vuong, *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the US Criminal Justice System CREATED EQUAL*, 2009 <[http://www.nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication\\_pdf/created-equal.pdf](http://www.nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/created-equal.pdf)> [accessed 17 March 2016].

39. The Guardian, 2015.

40. Davis, Angela Y., *Women, Race and Class* (London: The Women's Press, 1982).

A recent study undertaken by The Guardian, has revealed that not only are black people three times more likely to be killed than white people, but they are also twice as likely to be killed unarmed, than white people.<sup>42</sup> In addition, during 2015, young black men were nine times more probable to be killed by law enforcement officers than any other U.S citizen. As discussed above, African American's experience of everyday life is based on a number of interconnecting socially constructed identities, which ultimately disempower and leave them vulnerable to direct violence, informed by structural and cultural violence.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, an intersectional lens is advantageous upon analysis of examples of police brutality, in order to understand why the African American race and in particular black men are disproportionately arrested, have higher unemployment levels and incarceration rates.<sup>44</sup>

Theoretically, the U.S is arguably a post-racial society, however the political struggle and violence experienced by African Americans continues to shape, permeate and disempower everyday life. This essay therefore suggests that post-racial America is a misconception of U.S society.<sup>45</sup> The ending of slavery and 'big events' such as the civil rights movement in the 1950s and the dual-election of America's first black president, is often synonymous with the ending of racism.<sup>46</sup> However, the racial prejudice and brutality that the black community are continually subject to at the hands of the police and the CJS, exposes the ongoing racial stratification by institutions supposedly enforcing equality. Furthermore, as already discussed, the prejudicial construction of 'black masculinity' as deviant and brutish during the slave era,<sup>47</sup> has become fixed in the current notion

of black men as inherently dangerous; an influence on attitudes and decisions conducted by the police and a reason to why a third of all black men can expect to be jailed in their lifetime.<sup>48</sup>

The U.S has arguably entered an era of 'colorblindness'; an ideology which allows American law and policy to be racially 'colorblind' and therefore prevents the use of racial data or profiling, in order to achieve equality and racial neutrality within the CJS.<sup>49</sup> However, opponents of the 'color-blind' ideology view it as a new form of 'dyconscious racism';<sup>50</sup> an idea which assumes "discrimination to be a thing of the past"<sup>51</sup> and fails to see America as a 'white supremacist' nation, that subjects its black community to ongoing prejudice.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the colorblind rhetoric misleads discourse regarding America as a post-racial society and views racism as a social construction, which can be deconstructed if race and race relations are not addressed by governmental institutions or the CJS. As a result, the racialised structures and practices apparent in the CJS and the failure of the CJS to criminally indict white police officers charged with the killing of young African American men, such as Tamir Rice have become commonplace.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the attempts to make the CJS 'colorblind' is arguably "a bid for innocence, an attempt to escape our responsibility for our White privilege. By claiming innocence, we reconcile ourselves to racial irresponsibility".<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, the idea of America as a 'post-racial' society cannot be valid in a 'colorblind' society, where institutions refuse to recognise their own racial bias, and race and race relations continue to define society as we know it today.<sup>55</sup>

Michelle Alexander a civil rights attorney, argues in her book

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41. The Guardian b, 'The Counted: People Killed by Police in the United States – Interactive', The Guardian (The Guardian, 1 June 2015) <<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database>> [accessed 17 March 2016].
42. The Guardian c, 'Young Black Men Killed by US Police at Highest Rate in Year of 1, 134 Deaths', The Guardian (The Guardian, 31 December 2015) <<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/31/the-counted-police-killings-2015-young-black-men>> [accessed 17 March 2016]
43. Alexander, 2010.
44. Ferber, p.76.
45. Ashton, p.42; Hancock, p.25.
46. Alexander, 2012; Haney-López, Ian F, 'California Law Review Post-Racial Racism: Racial Stratification and Mass Incarceration in the Age of Obama', California Law Review, 3 (2015), 1023–1074.
47. Ferber, 2007.

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48. Ferber, 2007.
49. Carbado, 'Colorblind Intersectionality', Signs, 4 (2013), 811–45; Crenshaw, Kimberle, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', Stanford Law Review, 43 (1991), 1241; Peery, 'The Colorblind Ideal in a Race-Conscious Reality: The Case for a New Legal Ideal for Race Relations', Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy, 2 (2011), pp, 473–95.
50. King, Joyce E., *Dysconscious Racism, Afrocentric Praxis, and Education for Human Freedom: Through the Years I Keep on Toiling: The Selected Works of Joyce E. King* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1991).
51. Ferber, p.11.
52. Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, 3rd edn (United States: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009)
53. The Guardian, 2015.
54. Gordon, Jenny, 'Inadvertent Complicity: Colorblindness in Teacher Education', Educational Studies, 38 (2005), 135–53 p.143.
55. Huffington Post, 'Why It's so Hard to Talk to White People about Racism',

The New Jim Crow, that the high quantity of black men in jails and prisons across America is essentially a covert system of 'racialised social control', which works in a way similar to Jim Crow, the 1880's law, which attempted to enforce racial segregation in America.<sup>56</sup> She contends that "we have not ended racial caste in America: we have merely redesigned it".<sup>57</sup> Therefore, in an era of colorblindness, police officers have been given the power to discriminate, without being challenged as racially profiling, thus essentially protecting the CJS from reports of racial discrimination and prejudice. As a result, black men are more vulnerable and at risk to specific forms of violence such as police brutality and in a colorblind society do not receive the justice they deserve<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, their mass incarceration is ultimately used to systematically enforce white domination and as stated by Bonilla-Silva, has become a

*"formidable political tool for the maintenance of the racial order serving as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system of racial oppression in the post-Civil Rights era".<sup>59</sup>*

The concept of intersectionality is therefore a valuable tool, to understand the continual racial subjugation of the black community and in particular the imprisonment and oppression of a third of the black male population.<sup>60</sup>

The 'war on drugs', a term used to describe President Reagan's campaign to reduce the illegal drug trade in the 1980s, is closely linked with the rise of capital punishment, despite a reduction in crime rates during this time.<sup>61</sup> Previous to the campaign, incarceration rates were similar to those in developed countries, however since the 'war on drugs' and consequently harsher drug penalties, America's prison population has almost tripled and today the nation has 25% of

the world's prisoners despite only having 5% of its population.<sup>62</sup> The system is in crisis, and from a legal standpoint, there are multiple layers of subjugating policies, disproportionately affecting poor black communities and black men in particular. For instance, the color-blind ideology limits how law enforcement procedures can use an intersectional lens in order to scrutinise the levels of oppression people are subject to, which consequently limits the power of racial profiling to be taken into consideration and thus leaves black men at a disadvantage. Alexander further posits the argument that the mass incarceration of black males operates

*"like Jim Crow (and slavery) and exists as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions that operate collectively to ensure the subordinate status of a group defined largely by race".<sup>63</sup>*

Therefore, this essay suggests that the campaign is not a war on drugs, but ultimately a war on color.

