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Migrant urbanisms: ordinary cities and everyday resistance

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Abstract

This paper expands on the quotidian perspectives of 'ordinary cities' and 'everyday resistance' and explores the migrant urbanisms that emerge out of movement, mixing and exchange. The paper argues for a shift beyond a focus on encounter across racial and ethnic difference, to engage with whether everyday social practice can effectively contaminate political practice. The question is raised within the understanding that everyday life is rooted in inequality, and extends to an analysis of migrant participation in city life as creative expression and everyday resistance. Against a pernicious migrancy problematic in the UK that defines migration as an external force assaulted on national integrity from the outside, I explore migrant urbanisms as participatory practices of reconfiguration within ordinary cities, where diversity and innovation intersect. At the core of this exploration is how migrants are active in the making of urban space and urban politics.

Key words: migrant urbanisms, ordinary cities, everyday resistance, migration, urbanisation, participation, reconfiguration, practice

Introduction: against the 'migrancy problematic'

Thinking about ordinary spaces and everyday life opens up ways of understanding complex global processes of urbanisation and migration. In responding to the Special Issue on 'Sociologies of Everyday Life' I focus on the lived experiences of urban migration in a context of accelerated mobility and increasing inequality. Engaging the quotidian perspectives of the 'ordinary' and 'everyday' with respect to urban migration allows me to develop two related objectives. The first is a focus on the animate ways in which cities are altered by migration, and the everyday movement, mixing and exchange that saturates and transforms urban spaces. The second is a shift from the sociology of encounter as a mundane or casual meeting between strangers, towards a sociology of reconfiguration, one in which the social is integral to the political. An underlying question for this paper is whether migration - and indeed urban multiculturalism - can be understood as part of social and political processes of reconfiguration emerging within and across connected societies, rather than as an assault on national integrity. This seemingly simple question is set against a pernicious political mantra across the UK and Western Europe that problematises migration as an external imposition "being done to us from the outside".

A key example of how immigration is currently positioned as an external force requiring highly discriminatory regulation is evident in the recent *Immigration Act* passed by UK parliamentary decree in 2014 (Home Office, 2014a). The Act authorises a legal regime to control and manage immigrants across public and private spheres, not simply as outsiders, but under the rubric of illegality. References to 'sham marriages' and 'sham civil partnerships' are inscribed in Chapter 2 of the Act, while the public invocation of 'Bogus Students' has been used to monitor tertiary education enrolments, and to revoke the 'Highly Trusted Sponsor' licence to recruit foreign students (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19425955>). Following from the Act, the *Right To Rent Immigration Checks: Landlords' code of practice* (Home Office, 2014b) obliges private landlords and letting agencies to check the visa status of prospective tenants. Malicious public "experiments" pre and post the Act continue to focus on immigration status, including the 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest' slogan on vans driven around the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Barnet, Brent, Ealing and Hounslow, instituted by the Home Office in July 2013. The campaign met with widespread resistance, generating both anger and fear (Jones et al., 2014), and

the Home Office ultimately conceded that the experiment would not be rolled out across the UK. However, an increasingly elaborate regime of state and privatised infrastructures that monitor and manage the migrant as a counterfeit citizen permeates everyday life.

Against a political foreground in which the 'migrancy problematic' continues to escalate (Gilroy, 2004: 165; Hall, 2015a), is an exploration of migration as a participatory rather than an invasive process of change. Not only is large-scale migration entirely integral to the economic and cultural momentum of our global era, but migrants also actively participate in and shape core aspects of life in the UK. Emerging bodies of sociological, economic and policy research trace these long-standing participations, with recent contributions indicating the role of migrants in the British Military (Ware, 2012), the growing presence of international students and lecturers across UK Universities (Universities UK, 2014), and positive net fiscal contributions by migrants to the economy that significantly outweigh the claim on state benefits (Dustmann and Frattini, 2014). Castles' standpoint - that mobility is best understood as not distinct 'from broader societal relationships and change processes' - offers a crucial footing, advocating that migration research and migration policy ought to be embedded in 'a more general understanding of contemporary society' (2010: 1566). The quotidian perspective of the 'ordinary' and the 'everyday' offers a view of migration as integral to ongoing processes of societal change and diversification, rather than as the exception to it. This perspective challenges the out-dated insistence of regressive and indeed ineffective state attempts to 'control' migration as a feature of entry and exit into and out of national borders (Cohen, 2015):

We should be clear. It is not wrong to express concern about the scale of people coming into the country. People have understandably become frustrated. It boils down to one word: control. People want Government to have control over the numbers of people coming here and the circumstances in which they come, both from around the world and from within the European Union. (David Cameron, November 2014).

