Conflict in Cities and the Contested State:
Everyday Life and the Possibilities of Transformation in Belfast, Jerusalem and other Divided Cities
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End of Year Report 2008: ESRC Large Grant (RES-060-25-0015)

1. Project
   'Conflict in Cities and the Contested State' (CinC3) is a five-year research project, begun 1
   October 2007, that focuses on divided cities as key sites in territorial conflicts over state and
   national identities, cultures and borders. It builds on an earlier project begun in 2003, which was
   supported by two ESRC ‘New Security Challenges’ grants (CinC1-2). The research focuses on
   Belfast and Jerusalem in a series of relatively self-contained modules (see Annex 2), which allow a
   degree of flexibility for using different disciplinary approaches and methodologies as appropriate
   to each city and topic but with shared objectives and themes.

   To date, the investigators have met in Cambridge and London (December ’07 and February
   ’08), and had two video-conferences (October ’07 and January ’08). A detailed ethical framework for
   the project has been written and the Conflict in Cities website updated.

2. Staff
   Cambridge: Dr Maximilian Gwiazda was hired for two years in the first instance on 1 October 2007
   as a full-time Research Associate. Architect Lefkos Kyriacou (40%) was rehired (from CinC2) as a
   Research Associate for visual research, mapping and other graphic material. Karen Smith was hired
   as a part-time administrator (50%).

   Belfast: Dr Milena Komarova was hired as a full-time Research Associate on 1 November 2007 for
   two years in the first instance.

   Exeter: Craig Larkin was hired as a full-time Research Associate on 1 October for two years in the
   first instance. Mary Carter was hired as a part-time administrator (25%).

3. Graduate programme
   Recruitment for the Graduate Programme began in November; interviews for shortlisted
   candidates were held in London at Chatham House in February. Seven students were selected (two
   for each of Cambridge and Exeter and three for QUB) and have accepted their offers; three will be
   funded by the ESRC and the other four by their respective universities. The students’ contribution
   to the project will be research on Berlin, Brussels, Mostar, Nicosia, Beirut, Tripoli (Lebanon) and
   Kirkuk.

4. Research
   4.1 Belfast
   Work on modules B1 and B4 has commenced. The first six months of the project has been largely
   devoted to preparatory work: reviewing research bibliographies and related research projects and
   developing a serviceable theoretical and historical framework for the subsequent studies of
everyday life. Progress has also been made on developing detailed research designs for new
empirical research on Belfast.

   Research Module B1.1: The Geopolitical Context and Categories of City
   The objective of Module B1.1 is to develop a general, historically-informed geopolitical
framework, ie. to situate Belfast, Jerusalem and other divided cities in relation to ethnic, ethno-
national and inter-state conflicts, and broad patterns of historical-geographic change, from a world
of empires to a world of national states and beyond. Anderson has prepared a working paper that
interrogates the category of ‘divided cities’ and that looks to establish an empirical and theoretical
basis for comparing different cases across different contested states (for all references to outputs see
Annex 1). ‘Divided cities’ are positioned within an analytical framework that considers the
intersection of four types of causal factors: Their location on (1) the peripheries or frontier zones of
empires; (2) within different pathways of state formation; (3) in rival processes of nation formation;
(4) and along major fissure lines of language, religion and different levels of economic
development. Anderson and O’Dowd are also working on another paper on Empires, national
states and cities which seeks to further elaborate the comparative framework of the project.

   Research Module B1.2: The Changing Built Environment and Socio-Economic Structures of Belfast
This Module aims to outline the evolution of the city’s built-up area and its main physical, economic and social structures over the last four decades, from before the onset of the recent ‘Troubles’ in the late 1960s up to the present. It focuses on the transitions from ‘industrial city’ to ‘city of troubles’ to the presently developing ‘consumer city’, and on how these transitions have been shaped by the ethno-national conflict and have in turn influenced it. A working paper overview of the restructuring of the city by various combinations of conflict-related and urban development factors since the 1960s is in progress (O’Dowd). Another working paper (Komarova) discusses how different discourses/interpretations of the notion of ‘sharedness’ in the context of Northern Ireland bear on the definition and realisation of shared space in Belfast. The research will aim to better understand the process of ‘co—production’ of urban space at both policy level and the level of everyday life. Case studies (The Titanic Quarter, The Crumlin Road Gaol Development, the Gaeltacht Quarter, and other selected places around the city), will be examined as: the outcomes of specific negotiations/process of governance reflecting different views of what constitutes ‘sharedness’; the change in the relationship between identity and territory that they attempt to produce; and the ‘micro-politics’ of everyday encounters that they act as a stage to or produce. Analysis of case studies will be contextualised in a broader understanding of: larger scale ethno-nationalist divisions between Belfast DCA and Belfast Metropolitan Area; growth centre planning in the 1960s; population movements induced by ‘the troubles’; corporate and state restructuring; and more recent issues of post-conflict urban management.

Research Module B4: Public Space in Belfast City Centre

Within module B5, a preliminary research design has been developed on the gender dimension of the uses and recent transformations of public space in the city-centre; and on how it is structured and managed to avoid conflict and to allow for engagement with the ‘other side’, by various agents (Gender, Everyday Life and the City Centre in Belfast). The research questions here are particularly concerned with whether and to what extent everyday life in Belfast continues to be perceived, conceived and lived through distinctly gendered patterns of ethno-national mistrust and fear, and whether the city centre offers a space which is free from such patterns. The intersections between gender, class and post-conflict ethno-national tensions will be explored by examining the ways in which early parenting is organised and practiced in urban play, leisure, care and educational spaces on the one hand, and the consumption-oriented city centre spaces on the other. The study will have two key stages: ‘Everyday Use of Public Resources’ involving observations and interviews with parents caring for infants and small children in everyday spaces; and ‘Everyday Use of City Centre’ involving participant observations with parents recruited at stage 1. Stage I will begin in autumn 2008. Both stages will be completed in the summer of 2009. A working paper – early Parenting and Everyday Urban Life: Dynamics of Gender, Class and Ethnicity – is in progress.