In addition, if released from prison (America is the only nation in the world, which sentences children to die in jail),<sup>64</sup> ex-convicts are no longer able to participate in society fully, through denied access to public housing, federal benefits, jobs, student loans or the vote.<sup>65</sup> It is therefore no wonder homelessness is also a racialised matter, where in New York people experiencing transitional homelessness are predominantly black (83.6%), male (81.5%) and often under the age of 30;<sup>66</sup> illustrating a correlation between homelessness statistics and incarceration rates in America. Evidently, ex-convicts are ostracised from society and as argued by Alexander, "Today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living "free" in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow".<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the incarceration of black

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Huffington Post (The Huffington Post, 30 April 2015) <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/good-men-project/why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism\\_b\\_7183710.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/good-men-project/why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism_b_7183710.html)> [accessed 17 March 2016].

56. Alexander, 2012.

57. Alexadner, p.8.

58. Bonilla-Silva, p.3.

59. Bonilla-Silva, p.3.

60. Ashton, 2012.

61. Alexander, 2012; The Economist, 'Why Does America Have Such a Big Prison

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Population?' (The Economist, 2013) <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/08/economist-explains-8>> [accessed 17 March 2016].

62. The Economist, 2013.

63. Murray, 'The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander', African American Review, 45 (2010), 466–68 p.468.

64. Aljazeera, 'UN Expert Slams US as Only Nation to Imprison Kids for Life without Parole', Aljazeera, 9 March 2015 <<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/9/un-expert-slams-us-as-only-nation-to-sentence-kids-to-life-without-parole.html>> [accessed 17 March 2016]

65. Stevenson, 2011.

66. Samhsa, Current Statistics on the Prevalence and Characteristics of People



men in America; as well as the marginalisation they experience once released, is a form of institutionalised racial control, which links in with the prejudicial construction of 'black masculinity' as a threat. Ultimately, 'colorblindness' during an arguably 'post-racial' era has allowed the subjugation and structured control of African Americans by society and institutions. Although lynch mobs are a thing of the past, the rise of police brutality and the disproportionate amount of black men experiencing homelessness and incarceration, illustrates the failure of the CJS to prevent the intersectional oppression of young black men.<sup>68</sup>

As previously discussed, much of the intersectionality literature has centered around the subjugation of black women, which is why this essay has focused specifically on the intersectional oppression and everyday violence, black men face in American society. Upon analysis of intersectionality and how the concept helps us to theorise the vulnerability and risk black men face, to specific forms of violence, this essay has explored the interconnected nature and construction of race (black) and gender (male) in America, and looked at the social construction of 'black masculinity; informed by a legacy of slavery and terror. In doing so, it has highlighted the link between direct violence informed by cultural and structural violence and explored how the interconnected nature of race and gender has fixed a number of prejudicial constructions to the intersection of black men.<sup>69</sup> This essay, henceforth finds that an important parallel can be drawn between the terror and racial persecution inflicted during slavery and the current period of high incarceration rates and homelessness, disproportionately affecting the black community and in particular, poor young black men.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the racial stratification apparent in many areas of society; streets, jails, prisons

and communities, illuminates the importance of intersectional analysis, in order to highlight how specific intersections of identity, such as race and gender, as well as class and age can increase an individual's vulnerability and risk to specific forms of violence.

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Experiencing Homelessness in the United States, 2011. <[http://homeless.samhsa.gov/ResourceFiles/hrc\\_factsheet.pdf](http://homeless.samhsa.gov/ResourceFiles/hrc_factsheet.pdf)> [accessed 17 March 2016] p.5

67. Alexander, 2010, p. 141.

68. Samhsa, 2011.

69. Hooks, bell, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (New York: Routledge,

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2003).

70. Alexander, 2010.



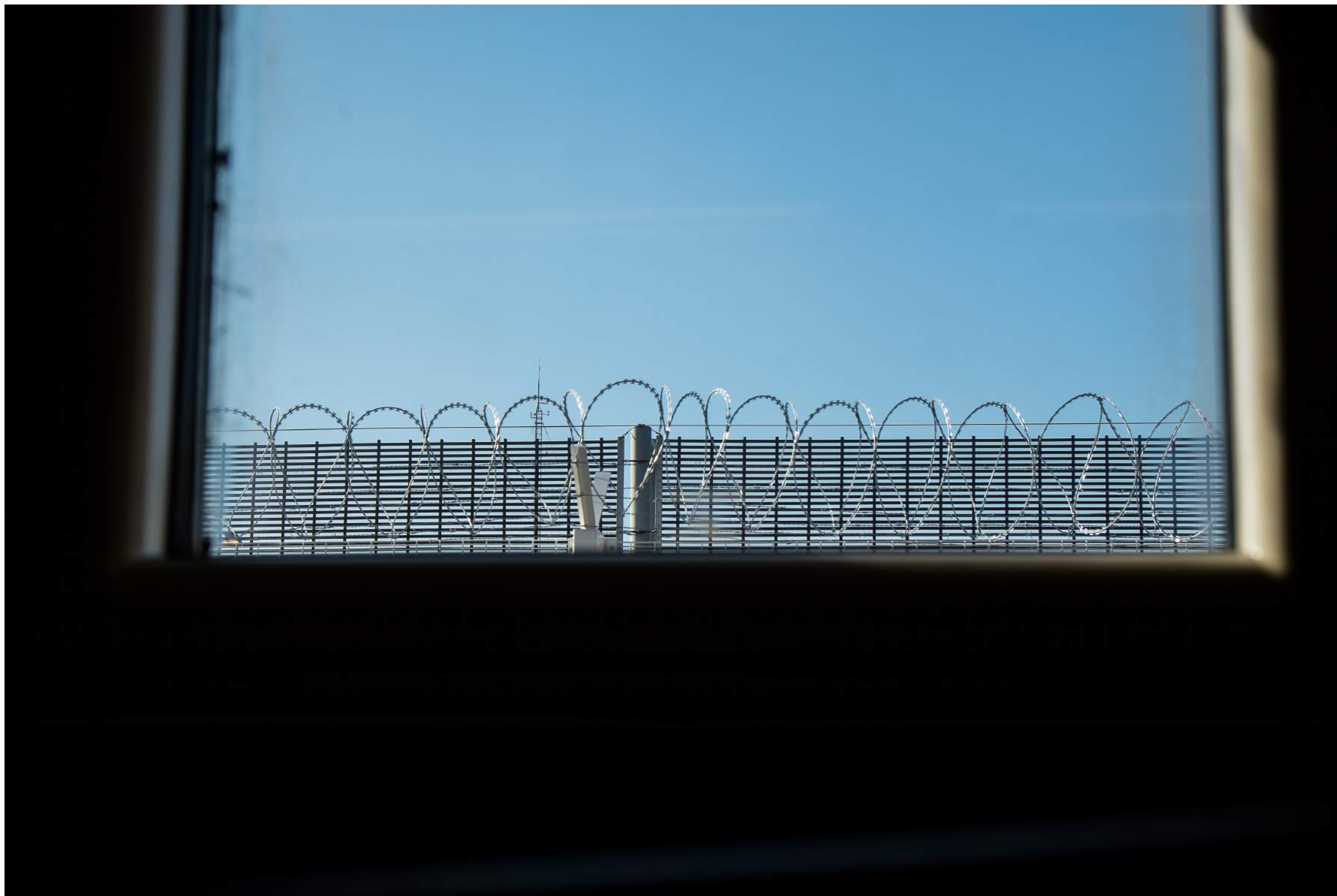
## The Jungle, Calais

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*Jamie Sinclair*

*I first visited 'the Jungle' refugee camp of Calais towards the end of summer 2015, as the crisis was beginning to heat up. I was invited as a photographer to document a day visit of an individual overseeing donations. I ended up staying for a week sharing tents with the refugees and volunteer's alike. Included in the journal, are a handful of the photos from several very meaningful trips I have made.*