In arguing that the quotidian perspective allows for an understanding of migration as part of the lived processes of societal change, it is necessary to advance our approach to everyday life, towards what lived *participation* means in social, economic and political terms. While it is important to recognise the significance of the day-to-day life of urban migration and urban multi-culture (Neal, Bennett, Cochrane and Mohan, 2012), it is equally necessary not to engage in the apparent banality of the ordinary and

everyday simply as encounter. The casual interactions amongst diverse individuals and groups may well exhibit important dimensions of 'convivial' (Gilroy, 2004) and 'commonplace' diversity (Wessendorf, 2014). However, alongside these productive registers of interaction, lurk the enduring structures that limit migrant participation through the virulent systems of social sorting by class, race, ethnicity and gender (Back and Sinha, 2012). Beyond encounter, are a variety of approaches that engage with more concerted practices of mixing and claims to difference. Robinson (2014) highlights the emotional work required to participate in everyday exchanges in multi-ethnic inner city local libraries in London and Berlin; while Garbin argues for the right to alterity, capturing the 'spatial appropriation, regeneration and re-enchantment of the spatial landscape', through the establishment of African Pentecostal churches in London and Atlanta (2013: 677). Crucially, Hickman, Mai and Crowley (2008) challenge prevailing political expectations that migrant assimilation and social cohesion occurs against a foreground of accepting "shared British values". Rather, their detailed analysis across the UK reveals that prevailing inequality exacerbates social tension. 'Cohesion' is revealed less as a process of cultural acquiescence and more as an active process of negotiating diversity in the context of uneven everyday life.

In the two core sections that follow, I develop a fuller articulation of how our understanding of migrant participation can be advanced through engaging with the ideas of 'ordinary cities' and 'everyday resistance'. At this point I highlight the key ways in which this paper aims to expand on migration as an integral process of social change, as opposed to either an invasive process that threatens national integrity, or as the fleeting and congenial interactions amongst urban strangers. But to what everyday 'city' and to what 'migrant' do I refer? The conceptual and physical space to which I engage is the commonplace local urban high street within ethnically diverse and comparatively deprived urban localities (see for example Zukin, Kasinitz and Chen, 2015). In these apparently messy or banal linear strips activated by migrants, where mobile phones, money remittance counters and hair and nail salons converge, there is no overt migrant spectacle. The space of the street is neither the charged border space of Melilla or Calais (Andersson, 2015), nor the macabre maritime routes of those seeking refuge from carnage and famine (Sigona, 2013). In contrast, the migrants who shape city streets occupy and transform a space made once the national border is traversed. On the city street there are additional interior demarcations, perhaps less spectacular and less perilous, but none-the-less a space in

which ingenuity and agility are necessary modes of practice to engage with underlying precarity and prejudice.

Using the city street as an empirical reference, I engage with urban migration through the ordinary spaces and the lived practices of transformation. I begin with the urban frame of '**ordinary cities**' as developed by Robinson (2006) as an approach for refusing the categories of economic hierarchy in a global order, and with it the relegation of seemingly less prominent or less valuable cities and citizens. By contrast, I turn to an analysis of mixing and hybridity opened up through urban spaces of interconnection including Robinson's recognition of 'many urbanisms' and the variegated forms of creative city-making. While the ordinary city motif is spatially framed through varied urban geographies and localities, the frame of '**everyday resistance**' focuses on the sociabilities of and for difference. Both conscious and mundane processes of everyday resistance are encapsulated in Lefebvre (1947) and de Certeau (1984), where inequality is understood as integral to the maintenance of capitalist societies, and resistance is therefore an inevitable part of everyday life. I seek to expand on the everyday practices of resistance through how cultures of congeniality amongst diverse individuals and groups resonate with the politics of reconfiguration; an active *making* of new urban spaces and forms of citizenship.