4.2 Jerusalem

Work on modules J1 and J2 has commenced. Archival work is consolidating a comprehensive Jerusalem database, especially regarding the sharing of material between the Cambridge and Exeter teams. Dumper visited Jerusalem in November 2007 and February 2008 and explored emerging attitudes and perspectives concerning the place of Jerusalem within variations of one and two state ‘solutions’ as well as the administration and management of the city’s religious sites, both currently and under a number of different future scenarios. In late March/early April, the Cambridge and Exeter teams are making a joint fieldtrip to Jerusalem; it is underway as this report is submitted. Kyriacou is continuing (from CinC2) research on the series of maps, architectural drawings and other graphic depictions which illustrates the work.

Research Module J1 (Cambridge and Exeter): The Impact of the Separation Barrier

This research continues and extends the study of Jerusalem under the Israeli policy of closure and the construction of the separation barrier (begun in CinC2). Rather than a ‘before and after’ comparison, the process of closure is a complicated one where official policy is often obscured; the situation requires regular and ongoing monitoring, in situ and by electronic data. The research focuses on three broad areas indicated by the phenomena observed: privatisation and security; mobility and new spatial formations; and institutional support and emerging new structures. Privatisation is in various ways – security, historic sites, tourism, transportation – altering relationships between Palestinians and Israelis. Moreover the barrier has had unexpected ramifications in increasing certain sectors of the Palestinian population and transforming micro—economies. Palestinian Jerusalem is now effectively severed from its West Bank hinterland and much of the city’s sphere of political and cultural influence no longer exists; we are investigating...
resulting shifts in gender balance and, in lieu of any other authority, a new emphasis on religious institutions and familial structures. On the Israeli side, the continued conflict has been at least partly responsible for depletion of the secular population and an upsurge in religious and ultranational institutions and infrastructure. Our findings indicate that in both Palestinian and Israeli Jerusalem, the struggle for national territory carries a religious face.

The barrier and accompanying bypass roads and checkpoints have contributed to divergent urban spatial patterns that appear to promote inequality between Palestinians and Israelis. It is a situation that Pullan has explored in different ways, including the expressions in the visual cultures of the divided city and within the wider context of social and philosophical understandings of space as they have changed from early modernity to the present. She finds that the extreme fragmentation of the city, as a result of a manipulative planning process, is at odds with the present political discourse for a re-divided city.

**Research Module J2.1 (Exeter): Holy City / Holy Places**

Module J2.1 focuses on the legal administration and the preservation of the Holy sites. A key finding shows that while there was a measure of consensus over the need for an agreed set of arrangements concerning access and maintenance, including the adoption of international norms such as UNESCO conventions, there was much less agreement concerning the most suitable structures to implement these agreed arrangements. The degree to which the religious leadership of the different communities should be responsible for coordination on these issues was contentious and did not fall along secular/religious and Israel/Palestinian lines. The primary determinant was the nature of the security arrangements and overall political agreement for the city. These findings will contribute to advisory work being conducted by Dumper for the Jerusalem Old City Initiative (Canadian government funded and based at the University of Windsor, Canada) and the joint paper with Larkin on international norms.

Larkin is examining the role of UNESCO in preserving Jerusalem’s diverse cultural heritage. His working paper explores UNESCO’s troubled historical interventions; its often fragmented and reactionary responses to controversial archeological digs and the difficulties it faces in negotiating Jerusalem’s contested political status. Drawing on comparative analysis of regional interventions in the old cities of Aleppo and Fez, and post-conflict projects in Kosovo, Larkin outlines future challenges and possibilities for UNESCO projects in Jerusalem. Recommendations include the need to implement a comprehensive heritage plan; to involve more community participation; address social improvements (housing and sanitation), involve inter-agency co-operation; and demonstrate greater commitment to reconciliation.

**Research Module J2.2 (Cambridge): Holy City / Holy Places**

Module J2.2 focuses on the interface of archaeology and urban planning in laying contentious claims over religious sites in Jerusalem’s Old City and the adjacent area (‘Holy Basin’). Gwiazda is researching ultranationalist settler organisations such as Ateret Cohanim and Elad, and the settler-supported Western Wall Heritage Fund, which have extended their ability to use a wide array of archaeological practices (frequently under the mantle of tourism or conservation) in the ideological and physical construction of existing and new religious sites, extending the infrastructure of expropriation and occupation in East Jerusalem. Pullan has concentrated on settler-dominated sites in the Old City and Silwan/Ir David, finding that through practices of conservation and heritage designation, and the enhancement of tourist areas, secular sites are being appropriated for religious purposes. On a local level, it is important to examine how settlers manage and represent ‘uncovered’ religious sites in terms of past and contemporary narratives (including their dissemination through pamphlets and websites), liturgy (gender segregation, readings, prayer), as well as architecture (visitor centres, landscaping, and installations). In parallel to these spatial analyses, the project examines how settlers lobby and infiltrate public and government authorities (ranging from the Antiquities Authority, to the Police, Municipal administration and other ministries) in order to gain control over ostensibly disinterested ‘scientific’ archaeological digs.

**4.3 Joint research, data and archives – Cambridge, Exeter, Queen’s**

Komarova has constructed a bibliographical database (in exchange with the project teams in Cambridge and Exeter). A joint database for contacts, minutes, etc has been established. Gwiazda, Komarova and Larkin will form a panel for The Culture of Reconstruction conference, Cambridge 25-27 June 2007.