*Upon arriving home, I set up a charity called 'Humanizing Refuge' with a handful of very passionate freinds. We host exhibitions and talks to raise both awareness and money, for the camp. Through repeat trips to 'the Jungle' I am left nothing short of amazed by the people I have met. There is an intense sense of community in Calais, where I have been overwhelmed by their warmth and friendliness. Despite the recent demolition of the Southern sector of the camp by the French government, I am certain the refugees remain more resilient than ever. I am due to make a return trip in a few weeks.*





























## Assess the Achievements of Israel's 2011 Tent Protests

Charlotte Carter

*This essay explores Israel's historic social justice protests, examining the Tent Protests that took place in 2011. It assesses the achievements in respect to the demands of the protesters, within the context of Israeli politics and society, and the broader global trends of neo-liberal globalisation and its discontents. This essay will argue that in the context of the protesters demands, the achievements are limited. Beyond this, there are several interrelated and at points, immeasurable achievements in respect to Israeli society, and broader global trends. William Gamson's concept of 'collective action' and Dani Filc's concept of 'crisis of representation' will be harnessed to illustrate the challenges faced by the protesters, further emphasising the significance of these achievements.<sup>1</sup> Their longevity and subsequent legacy remain subject to ongoing debate.*

The Israeli 'Tent Protest' movement took place in the summer of 2011, where protesters occupied public spaces with tents in central Tel Aviv and beyond, eventually united by the slogan of 'the People Demand Social Justice'.<sup>2</sup> They held weekly rallies and marches, as well as fostering public discussion and debate around an agenda characterised by increasingly entrenched neo-liberal policies and mismanagement of state resources that neglected the human rights of their citizens.<sup>3</sup> The movement mobilised at its peak of over 400,000 people, whilst initiated and led by Israel's youthful middle class, it came to engage people from varying sectors of society.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it became historic in mobilising such large numbers to the streets; particularly striking was that protesters were mobilised by a socioeconomic agenda.<sup>5</sup> A precursor to the protests occurred in June 2011, when a young Israeli began a Facebook campaign over the excessive prices of cottage cheese, resulting from the removal of government price controls in 2006 and subsequent privatisation; the Facebook campaign went viral, attracting over 100,000 supporters as well as support from the press, and subsequently led to the lowering of prices through the reduction of import duties on dairy products.<sup>6</sup> This unlikely achievement is said to have mobilised feelings of power amongst the public in respect to bringing about change, particularly in respect to socioeconomic issues.<sup>7</sup>

This essay begins by detailing the precursors to the Tent Protests, as well as assessing the achievements of the Israel Tent Protests in respect to protesters demands. Subsequently, through outlining Gamson's concept of 'collective action',<sup>8</sup> some of the more immeasurable achievements of the protests will be explored

1. William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Dani Filc, *Neo-Liberalism, Sovereignty, and the Crisis of Representation in Israel*. ed. by T. S. Hermann, *By the People, For the People, Without the People? The Emergence of (Anti)Political Sentiment in Western Democracies and in Israel*. (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute 2012), Pp. 226 – 246.

2. Uri Ram & Dani Filc, *The Rise and (so far) Demise of Social Protest in Israel*. 8th January. [Online]. (2012). Available from: <[http://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls\\_uploads/pdfs/Themen/Arabellion/20120115\\_the\\_social\\_protest\\_in\\_israel-Uri\\_Ram.pdf](http://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/Themen/Arabellion/20120115_the_social_protest_in_israel-Uri_Ram.pdf)> [Accessed on 12/01/2016] p.1.

3. Alan Craig, Chapter 41: *The Israeli Tent Protests*. Ed. By L. Sadiki, *The Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratisation*. (London: Routledge 2015). p.538 – 539; Ram & Filc, p.4.

4. Craig, p.538.

5. Ram & Filc, p.1.

6. Craig, p.539.

7. Anat Lapidot-Firilla, *On the Fringe of the Arab Spring: The Tent Protests in Israel. The Awakening of the Civil Society in the Mediterranean*. (2012). Pp. 98 – 102. p.99.

8. Gamson, 1992.

in the context of the broader social, political and cultural climate of Israel. Both the socio-cultural cleavages in Israeli society, as well as the entrenched nationalistic security discourse are key to this discussion.<sup>9</sup> The latter part of the essay explores the impacts of the Tent Protests on wider Israeli society, particularly public discourse and civil society,<sup>10</sup> before drawing on Israel's political discourse both prior to the Tent Protests,<sup>11</sup> and in their wake. Lastly this essay addresses the wider global trends associated with neo-liberal globalisation and the ways in which the Tent Protests impacted on them within Israel.<sup>12</sup>

One month after the cottage cheese protest, 25 year old Daphni Leef sparked the encampment in the centre of Tel Aviv through the use of Facebook, in objection to the high Tel Aviv rents.<sup>13</sup> A ripple effect of public support emerged online and with galvanisation from mainstream media, the encampment expanded in the centre of Tel Aviv, and to other periphery cities.<sup>14</sup> Protest leaders began to develop demands seeking to soften current socioeconomic policies on welfare, education, housing and healthcare.<sup>15</sup> These demands were built against a backdrop of deteriorating public services, and an escalating cost of living,<sup>16</sup> the consequences of which were systemically infringing of the human rights of Israeli citizens. Furthermore, flaws in the taxation system disproportionately affected the youthful middle class leaving them financing welfare payments,

which had caused resentment in recent years towards the welfare dependent Ultra-Orthodox *Haredim*.<sup>17</sup> With the movement growing daily, the government was forced to recognise social failures in previous policies, and the movements growing legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> Indeed subsequently, the Netanyahu government announced the creation of the 'Trajtenberg Committee on Socioeconomic Change' on 8th August 2011, calling for a consultation and report within a month on identified issues.<sup>19</sup> The recommendations encompassed economic and social reforms and while less radical than protesters would have liked, were pledged to be implemented. In 2013, Talia Gorodess asserted that only a few have been implemented, such as: free education for ages 3 and up, minor changes in tax policy and an increase in the deficit by 3% to accommodate some of the social reforms.<sup>20</sup> There have been decreases in the prices of rents, allegedly due to a psychological effect caused by the protests and a public not willing to pay.<sup>21</sup> Predominantly though, due to the power of religious influence and the prevalence national security discourse in the ruling coalition government, a significant portion of the reforms were blocked.<sup>22</sup> It is here that some assert that the achievements of the Tent Protests are few, even going as far to say they 'would be considered a failure'.<sup>23</sup> For now, in this realm any major achievements from the protests would not be realised.