Ordinary Cities: thinking about migrant urbanisms

The era of economic globalisation has been paralleled with an unprecedented scale and pace of urbanisation, bringing in to focus how migration processes are connected to processes of urban transformation, and vice versa (Glick Schiller and Çaglar, 2011; Foner, Rath, Duyvendak and van Reekum, 2014). When John Berger and Jaen Mohr wrote their book, *A Seventh Man* (1975), their aim was to show the centrality of labour migration to the construction of modern Europe and its urban centres: at the time one out of seven manual workers in Germany and in Britain were immigrant workers. Four decades on, the impetus of an increasingly asymmetrical global economy is that we now live in a world in which 232 million people are international migrants, with Europe as the largest migrant region of 72 million migrants (United Nations, 2013). The connection between migration and the transformation of cities continues, as is broadly indicated through the 2011 UK Census: the urban cores are primary destinations for historic and contemporary migration, and while 12% of the UK's current population was

born outside of the UK, cities such as London (41.6%), Manchester (26.7%), Birmingham (22.9%), Bradford (15.3%) and Bristol (14.9%) are increasingly composed of diverse migrant groups (Paccoud, 2013: 3). What kinds of cities are made through the convergence of diverse cultural and economic practices brought by migrants, and how does the city in turn shape the everyday life and space of urban migration?

The question of the generative capacity of urban locality and city space has been at the forefront of conceptualising 'the global city' in the era of economic globalisation (Sassen, 2001). The notion of an urban hierarchy of 'world class' cities has served to privilege the economic as a primary measure of urban expansion, and to emphasise the capacities of global élites, international corporations and professionalised creatives in the renewal of cities (for a valuable critique see Scott, 2006). However, the analysis of 'global cities' through inventories of economic hierarchy and professionalised prowess has rendered many cities and a diversity of urbanisation processes invisible and/or invaluable; quite literally 'off the map' (Robinson, 2002). For Robinson the ordinary cities perspective offers 'a post-colonial re-visioning of how cities are understood and their futures imagined' (2006: 2), restoring to the map the cities and urban spaces rendered invisible and inconsequential by the global city analytic. The post-colonial project of revealing the 'absent object' (Mbembe, 2001) or Robinson's absent cities and citizens, therefore depends on an awareness of the endurance of colonial prejudices, racialisations and relegations of certain cities and citizens. Robinson further challenges Western-centric accounts of what constitutes innovation and modernisation, and encourages us to engage with plurality or 'many urbanisms' and many modes of inventiveness.

How does the 'global city' analytic affect our comprehension of migrant urbanisation, and how might the 'ordinary city' offer a means to engage with the range of city spaces being made by migration? The rendition of the global city as an hierarchical and prestigious territory potentially masks our understanding of migration as a process of city-making in a number of important ways. Firstly, it omits understandings of the relational and uneven consequences of migration and urbanisation across the planet. Although transnational exchange occurs across space, there are also unequal consequences of mobility; as London continues to grow through migration, for example, there is also a counterpoint elsewhere of urban shrinkage or demise. The 2011 census data reveals that 158,300 people born in Poland currently live in London (Paccoud 2013:11). However, Burrell's work on East-West European mobility (2010) of

post accession migrants to the UK and in particular migration from Poland, reveals a far more complex, relational global landscape. Secondly, the global city analytic renders invisible internal inequalities within the city, and the subservient and precarious infrastructures required to sustain the demands of the 'world-class' city. Migration scholars have identified both the low paid, zero-hour contract and shift work labour force, frequently fulfilled by migrants, and the increasing limits for migrants to access secure forms of housing tenure (Zhang, 2004). Thirdly, it flattens out understandings of diversity and creativity, privileging an ordained professional creative class (Florida, 2005) and valorising a 'frequent flyer' cosmopolitanism (Calhoun, 2002).

It is this third dimension of masking that I focus on, seeking to recognise that the city is actively being made both within and outside of the fields of elites and experts. We know comparatively little of the role of micro-global networks sustained by migrants in on-going urban transformations, such as the day-to-day arrangements of micro-economies that emerge from local and global connections. Similarly, we know little about the impacts of migrant 'ethnic minority entrepreneurialism' (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990) and migrant labour, not only as practices sustained within ethnic enclaves (Portes, 1981), but as more expansive transactions and interactions that reshape city space and city life (Hall, 2015b). While Block and May (2014) for example, reveal the essential role of social capital including trust, empathy and skill operationalised largely between employees and undocumented migrants within ethnic enclave economies, a challenge remains to explore the broader circuits that reach across enclaves. The focus on migration and its wider webs of exchange that I argue for in this paper, is less singularly on the explicit categories of 'employment', 'sector' or 'ethnicity'. Rather, the emphasis is on transnational and transcultural modes of *making*, and detailed understandings of mixed compositions of economies and spaces that are at once globally and locally constituted.