Turning now to a social movement concept, Gamson<sup>24</sup> identifies

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9. Smooha, S, Chapter 16: Class, ethnic and national cleavages and democracy in Israel. eds. by E. Sprinzak & L. Diamond, *Israeli Democracy Under Stress*. (Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner 1993). Pp. 309–342.; Gordon, U, *Israel's 'Tent Protests': The Chilling Effect of Nationalism*. *Social Movement Studies*. 11 (3-4) (2012), 349 – 355.
  10. Talia Gorodess, 'The People Demand Social Justice': How the Israeli Social Protests Ignored the Palestinian Issue, and the Road Ahead. (2013). *The Atkins Paper Series*. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. [Online]. Available from: < [http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Atkin-Paper-Series\\_Talia-Gorodess.pdf](http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Atkin-Paper-Series_Talia-Gorodess.pdf) > [Accessed on: 13/01/2016].
  11. Filc, 2012; Hermann, T, S, Introduction. ed. by T. S. Hermann, *By the People, For the People, Without the People? The Emergence of (Anti)Political Sentiment in Western Democracies and in Israel*. (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2012). Pp. 9 – 39; Craig, p. 545.
  12. Chris Hay, *Why we hate politics*, (Cambridge: Polity Press 2007); Daniel Maman & Zeev Rosenhek, *The Israeli central bank: Political economy, global logics and local actions*. (London: Routledge 2011).
  13. Craig, p.539.
  14. Rosenhek, Z & Shalev, M, *The political economy of Israel's 'social justice' protests: a class and generational analysis*. *Contemporary Social Science*. 9(1) (2014), 31 – 48. p.2.
  15. Ram & Filc, p.4.
  16. Gorodess, p.4-5.

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17. D. Horowitz, *The Great Cottage Cheese Uprising*. *Jerusalem Post*. 24th June 2011. [Online]. [Accessed on: 14/01/2016]. Available from: <<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/The-Great-Cottage-Cheese-Uprising>>.; Craig, p.542.
  18. ACRPS, *The Israeli Protest Movement: Motivations and Opportunities for Change*. Assessment Report. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Policies Analysis Unit. September 2011. [Online]. (2011). Available from: < <http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/75f6fb55-2779-455e-b315-cbf22bd2c302> > [Accessed on: 13/01/2016] p.10; Ram & Filc, p.6.
  19. Craig, p.543.
  20. Gorodess, p.6.
  21. Anonymous, *Reduction in the prices of second-hand apartments: 7% decrease in Tel Aviv*. *Buat-Nadlan*. 18th February 2013. [Online] (2013) Available from: <<http://www.buat-nadlan.com/2013/02/7.html>> [Accessed on 14/01/2016].
  22. Craig, p.544.
  23. Lapidot-Firilla p.102; Gordon, U, Pp. 349 – 355; Alimi, E. Y, 'Occupy Israel': A Tale of Startling Success and Hopeful Failure. *Social Movement Studies*. 11(3-4) (2012), 402 – 407. p.406.
  24. Gamson, W. A, *Arab Spring, Israeli Summer, and the Process of Cognitive Liberation*. *Swiss Political Science Review*. 17(4) (2011), 463 – 468. p.464.

the notion of ‘collective action’ in application to the Israeli social protest, and the wider Arab Spring.<sup>25</sup> He identifies three frames that characterise their nature; injustice, agency and collective identity. The injustice frame is comprised of a moral and cognitive judgement and ‘laden with emotion’ calls for action, uniting people over a common feeling of injustice. A collective identity is recognised through ‘the process of defining [a] “we”<sup>26</sup> where protesters can be united by their shared sense of injustice, often against a common opposition. The agency frame is characterised with knowledge that through collective action, policies or conditions can be changed. Gamson’s understandings of collective action in social movements can shed light on some of the more immeasurable achievements of Israel’s Tent Protests, through the recognition of some of the challenges faced in mobilising each of these frames in a bid for collective action.

Varying social cleavages in Israeli society along ethnic, religious and class lines have long been acknowledged, and inherently linked with political party choices.<sup>27 28</sup> As subsequently emphasised by Rosenhek & Shalev,<sup>29</sup> the Tent Protests mobilised the broadening of a new collective identity to represent ‘the people’, attempting to overcome old divisions. In recognition that the protest consisted of predominantly the young, secular Israeli middle class and Israeli society is ridden with cleavages, representing ‘the people’ appears ambitious.<sup>30</sup> A prominent Israeli blogger, Azoulay describes the movements’ commitment and success in transcending socially constructed divides, writing

*“Jews versus Palestinians, [...] middle class and workers, Ashkenazi and Misrahi – are now forming new coalitions of interest groups that clearly cut across these lines...”*<sup>31</sup>

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25. Gamson 1992.

26. Gamson 2011, p.464.

27. Smootha, S, Pp. 309–342.

28. Anderson, R & Yaish, M, Social cleavages, electoral reform and party choice: Israel’s ‘natural’ experiment. *Electoral Studies*. 22 (3) (2003), 399 – 423.

29. Rosenhek & Shalev, p.4.

30. Gordon, p.349 .

31. Azoulay, A, “Civil Awakening”. In the Moment Blog. 19th September 2011. IN: W. A. Gamson, Arab Spring, Israeli Summer, and the Process of Cognitive Liberation. *Swiss Political Science Review*. 17(4) (2011), 463 – 468.

Gamson notes one significant cleavage that was not risen above in the Tent Protests, between the ultra-orthodox Jews and the secular and non-orthodox.<sup>32</sup> This is accompanied by the recognition that certain factions participated more than others in the protests, influenced by these social and political cleavages.<sup>33</sup> Notably though, the Tent Protests harnessed significant public support, with up to 90% of the public identifying with/or supporting the protest.<sup>34</sup> It is clear that the Tent Protests were unique; the breadth of engagement across social and cultural boundaries was far reaching, and not to mention successful in that respect.<sup>35</sup>

The Tent Protests undoubtedly empowered and gave a strong sense of hope to Israelis who, armed with a strong sense of agency believed they had the power to effect change;<sup>36</sup> Gamson similarly acknowledges this strong sense of agency, perhaps in the wake of the success of the cottage cheese protests.<sup>37</sup> Gamson attributes the Arab Spring as a considerable influence on the agency of protesters.<sup>38</sup> However in comparison to similar events further afield, Gordon notes that the Israeli protests might be ‘the tamest specimen in the current global wave’; apolitical in nature with ‘an avoidance of any direct confrontation with the neoliberal Netanyahu government’.<sup>39</sup> He goes on to attribute this to the patriotic, state-loyalist discourse that governs Israeli society at unprecedented levels that has long demonised the ‘left’, conducive to ‘consorting with the enemy’.<sup>40</sup> Lapidot-Firilla’s discussion on the Tent Protests draws upon the Israel’s ‘nationalistic security discourse’, here with its relationship to the Knesset as being detrimental to democratic principles, which is matched by Gordon in his analysis.<sup>41</sup> These notions contribute to a worrying erosion of democracy in and beyond the Knesset - in civil society. Such a prevalent nationalistic security discourse

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32. Gamson 2011, p.466.