In this vein, Ong (2011:10) advances the notion of 'worlding cities' as the active and aspiring practices of *making* or participation. 'Worlding' is an essentially creative and transformative practice, and Ong's emphasises a particular urban intensity:

'Worlding in this sense is linked to the idea of emergence, to the claims that global situations are always in formation [...] worldings remap relationships of power at different scales and localities; but they seem to form a critical mass in urban centres' (Ong, 2011:12).

Engaging with 'ordinary cities' in terms of migrant urbanisms encourages a view of how a variety of creative urbanisms emerge (Robinson, 2006), where being global incorporates the participatory practices of remaking urban space in relation to many frames of cultural and geographic reference (Ong, 2011). Everyday mixing is expressed in 'material, structural and spatial dimensions', all of which are integral to the practices of re-making the city (Wise and Velayutham, 2014: 408). Building from this base, I now refer to the ordinary space of the street and draw on recent research on migration and urban streets to propose a definition of the 'ordinary street' as one realm in which migrant urbanisms emerge.

The first aspect of the 'ordinary street' is evoked by an *overlapping urbanism* of trade and exchange, where a diversity of proprietors and customers intersect. Individual allegiances and affinities locate, both through a coalescence of intercultural city-making and/or a side-by side retention of cultural distinctions. The practices of procuring and arranging a diverse range of goods, services, materials and spaces from near and far places produces an urban collage, an amalgamated place in which it is not easy to discern where one is in the world. 'Ordinary streets' are less about the explicit creation of ethnic enclaves, or the segregation of ethnic minority entrepreneurialism within the 'urban ghettos' that Gold charts across the US (2010). While 'ordinary streets' may be located in comparatively deprived and ethnically diverse parts of cities, their spaces and economies tend to incrementally emerge through wider and more varied diasporic networks, as suggested in Zukin and Kasinitz's account of Fulton Street in New York (2015), or Hentschel and Blokland's analysis of Müllerstraße in Wedding, Berlin (2015). While cohabitation occurs within family and ethnic networks, so too is there sharing and experimentation across gender, racial and ethnic groupings, described in the observation of 'mutualisms' or productive co-location within sub-divided shops on Rye Lane in London (Hall, 2015b).

The collage arrangements at street scale are similarly evident at the scales of shop, signage and surface, establishing a *loose infrastructure* of how spaces are arranged in physical and temporal dimensions. Closer in nature to a market or bazaar, but within the given street structure, shop interiors and exteriors are constantly mixed and rearranged, where a hair salon merges with house cleaning services in one shop in an ethnically diverse Toronto neighbourhood, for example, while cell phones, internet services and money transfers merge with in another (Rankin, Kamizaki and McLean, 2015). On-going shifts might respond, for example, to the need for a wider variety of

tenures, with space divided into dimensions as small as a table for mobile phone services, or a chair rented out per week for doing hair, combining daily, weekly and monthly forms of rental (Hall, 2015b). *Loose infrastructure* potentially accommodates a wider diversity of retail and retailers, and allows for an agile and fast-footed urbanism that is frequently undetected by, or out-of-pace with, more bureaucratic planning and management processes. While this 'below the radar' city-making emerges out of ingenuity and precarity and accommodates many sorts of newcomers, its conditions are always negotiated, often leaving the most fragile in the weakest positions (Meneses-Reyes, 2013).

Finally, exchange on the street is pragmatic before it is ideological: individuals don't go onto the street to 'do multicultural', but in the process of making shop or making trade, economic and social exchange occurs (Hall, 2012). Exchange is reliant on face-to-face forms of contact and implied forms of agreement, and for the most part, everyday congeniality prevails. Conviviality is severely tested however, when there are unanticipated interruptions to everyday life, and where perceived social differences are used to exacerbate tensions (Gold, 2010). It is at the point of crisis that frictions and oppositions arise, raising the question of whether day-to-day and highly individualised exchange is a sufficient mode of civility to absorb confrontation, or whether more collective or organised platforms of civility are required. I now turn to the context of Rye Lane in Peckham in South London, to explore how the multi-ethnic traders on the street deal with crisis, and engage with the question raised at the start as to whether everyday social practice can effectively contaminate political practice. In the section that follows, I explore whether social exchange that is practical, tacit and visceral before it is ideological, is able to extend beyond encounter, towards the possibilities of social *and* political reconfiguration.

Everyday Resistance: from the social, the political?

In a compelling survey of high streets across London, researchers found that two thirds of all Londoners live within a five-minute walk of a high street (Gort Scott and UCL, 2008). Defined simply as a minimum stretch of 250 metres of retail, the survey suggests that the distribution of high streets across the city provides a sense of 'everyone's London'; an everyday urban infrastructure common to London life. The

realm of the ordinary street has featured significantly in contemporary social research, as an expressive space available to those increasingly excluded from the prestigious, world-class city, and as a space of comity that transcends the island of the ghetto or the enclave (Anderson, 2011). More explicitly, the analytic of the everyday has extended to incorporate the notion of protest and resistance “through” and not simply “on”, the street. Hattori, Kim and Machimwa refer to ‘the Amateurs’ Revolt’ as a street protest against nuclear power in the aftermath of the Fukushima plant failure in 2011. The cluster of shops in Koenji in Tokyo and its surrounding public space ‘offered a ready-made “scene” for protest’ (2015: 156); a loose civil infrastructure for rapid, organised, but unannounced resistance. Here, the street provides a common and accessible platform to co-ordinate an expression of shared discontent.

In the English ‘riots’ of August 2011, it was generally on local high streets that people gathered, in a familiar public place close to home. As part of the ‘Reading the Riots’ project, Rodgers and Prasad (2011) traced that, on average, accused rioters were up to 2.2 miles or a thirty-minute walk from home. On Rye Lane in Peckham, South London, accused rioters were 1.5 miles from home, underscoring the significance of a ‘commons’ to which people can identify as part of their everyday life-worlds. While it is not insignificant that Rye Lane was one of many high streets in which the August 2011 ‘riots’ occurred, the form of protest I focus on in this section, is less about explosive moments of dissent, and more connected to incremental processes of civil resistance. To engage in the kinds of resistance that have begun to emerge on Rye Lane post the 2011 riots, it is necessary to begin with how the street is located in the economic and cultural landscape of inner London. Peckham has, for many decades, been tainted with an enduring designation of ‘deprivation’ and is the locus of on-going state-led regeneration efforts (Glucksberg, 2013). The London Borough of Southwark in which Peckham is located is comprised of a 60.3% ethnic minority population, while 42% of the Peckham Ward is foreign born (Southwark Council, 2014, based on 2011 Census Data, ONS). The Peckham Ward in which Rye Lane is located is categorised as having a high Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and 38% of its residents are categorised as living in the most deprived areas in Southwark (Southwark Council, 2014, based on 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation Census Data).

However, understandings of human capital and skill in Peckham remain largely unscrutinised, as do the presence of active economic networks that span within and across the neighbourhood, extending to global webs of exchange. With this in mind, we

undertook an economic and spatial survey of Rye Lane in 2012, extending the study over 2013 and 2014 to explore through interviews and observations, how traders experienced change on the streets (Hall, 2015b). Our three-year fieldwork period coincided with the emergence of a traders' association. We began with a detailed survey of the 199 independent shops along the kilometre stretch of Rye Lane and focused on independent retail, which comprised of 65% of the shops. Amongst the independent proprietors, we recorded over twenty different countries of origin including Afghanistan, England, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Ireland, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Pakistan, Kashmir, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Yemen. In the survey we also asked independent proprietors how many languages they spoke: 11% of street proprietors spoke one language; 61% spoke two to three languages; and 28% spoke four languages or more. The language proficiencies of proprietors on Rye Lane are remarkable, and in the proficiency category of four or more languages, the street excels (Hall, 2013). The repertoires of multilingual communication are as strategic as they are sociable, allowing proprietors to maintain trade across wide-spanning networks, as well as to attend to the needs of an ethnically diverse clientele. In parallel to the realities of inequality that permeate everyday life in Peckham, are therefore a range of fluencies and competencies that allow individuals to participate in a diverse cultural landscape, one which is forged across local and global scales. But in the context of this diversity, what are the resources necessary to cope with crisis; how does the everyday life on a multi-ethnic street adapt to cope with internal and external stress?