33. Ram & Filc, p.3; Shalev, M, The Economic Background of the Social Protest of Summer 2011. The State of the Nation Report 2011-2012, Policy Paper No. 2012.08. Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. [Online]. (2012), Available from: [http://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/files\\_mf/theeconomicbackgroundofthesocialprotestofsummer2011.pdf](http://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/files_mf/theeconomicbackgroundofthesocialprotestofsummer2011.pdf) > [Accessed on: 13/01/2016] p.4.

34. Gorodess, p.5.

35. Rosenhek & Shalev, p.13.

36. Lapidot-Firilla, p.100.

37. Lapidot-Firilla, p.98.

38. Gamson 2011, p.466.

39. Gordon, p.349 – 350.

40. Gordon, p.350-351.

41. Lapidot-Firilla, p.100; Gordon 2012.



is evidenced by Gordon, who asserts that one protest leader unflinchingly 'assimilate[s] the movement's goals into the hegemonic discourse of security' post a military escalation between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>42</sup> All of this emphatically illustrates the challenges faced in mobilising a strong sense of agency amongst so many protesters. It could also be seen to undermine claims to sustained agency in the Tent Protests. Alimi asserts that that in spite of this, the contribution of over 400,000 public voices should be considered 'a source of sober optimism'.<sup>43</sup>

The last frame of Gamson's<sup>44</sup> collective action concept, injustice is undoubted;

*'There were (and still are) good reasons for the 'occupiers' discontent [...]. The move away from a welfare state to neoliberal global capitalism [...] has reached full speed. [...] the protesters saw [...] yet another source of their predicament, one that is rooted in unjust social inequalities and wrongful national priorities'.<sup>45</sup>*

Consistently, the Tent Protests were mobilised in respect to the shift away from the welfare state, alongside rising cost of living.<sup>46</sup> In this context, it is striking that socioeconomic agenda has previously not mobilised the Israeli society; Grinberg argues that it is only during 'quiet' periods in respect to the Palestinian conflict that 'marginalised 'internal' conflicts emerged'.<sup>47</sup> Often considered a self-fulfilling prophecy, Israel's prominent 'security mentality' has been known suppress protests in the past.<sup>48</sup> Taking all of this into account, it is clear that Tent Protests made significant achievements in the face of entrenched social boundaries and an omnipresent securitised discourse to mobilise the public for collective action. As will now be explored, the Tent Protests subsequently impacted on public discourse, civil society and in the political arena.

Firstly, Gorodess notes that mainstream media have made a considerable shift in reporting priorities towards issues raised by the Tent Protests, which can be seen to maintain the socioeconomic

agenda in the public sphere.<sup>49</sup> She subsequently notes that,

*'for the first time in Israel's history the social agenda has become a top priority, dominating the newspapers, television, street conversations and politics'.<sup>50</sup>*

It has been recognised that the socioeconomic agenda that united the protests that summer has altered public discourse.<sup>51</sup> Supporting this, Lapidot-Firilla concludes that the protests succeeded in introducing the language of social justice and redistribution of resources, and generated public discussions.<sup>52</sup> A prominent theme that arose from the 'new wave of global mobilisation' in 2011 was the facilitation of grassroots and participatory democracy that occupied public spaces.<sup>53</sup> In the face of receding democratic principles in the Knesset, bringing a form to civil society created hope and empowered the masses. Tejerina et. al. argue that these movements

*'gave democracy a new meaning, turning it into a horizontal, deliberative, transparent, and participatory dialogue between 'common persons''.<sup>54</sup>*

This stands in contrast to the democracy Israelis have known whose principles, whilst symbolised by an electoral system of proportional representation, have been shown to be receding in the Knesset, aided by anti-democratic legislation, entrenched neoliberal policies that detract power from the state apparatus and a nationalistic securitised discourse.<sup>55</sup> Dani Filc illustrates that Israel, like many other wealthy countries, is facing a 'crisis of representation' signified by a 'break between democracy and representation', whereby the 'mechanisms of political representation are not able to re-present the people as a unity'.<sup>56</sup> The more entrenched these symptoms become, the stronger challenge to social justice they will pose.<sup>57</sup> Whilst the Tent Protests arguably created new meaning of democracy, this existed outside of the political sphere and hence neglected to address Israel's crisis of representation.

42. Gordon, 353.

43. Alimi, 406.

44. Gamson 1992.

45. Alimi, 404.

46. Filc, p.239; Grinberg, L. L. The J14 resistance movement: The Israeli mix of Tahrir Square and Pueta del Sol. *Current Sociology. Monograph.* 61(4) (2013), 491 – 509. p.491.

47. Grinberg, p.495.

48. Alimi 2012.

49. Gorodess, p.7.

50. Gorodess, p. 7.

51. Gorodess, p. 7.

52. Lapidot-Firilla, p.102.

53. Tejerina, B, Perugorria, I, Benski, T & Langman, L, From indignation to occupation: A new wave of global mobilisation. *Current Sociology. Monograph* 61(4) (2013), 377 – 392.

54. Tejerina et. al., p.383.

55. Gordon 2012; Lapidot-Firilla 2012; Filc 2012.

56. Filc, p.227, 232.

57. Filc 2012.

In the past though ‘interested’ in politics, the Israeli people have been attributed as antithetical to politics, bound up in significant mistrust and alienation towards politicians and the political arena and described as ‘anti-politics’.<sup>58</sup> Anti-politics has reverberated to lower voting turnout, lack of identification with parties and a more fractured political party system, all symptoms of Israel’s crisis of representation.<sup>59</sup> Exploring the nature of the Tent Protests in this context draws both powerful and unresolved results. Primarily the protests convincingly triumphed in engaging an ‘anti-politics’ society, riddled with distrust of politics. It has been argued that it mobilised so many due to its resounding commitment to being apolitical in nature;<sup>60</sup> it was widely labelled as a ‘civil society movement’, outside of politics and above the deeply trodden identities that embody political conflict. The scale of engagement is an achievement in itself.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, it is said to have created a safe space for Palestinians to engage in the protest alongside Israelis.<sup>62</sup> The movement also created a plethora of new ties with the political sphere, civil society groups, NGOs and academics and strengthening the Israeli civil society.<sup>63</sup> A free and vibrant civil society has been acknowledged by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>64</sup> to play a central role in national development agendas. Gorodess emphasises this achievement, asserting that ‘the protests gave rise to more than 150 new organisations, institutions and initiatives in various areas’.<sup>65</sup>