During our study, we became aware of three particular crises that impacted on the everyday life of the street, requiring a response on the part of traders, customers and residents, beyond "business-as-usual". To start with, the global financial crisis that surfaced in 2008 has had significant reverberations across the UK high street retail economy. Numerous studies into the demise and alternative future of the "British" high-street followed, in response to the high vacancies in shops that came to exemplify struggling and failed high street economies (Wrigley and Lambiri, 2014). Rye Lane exhibited comparatively minimal levels of vacancy in 2012 (10%) however, traders noticed the effect of customers simply having less to spend: 'Sometimes [business] it's good. Sometimes it's bad. The last months, business has been bad.' (Interview with Ziyad, 2012). Like many well-located inner-city areas in London, Peckham is evidencing an increase in property values in both residential and retail sectors. Omar, who has been in clothing retail on Rye Lane since 1984, and who owns his shop,

comments that it might be more profitable to rent out his shop rather than run his business within it, 'I may just rent my property, sit back and collect the money and enjoy life.' (Interview with Omar, 2012). For many traders, however, the impacts of the recession require more agile responses to engaging with the parallel realities of reduced spending power on the street, and increasing rental costs.

While the first crisis was economic in its origin and impact on the street, two additional crises have had political implications for how actors on the street view their individual and collective future. A planning and regeneration initiative co-ordinated by the London Borough of Southwark is underway for the Peckham Town Centre, together with on-going consultation on the Development Action Plan (Southwark Council, 2012). As is a familiar motif in numerous urban regeneration processes, varied local groups vocalise that their interests are under-represented in the regeneration process. Further, some local groups identify a 'disconnect' between the mode of consultation or participation and the translation into policy and plans. In the words of an activist and leader of an established community engagement initiative that facilitates discussion about the future of Peckham Town Centre:

I have dedicated myself, because it is for a higher, a deeper and a wider cause than simply investing in physical infrastructure in Peckham. It's because I passionately believe that the human race actually needs a different way of organising itself at neighbourhood level, which works differently with the policy makers – we need a different way of doing it. We've got a huge, dreadful disconnect with people in their ordinary lives, and the people who take policy decisions in the professional, technical and managerial world. (Interview with Ethel, Peckham activist, 2014).

Traders too have felt under-represented in both day-to-day and concerted regeneration initiatives. Abdul, a trader on Rye Lane, comments that a lack of collective organisation on the part of the traders had previously limited the possibility of responsive engagement with officers working in the Borough:

Back in 2009 I feel for it because we had a problem with the Council doing their job in Rye Lane. We had no voice, no one could hear us, if we have any problem, serious or small, no one would take any notice if we don't take care ourselves. (Interview, 2014).

In the course of our discussion with planners in the Borough over our research period, it was apparent that no formal survey of the actual retail composition and performance of Rye Lane had been undertaken to inform the regeneration process (although a consumer-oriented survey had been commissioned). The value of the established and emergent micro-economies on Rye Lane seemed to remain invisible to those officially responsible for co-ordinating the town centre regeneration. In dealing with day-to-day

issues, such as the official regulation of items sold within the shops, traders also suggested that the relationship with the Borough was at times uncoordinated:

They think we don't know our rights, and most of us, we don't know our rights...but why don't they work with us? That is why I am learning my rights, and we are learning our rights together. (Interview with Abdul, 2013).

Finally, an incident in September 2012, involving an alleged sale of a malfunctioning mobile phone to a young man in a shop on Rye Lane, rapidly brought tensions to the fore, and propelled the formation of the traders' association forward. The phone had allegedly been bought without receipt and the young man was apparently offered no compensation when he confronted the proprietor. A heated street protest representing the party who had brought the phone grew. What mediates in such a situation, where expressions of racial and religious differences enter into the process of protest? A short film released onto *You Tube* captures an important moment of mediation, where varied parties met on the street in October 2012, to underscore a commitment to working together (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbgZifpP68E>):

- *A representative of the protesters:*

The purposes of why we are here [...] as civil people [...] is to show respect [...]. We don't play the divide and rule game. Let's deal with this with decorum as respectful African people, Caribbean people, community people [...]. One voice. [...] Now Mr X will address the people.

- *Mr X, representative of the traders:*

The retailers of Rye Lane value the support of local people. We recognise that working together we try and improve Rye Lane [...]. The incident involving Mrs W and her son should never have been allowed to happen the way it did, and we regret it, we offer our apologies. Most importantly we would like to work with her and her group to ensure such an incident never happens again. We work together to improve the relationships.

- *A member of the protesters:*

What do you propose to do to make this better? What steps are you going to put forward?

- *Mr X:*

(Mr X mentions three things: better camera coverage on the street, starting a more inclusive employment programme on the street between the proprietors and people who live in the area, and the establishment of a traders' association)

We are working together, we will have regular meetings to work together.

- *A member of the protesters:*

Do you have a customer services policy that will allow us to make proper complaints when things happen?

- *Mr X:*

Yes, we have an association now.

- *Mrs W, parent of the child who brought the mobile phone:*

I am pleased we have had the opportunity to meet Mr X and Mr Y to find a resolution. Can I personally thank them for their commitment to this. We see this as an opportunity to move forward together that we can have a regular dialogue. We formally accept your apology and draw our protest to a close.

A further dimension of mediation in the incident above also involved the participation of ancillary groups. A local vicar comments:

We have had small success in Peckham. It grew out of some tensions in Rye Lane, of racial and religious elements, that brought the secretary of the mosque into the same forum as I was as a vicar. We had a multi-faith walk, and we entered into each other's religious spaces. We had about seventy participants, and we were showing a respect in practical ways beyond a false mystique. [...] Beyond the crisis, initiatives are time-consuming and slow processes. I've twice attended main Friday prayers and been invited to speak about solidarity between Christians and Muslims, and was warmly received. [...] There are very few places where people can engage in civil society, engage in careful listening. (Interview with a local vicar, 2014).

The traders' association is potentially a place where people can engage in 'careful listening' as well as proactive efforts to engage in change. The engagement itself is made both possible and fragile by the rhythm of everyday life. Abdul comments that it is not always easy to sustain the momentum of the association because of the constraints of time:

It is not easy. Everyone on this street is struggling with their business. People have no time. After working long hours, they just want to go home and if you ask them to stay for a meeting, they are sometimes too tired. (Interview with Abdul, 2013).

However, Abdul also explained that small but important victories maintain collective momentum, and reflected on a situation where the association, through its collective identity, had managed to secure a market stall for a long-standing market member. The Borough had initially revoked the market stall holder's position over the busy trading days leading up to Christmas. While the market stall holder had made little progress as an individual in attempting to retain her trading rights, when the traders' association sent an email to the Borough, it was then that her rights were upheld. Abdul suggests, 'One email was enough. This is that small example of being together.'

How then, are the everyday politics of diverse migrant groups constituted on Rye Lane, and what are its political forms and modes? To begin with, a somewhat modest yet significant political set of practices persists, a dimension that Amin reflects on as 'a politics of small gains and fragile truces' in the pursuit of plurality and difference (2006: 1012). Similarly, Bayat in the context of the 'interreligious' and 'intertwined cultures' of the Middle East, directly engages with 'the quiet and unassuming struggles of the ordinary' (2013: 5). Here, the street is not only a common public platform, but is also a space in which individuals and groups are highly invested. For some it is the space close to home, for others a means of making a living. For all those invested, it is on and

through the street that dialogue is established and maintained. In addition, a loose cohesion of interests, including traders, other activist groups as well as religious groups, come together around collective events – be those celebratory occasions or moments of crisis. These active forms of meeting across different interests occur through organised protests, workshops, or co-ordinated cultural and religious events, which tend to occur on or in proximity to the street, all of which require leadership and protocol. Regularity is a further important dimension of organised resistance on the street, and relies on high stakes as well as small gains to sustain interest. A significant fragility is the lack of time; most individuals participate in collective forms of action as an additional activity outside of their core practices. Aspects like email and the platform of the internet reportedly contribute to organising interests and actions on a day-to-day level, but it is in the face-to-face forums where individuals and groups 'can engage in careful listening' that shared platforms of civility are reinforced.

Of significance in the everyday street politics on Rye Lane outlined in this paper, are expressions of the recognition and right to difference. Protestors, activists and traders on Rye Lane are not focused around a mantra of "British Values", but around a basic – if not always consensual - claim for living with difference. 'Values' are expressed in numerous dimensions: as the need for agreed protocols (as basic as a customer services policy); as the need for shared platforms (expressed through multilingual communication, trade associations, and multi-faith forums); and as the need for individual and group expression, frequently articulated in ethnic dimensions including shop products and layouts. Everyday streets politics evolves through both crisis and common ground, where crisis provides a momentum for collective action, and common ground provides a medium for refining the forms of collective engagement. This street politics is neither without friction nor vulnerability. However, it is expressive of the need and right for contestation *and* concurrence, and therefore encourages an understanding of togetherness, mixing and diversity outside of the ideologically canon of cosmopolitan tolerance (on which, see Jazeel, 2011: 77).