For the past 40 years or so, socio-political identities have been deeply-trodden in Israeli society predominantly reflecting unresolved political issues, namely the Israeli-Palestine conflict, and the issue of the future of the Occupied Territories.<sup>66</sup> Undoubtedly these political conflicts have shaped Israeli society and politics, generating two polarised blocs the ‘left’ and the ‘right’, leaving ‘no

space for representation, debate, compromise or middle ground’.<sup>67</sup> The Tent Protests were renowned for their avoidance of these political conflicts, committing to remaining apolitical and rising beyond old divisions. As has been illustrated above, the apolitical nature of the protest generated powerful results in respect to engaging the masses and developing Israel’s civil society. However some remain unresolved; Gorodess asserts that ‘perhaps the biggest success and failure of the social protests’ lies in their reluctance to address these ongoing conflicts, particularly the conflict between the Palestinians and the respective peace process.<sup>68</sup> Lapidot-Firilla too acknowledges this.<sup>69</sup>

Political discourse in Israel had focussed predominantly on security and foreign affairs issues, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>70</sup> This has been the case since Israel’s inception, reflected in ‘virtually all national political campaigns and their outcomes’ since then.<sup>71</sup> However, in 2013 national elections we witnessed an unprecedented shift in Israeli political discourse: it focussed on socioeconomic issues.<sup>72</sup> The lead up to the election saw some of the leaders of the protest transition to conventional politics, becoming candidates for the Labor party in the Knesset. As exemplified above, the protests engaged significant portions of Israeli society in its’ socioeconomic agenda; whilst it sought to maintain an apolitical stance, the effects arguably spread into the political arena amidst the 2013 elections. Post-elections, we observed a reinvented Labor party that won 15 seats in the Knesset, bringing new politicians with it. Alongside this, their ‘new agenda appealed to a middle class who would have never thought to protest’.<sup>73</sup> This new Labor agenda involved a shift to the right in terms of security, a focus on secular socioeconomic issues, and self-censorship in respect to the Palestinian concerns, was led

58. Hermann, T, S, Pp. 9 – 39; Filc, p.240.

59. Filc, p.232; Arian, A, Atmor, N & Hadar, Y, Auditing Israeli Democracy. Changes in Israel’s Political Party System: Dealignment or Realignment? (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute 2006). p.52.

60. Gordon 2012.

61. Craig, p.539.

62. Gordon, p.352.

63. Craig, p.543-544.

64. OHCHR, ‘A central role for a civil society is the only way to guarantee inclusive post-2015 development goals’. 18th May 2015. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. [Online]. Available from: <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15970&LangID=E>> [Accessed on: 14/01/2016].

65. Gorodess, p. 8.

66. Rosenhek & Shalev, p.2.

67. Grinberg, p.494.

68. Gorodess, p.7.

69. Lapidot-Firilla, p.102.

70. Gorodess 2013.

71. Gorodess, p. 3.

72. Craig, p.544.

73. Craig, p. 544.

by newly appointed Shelly Yachimovich. Simultaneously, Israeli TV presenter Yair Lapid succeeded in launching a new party 'Yesh Atid' that came in to the Knesset with 19 seats. In becoming the second largest party, Yesh Atid created a prominent secular middle-class agenda independently of the peace process.<sup>74</sup> As Craig notes, this is a significant outcome in the political arena. Not only did the Tent Protests bring the agenda of social justice into the political sphere, they also succeeded in generating 'a powerful centre to what had previously been an overwhelmingly right-wing Knesset',<sup>75</sup> as well as constructing 'space' between the polarised bloc of 'left' and 'right'. Furthermore, in the context of Israel's crisis of representation, it resoundingly represented a shift towards better representation of the people in the political sphere.

The newly emerged political agenda on social justice has consequences for the perceived success of the depoliticisation of the economic sphere that characterises the neoliberal project.<sup>76</sup> As Rosenhek & Shalev emphatically assert, the 'repoliticisation of economic issues in general and socio-economic policy in particular' is the most important achievement, and one shared with other waves of mobilisation elsewhere.<sup>77</sup> In the broader global context, this is significant in the face of an increasingly deep-rooted neoliberal ideology that projects symptoms of social inequality, weakened political structures and subsequently democratic control.<sup>78</sup> Filc emphasises that neo-liberalisation has added to Israel's crisis of representation in significant ways, one is through the depoliticisation of the economic sphere.<sup>79</sup> The Tent Protests as illustrated above succeeded in overcoming this; it remains in question for how long this agenda will remain at the fore.

To conclude, the Tent Protests generated several achievements across civil society and in the political arena. As illustrated through the use of Gamson's concept of 'collective action', considerable challenges were overcome in the emergence of the Tent Protests

including the hegemonic security discourse and deeply divided socio-political identities. The protests mobilised with breathtaking energy and passion for an agenda that had for too long been brewing under the public surface, oppressed by a hegemonic focus on security issues. Furthermore, Israel's 'crisis of representation', illustrated through the demise of democratic values, entrenched neoliberal policies and a society ridden with distrust towards politicians and politics was confronted through achievements in the political sphere. Ultimately the protests generated better and more diverse representation in the Knesset in 2013 elections, alongside bringing socioeconomic issues to the fore of the political agenda. As Rosenhek & Shalev assert, challenging the depoliticised nature of economic issues is a significant achievement which also set about disrupting Israel's crisis of representation further.

It is clear though that longevity and the legacy of the Tent Protests that has come significantly under question in analyses.<sup>80</sup> For the achievements of a strengthened civil society, and newfound public discourse on socioeconomic issues, their legacy perhaps remains in question due to their somewhat immeasurable nature being beyond the scope of this essay. In 2015 elections, Labor Party's new alliance with Hatnuah created the centre-left 'Zionist Union' that won 24 seats, coming in as a strong opposition to the ruling Likud party. Furthermore voting turnout surpassed previous elections, with 71.8% of eligible citizens voting, the highest since 1999.<sup>81</sup> In respect to longevity in Israel's political arena, it is clear that in the recent elections the central-left party representation stood its ground, along with the maintenance of a prominent socioeconomic agenda.<sup>82</sup> As evidenced, the legacy of the achievements from the Tent Protests can be seen more acutely in the political arena, even 4 years later. Armed with this, the future holds continuing intrigue for Israel's politics and civil society.

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74. Craig, p. 545.

75. Craig, p.545.

76. Hay, 2007; Maman & Rosenhek, 2011.

77. Rosenhek & Shalev, p. 16.

78. Filc 2012; Tejerina et. al, p.380.

79. Filc, p.243.

80. Alimi 2012; Grinberg 2013; Craig 2015.

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81. The Guardian, Israel elections: Herzog concedes to Netanyahu after Likud takes most seats. The Guardian. 18th March 2015. [Online]. Available from: <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/mar/17/israel-elections-netanyahu-herzog-voters-coalition-knesset>> [Accessed on: 14/01/2016].

82. A. Heller, Israeli Center-Left alliance looks to unseat Netanyahu. Associated Press. 29th January 2015. [Online]. Available from: <<http://www.apnewsarchive.com/2015/Center-left-alliance-in-Israel-poses-surging-challenge-to-Netanyahu-ahead-of-March-vote/id-21ca8010e73148998a33bb1283a5c388>> [Accessed on 14/01/2016]; M. Azulay, Zionist Union unveils party platform: Mending ties with US, reducing cost of living. Ynet News. 3rd August 2015. [Online]. Available from: <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4634652,00.html>> [Accessed on: 14/01/2016].



## Acceptance?

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*Shafiyyah Yacoobali*

*Inspired by a range of personal psychological battles, this poem seeks to highlight similar adversities that affect individuals across the world. Many of these tribulations are sadly provoked by a society that neglects the expression of individuality and fails to adequately embrace diversity. These very concepts are fundamental to the freedom of acceptance, and, taken together they outline the imminent struggle for the basic human right of acceptance.*

**In a world perfused with darkness and sorrows,  
And the uncertainty of what lies tomorrow,  
Flutter the souls of those, quite contrary,  
Ethereal, and sculptured so delicately.**

**By the onset of trials and calamities,  
Endured with nothing but innermost purity,  
And the psychological battles, some render  
metaphysical,  
Inflicting tangible pain – in the realms of the  
intangible.  
But many stigmatise the mentalities,  
Of those who deem themselves abnormalities,  
And some say ‘Oh what a terrible thing to be’  
Blemished with flaws and endless securities.**

**But amongst the perfection and polished imagery,  
And the extinction of character and individuality,  
What is more refreshing and pure?  
Than the emergence of minds that patiently  
endure,  
The tribulations of life, which could result in  
demise.**

**But what if they were all – just blessings in  
disguise?**

## Dying to escape: An interview with Joo il Kim on the plight of North Korean refugees

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*Naomi de Souza*

*“We are living in a sad reality where more than hundreds of thousands of our brothers are living with grudges, and in China’s various mountains and streams flow our brothers tears and blood.”*

**Sang – hun Kim**

**Chair of Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights**

*The international community has become increasingly weary of North Korea’s dogged approach to the physical, psychological and financial freedom of its people. With the North Korean diaspora growing, both the governments of North Korea, and to an extent China, have a lot to answer for. Through my research and discussion with Joo il Kim, a North Korean refugee, I seek to show how North Korea’s failure to forge international ties, and its pontification of state narrative, have shaped its poor human rights record. As part of our discussion, we spoke about how the British Government can support those fleeing the totalitarian state, and what legislation can be put in place to purposefully recognise them as refugees.*

The Korean War and the cross border chaos that ensued in the following years, led to an increased amount of displaced citizens. With boundaries in flux, and loyalties in disarray, families were lost and with the formal split of the peninsula in 1948, hopes for reunification were dashed. What is unique to the North Korean situation, is how its desperation persists, and how in some ways contemporary North Korean refugees face a similar decision to their brethren more than sixty years earlier. After looking at what could be perceived as the dysfunctional relationship between China and North Korea, I speak with Joo il Kim, a North Korean refugee whose traumatic ordeal at the hands of the state lead to him becoming a leading activist in Britain for the human rights of North Koreans. We discuss what can be done to alleviate the suffering of his fellow countrymen, and how working to change attitudes in the government and in the public sphere will have a positive effect on the way North Korean refugees adapt to their new country.

Historically, owing to movement between borders because of the Japanese occupation, China’s most North East province has had a high concentration of Chinese Koreans. This movement grew exponentially in the 1990s at the height of the North Korean famine, and Chinese Koreans began to assist North Koreans. However, the Chinese Communist party was concerned by what they perceived as “an act of bolstering ethnic spirit through North Korean defectors”, leaving refugees to be treated as a threat to the purity of Chinese political values and ethnicity. Astoundingly, because China fails to class North Koreans as refugees, most are repatriated, facing varying forms of imprisonment in North Korea’s infamous labour camps.

Alternatively, North Koreans transiting through China to get to Asia live under the legal radar, and are tied down by their inability to report anything to the authorities, are subject to rife sexual and economic exploitation. From 2005 to 2012, the American Government authorized ‘\$20 million to support organizations providing humanitarian support to North Koreans outside of North Korea’. Yet it remains questionable whether money can effectively assuage the horrific traumas inherent in the day to day life of a North Korea refugee. The Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights characterizes China as a criminal nation, labelling the Chinese communist party as “nothing but a mere paper tiger at best.” Indeed,



China and North Korea's dysfunctional relationship exacerbates the human rights situation on the peninsula. Holding China to account is important, but vilifying it could be counterproductive to the efforts of improving the human rights of North Koreans.

Often treated as a disposable economic resource, North Korean women face the most brutal of experiences in China. They are mostly sold to Han Chinese men who are often physically or psychologically impaired, and willing to pay a high price for a bride. A female North Korean refugee recalls a particularly harrowing experience, how when upon discovering she had a contraceptive device her Chinese husband "brought in an obstetrician and had members of his family hold her down while the obstetrician brutally tore the contraceptive device out causing her to be bedridden for months". Sexual exploitation and trauma is but one feature of the multitude of human rights abuses that North Korean refugees face. Ultimately, the life lived by a North Korean refugee is tumultuous and high risk.

## Meeting Joo Il Kim: a symbol of Pyongyang's loss of control

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"Refugee is a better term, the word defector just doesn't account for what we have been through" says Joo il Kim softly. Joo il is one of thousands of North Koreans who fled the military state for a better quality of life. He originates from Hamgyong Province, where 81% of North Korean refugees have come from. Kim is one of nearly seven hundred North Korean refugees living in New Malden. In this innocuous London suburb the only indication of the sizeable Korean population are their supermarkets and travel agents, nestled within the seemingly hum drum high street.

The level of support offered to refugees, is what makes New Malden an attractive home for the North Korean diaspora. Most North Koreans living here have slipped quietly into the community. Joo Il Kim, who has lived here for nearly ten years, felt compelled to directly challenge the regime that saw his family starve and persecuted at the height of the famine in the 1990s. Kim has experienced unthinkable trauma, and I am all too aware of this upon meeting him early in January. We meet in the North Korean information centre, run by his South Korean friend Bona Shin. The centre is a vital lifeline for North Koreans, and is working hard to introduce them to an independent way of life, and integrate and unite them with South Koreans. Yet tensions between North and South Koreans are not uncommon, with the Database Centre for North Korean human rights attributing this division to 'anti-communist sentiments they were taught in South Korea'. The report goes on to discuss how before Japanese occupation of the North from 1910 until 1945, all Koreans were 'developing together on the peninsula as a homogenous people, protecting the same language and culture for thousands of years.' With the formal division of the country in 1953, the cultures and languages of North and South developed independently of each other. Therefore when North Koreans started arriving in Britain, South Korea, Thailand, they were viewed by their Southern counterparts as suspicious, and at times, even troublesome. Despite this, the fervent hope that both sides hold for reunification is quite moving, and something that Joo il is keen to discuss.

A former North Korean army officer, Joo il Kim's role was prestigious. However his living conditions were far from, and his role became to catch instead of train the many soldiers that fled from their dire surroundings. This was in the 1990s, a time of acute economic turmoil, when the country reluctantly relied on food and humanitarian support from the World Health Organization. Movement within North Korea is limited, but due to the nature of his role, Kim had the rare chance of travelling across the provinces, causing him to see how widespread the crisis was. After a life of adulating his nation and leader, he found himself asking "is this the best that the North Korean leader can do?"