Perhaps the street politics on Rye Lane suggests that the point of a diverse and expressive public is not 'how to confer civic status' on minority or migrant groups (Meer and Modood, 2011: 18) but how *platforms of civility* emerge and are sustained within and across diverse groups in order to express and advance diverse needs through forms of collective action. The street is about collective voicing, and about protest and dissent. At times basic platforms of civility on the street deal with collective issues

ranging from the rights to trade, to securing recognition with planning and regeneration initiatives advanced by local authorities. Forming associations across diverse groups and against the backdrop of busy lives is frequently a fragile endeavour, and diversity, and lack of resources (including time), mean these platforms are often slow to grow and hard to maintain. In this sense, street voicing is neither a domestic, nor domesticated activity, but a space of constitution for a locally emergent politics that engages with wider claims of belonging.

A sociology of the ordinary and the everyday

This paper has taken as a starting point the idea of the ordinary and the everyday to advance a sociological perspective of migration as a participatory practice of social change. By focusing on global migration through the everyday practices of societal reconfiguration, I by no means disregard the significance of wide-reaching economic globalisation and accelerated urbanisation. Rather, the quotidian frame allows for the dominance of an hierarchical global order to be reconsidered through 'ordinary cities' and 'everyday resistance'. The aim is to embrace a more radical prospect for living with difference, through the realities and possibilities of 'many urbanisms' (Robinson, 2006) and a more plural and highly social politics. At the core of both the ordinary city and everyday resistance, is a fundamental regard for *making* as a mode of participation, and in this paper I have focused on the street as a shared urban space actively being made by migrants as they stretch their capacities and grow their networks across near and far places. From this quotidian perspective two key points are advanced:

1. A deviation from framing migration as a process solely carried out by migrants and regulated by states, towards understanding lived practices of migrant participation within a context of mobility and inequality; and
2. To explore migrant urbanisms as processes of reconfiguration; as social interactions of and for difference that extend beyond encounter through active practices of movement, mixing and exchange.

Participation, as explored in this paper, is not only a process of social but also political reconfiguration, where identity and belonging is renewed and remade rather than simply accommodated. While migrant participation is about everyday acts of re-composition, it occurs within highly uneven, racialised and ethnicised urban contexts. Migrant urbanisms are also therefore about everyday resistance, and extend to how

resolutions are forged and how disputes are maintained between diverse groups and between those with more power and those with less. I have used the notation of the street to engage with a public space of *overlapping urbanism* and *loose infrastructure* in which vast variety of ideas and infrastructures from near and far worlds intersect. Further, the street encapsulates the potential of exchange and interaction as productive frictions beyond casual encounter, which rely on congeniality and disagreement. I argue that we need to pay closer attention to emerging *platforms of civility*, and the ways in which diverse cultural expressions are given a wider voice, and a wider authority to engage with power. The quotidian imperative is to understand, with empirical depth, how platforms of civility emerge in cities that are increasingly diverse and unequal. The challenge is to engage with the lived articulations and makings of commonage, presence and protest, and to comprehend how these platforms develop resources as they emerge, struggle, grow or demise.

What might the makings of urban migration as 'ordinary' and 'everyday', lend to our sociological imagination? Reframing questions of belonging in a diverse and disparate world, towards the spaces and practices of cross-over and intersection, allows for a more complex view of how groups are updated through exchange. In the context of the street, a sociology of migrant urbanisms calls for a sociology of exchange beyond encounter: the conscious capacity of diverse individuals and groups to engage and to be engaged beyond a single or dominant cultural register. In this paper, it has been useful to extend the frame of 'ordinary cities' as the significance of varied geographies and urbanisms, with the everyday practices of and for difference. In the detailed sociology of ordinary cities and everyday resistance lies an empirical basis for rejecting the generalised claims of either a dystopic diversity or flattened, consensual cosmopolitanism (Lyon and Back, 2012; Rhys Taylor, 2014). The making of ordinary cities and everyday resistance is therefore not only a practice of social conviviality, but a cultural and political process that is activated between people within and across societies in order to connect or conduct or protest, *and* to foster transition, renewal and reconfiguration.

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Note:

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