After suffering tragedy personally and professionally, he crossed the Tumen River to China. It took two years to get through Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand to eventually reach Britain. He has since set up 'Free NK', a paper based in New Malden which aims to 'liberate the North Korean people' through its scholarship, revealing the many human rights abuses that occur. Much has been written on Joo il Kim's personal experiences, so I was keen to discuss other thoughts he may have, on the British asylum system, for example.

It is important to look beyond the myths widely propagated by the media, North Korea is so much more than a military state led by the crazed 'fat boy Kim'. Films like 'The Interview' with its lazy racial stereotypes, and the constant media scrum ridiculing Kim Jong Un, diminish what a dangerous and grave situation North Korea is in. In the last ten years especially, the West have obsessed over this apparently 'hermitic' nation and felt incredulous at its insidious hold on its people. Yet New Malden symbolises the regime's biggest fear; a loss of control. Indeed, what is dangerous is Kim Jong Un's prolonged refusal to denounce his toxic self-styled Communist ideology.

The flaws of the British asylum system further hinder the settling of a North Korean refugee. With both North and South Korea claiming sovereignty over the whole peninsula, the British Government officially recognise them as South Korean, as physically this was their last port of call. North Koreans are the only ones to have their fingerprints taken in South Korea, which Joo il says "is a breach of human rights." Ultimately they then become tied to a South Korean nationality, and are consequently deprived of the resources and support needed to settle. On this, Joo Il states "the UK should accept

us as North Korean, we have no freedom of obtaining information and if we are moving through China we make an emergency decision to enter South Korea." The Chinese Government is renowned for repatriating North Korean defectors, knowingly sending them back to certain imprisonment in its labour camps. Therefore, 'moving to South Korea is not a choice, the British Government thinks we choose to go to South Korea. If they make South Korea a first port of call, then North Koreans will have the information available to decide where to go, and better navigate the asylum system.'

From speaking to staff at the Korean information centre, it is clear that by helping North Koreans settle, they are leading the way in community integration. By busting the misconceptions some of the South Korean community may have, the Centre is empowering North Koreans. Their current resettlement programme, and various events they have hosted are all helping remedy the psychological and physical consequences that come with escaping. I asked Joo il Kim if the word 'defector' suffices as a unanimous term for all displaced North Koreans. To many, the term implies the decision to escape is light hearted, for political or passionate reasons. Yet the subsequent psychological breakdown many face, and the reality that most female North Korean refugees will be sexually exploited, shows the decision is far from frivolous. Joo Il Kim concedes, stating "refugee is the right term for us, defector just shows you have escaped. It doesn't do justice to what we have been through."

In the short time that I spent with him, I am aware we have only touched the tip of the iceberg. Not only is it remarkable, but humbling, how Joo il Kim is able to articulate the horrors he has faced. Like other prominent North Korean refugees, Kim is working tirelessly to bring awareness to the human rights abuses that friends and family are suffering. In preparing for this interview what was striking was how eager the Korean community were to help. Even after over sixty years of formal division, the community's unquestionable hope for the future of the peninsula, is quite moving. With increasing international scrutiny piling the pressure onto Pyongyang, it is their hope that the regime will soon be forced to wake up to the crimes it has committed.

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Thank you to Bona Shin for kindly hosting, and Yung Shin for translating.

To find out more about the work of the Korean information centre please visit their Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/koreaninformationcentre/?fref=ts>



## Gaza

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*Hugo Jones*

*In January I visited the West Bank to meet Palestinian and Israeli activists in the conflict. Photographs taken on 35mm film with a Cosina GX-1 & 50mm lens. This is just a photographic glimpse of daily life in Palestine, under occupation for over half a century.*



The 700 mile Wall, separating the West Bank and Israel.



Jericho, oldest city in the world. Bedouin children in a camp two weeks later demolished by the IOF.



Two year old Moyhi Aldeen and his brother, in Bi'lin, where non-violent protests take place every Friday against the wall

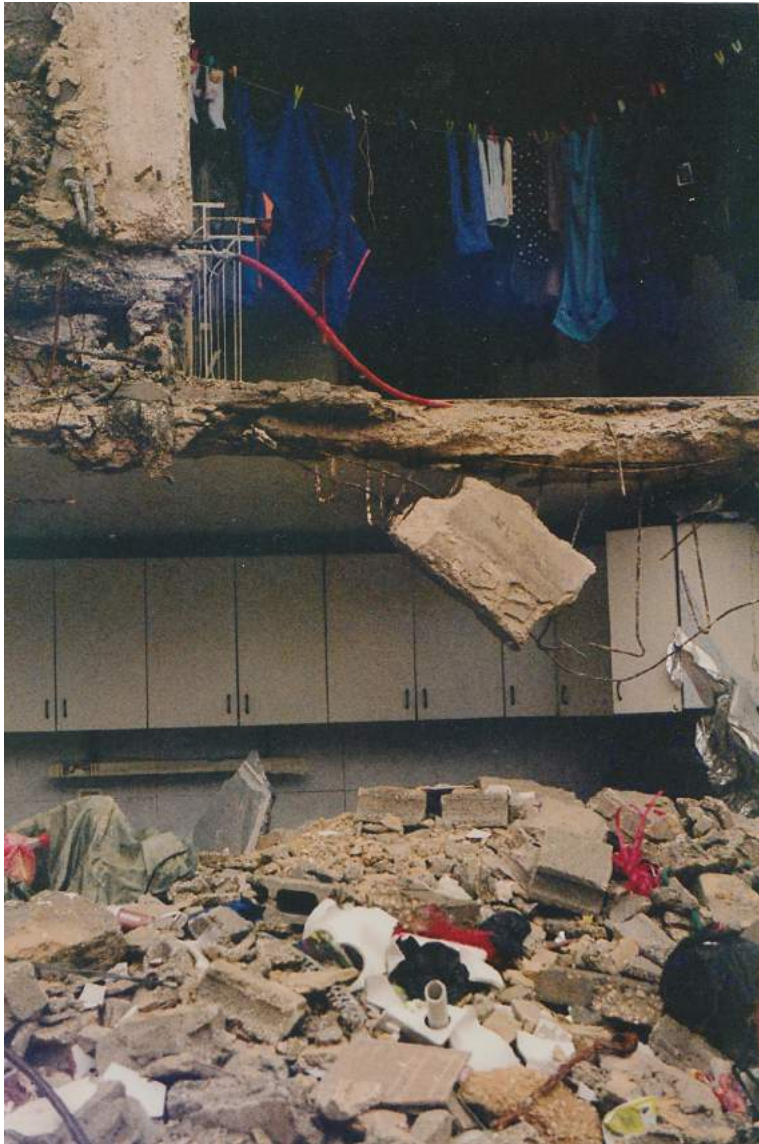






Al-Shuhada Street, Hebron - a city of 200,000 Palestinians. 2000 Israeli soldiers are stationed to guard 850 illegal settlers. In the picture Hassidic Jews watch Israeli soldiers point their guns at Palestinian children.





A house demolished by the IOF in Qalandia Refugee Camp, a disputed area of Jerusalem. The clothes line indicates neighbours still live in the neighbouring 3-walled house.



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