Abstract
Social capital is a concept that has passed from political theory into public policy. It is this passage that provides the context for my paper and it poses two questions that I address here: why has social capital made this transition and how has it changed in the process? To answer these questions I locate it within a broad field of global change that is instigating a search for new forms of power in light of novel political agendas. I develop this part of my argument in Part One. In Part Two I analyse two recent studies of social capital - by Camden Council and by the Rowntree Foundation – to see how social capital building actually occurs through myriad small interventions operative at the level of everyday life. These studies illustrate and exemplify the argument in Part One.
My aims in this paper are firstly, to sketch an account of broad structural changes associated with global transformation, in order to explain why social capital building has become a target for public policy; and secondly, to examine the kind of local initiatives whose detailed engagement with ordinary experience is needed if social capital building is to be instituted and understood as an effective means of political power. In Part One I argue that current economic and demographic factors have combined to engender a volatile, mobile situation in which concerns about security and integration come to the fore; in Part Two I suggest that it is these concerns that are motivating the state’s interest in social capital as a mode of governance.

PART ONE. Building Social Capital as a Response to Global Economic and Demographic Trends

The Changing Agenda of Governance

My broader argument is that building social capital is among a clutch of recent policy initiatives designed to repair the ideological resources of contemporary liberal states. Its significance is being altered as it becomes a strategy of governance and part of a wider experiment that Western governments are undertaking - albeit still in a rather ad hoc and inchoate way - to renew or reinvent the means of managing populations. The context for such experiments and improvisations is one of economic and demographic volatility. Over the last three decades or so there has been rapid social change: due on the one hand to the consequences of intensified capital accumulation supported by neo-liberal policies and on the other, to a process of population growth and mobility. These trends are related in various and complex ways summarised by the notion of globalisation. Economic and cultural phenomena are also closely entwined in this account. It is the combined effects of more culturally diverse communities (in particular where these are associated with segregation and bonded forms of social capital) and the dislocations that result from more intensive capitalism (more privatised lives and individualism; bigger discrepancies between rich and poor; less secure employment; changing labour markets) that makes repairing civil society seem so challenging yet so urgent. This is often summarised as a problem of exclusion, but I suggest that it is mobility and its effects that underpin such anxieties, where it is the tearing, as well as merely the weakening, of the social fabric that is at stake. In this paper I focus on the British case because building social capital has been explicitly highlighted by the UK government as one among several means of repairing civil society, while this has in turn been given a particular urgency in the wake of the London bombings of 2005.

It is not surprising that the concept of and agendas for social capital should have altered once it is relocated within the discursive and political field of multiculturalism, integration,
inclusion, diversity and security. The networks and participation associated with it are perceived from this point of view as elements within what is perhaps the biggest challenge of contemporary governance: how to square the circle of social diversity and cohesion. The fact that building social capital has become part of government policy also indicates a fundamental shift: from the focus on civil society as a relatively autonomous and spontaneous realm that criticises government while fuelling democratisation, to one in which it becomes a target for state intervention and managerialism in order to maintain social order.¹

**Theoretical Frameworks**

In order to construct my broad argument I draw on the theoretical resources of Durkheim, Althusser and Foucault. Durkheim can help us understand why policy-makers see building new forms of social solidarity as so important. He describes a passage from traditional forms of mechanical solidarity to modern forms of organic solidarity that rely on looser ties, held together by the social division of labour. As the autonomy and competitive individualism associated with industrial capitalism, and the population changes associated with urbanisation, weaken the volume, intensity and determinateness of social solidarity, egoism and anomie emerge as pathologies of modernity. Egoism indicates both introspective narcissism and an expansion of unregulated desire, while anomie suggests a normlessness where individual self-interest and class conflict flourish alongside self-destructive proclivities associated with rootlessness.

It is perhaps surprising that Robert Putnam mentions Durkheim only twice, in passing, in his seminal work on social capital, *Bowling Alone*. For it is tempting to associate Durkheim’s accounts of mechanical versus organic solidarity with bonding and bridging social capital, respectively, while his description of egoistic atomism is evocative in terms of social capital’s overall decline under conditions of global capitalism. Of course this kind of linear grand narrative is no longer persuasive to us postmodernists, but it is perhaps instructive to think of current concerns about overly-bonded, segregated communities in terms of pockets of mechanical (typically ethno-religious) solidarity that exist within modern secular societies which are increasingly organic or anomic. These pockets are not however residues of incomplete modernisation, as Durkheim might have defined them, so much as the migration of an alternative form of social solidarity and its related social capital into late modern societies. Contrary to the predictions of modernisation theorists, there has been a global resurgence of ethnic identities and ethno-national movements, rather than the expected convergence around more cosmopolitan, secular norms of civic identity.² As a consequence, the underlying consensus around a modern style of co-existence and its related values, which modern states have come to take for granted as an almost natural phenomenon, now appears
as a fragile and even anachronistic artifice requiring regeneration and renewal. It is helpful to think of this matrix of differential as well as ruined forms of solidarity as the challenge that confronts contemporary governments. It helps explain why recent policy-makers have been inclined to make a much stronger normative distinction between ‘bad’ forms of bonding social capital and ‘good’ forms of bridging social capital than Putnam ventured, while simultaneously invoking social capital as such in order to bolster an ideal of community (responsibility, duty, obligation) against individual selfishness or fecklessness.

Despite his scepticism about the state’s ability to construct new modes of solidarity, Durkheim did recognise power as a potentially positive phenomenon inasmuch as it helps to regulate desire and sustain a normative-juridical framework. He viewed the latter as a collective conscience functioning as a new ideological support for social cohesion yet without destroying autonomy or difference. In the UK one might plausibly argue that the recent spate of attempts at defining ‘Britishness’ as a new form of inclusive ‘civic patriotism’ can be viewed in this light. Thus defined, its aim nothing less than the invention of a new moral consensus: one designed to meet Durkheim’s criterion of cohesion-with-autonomy-and-difference through its emphasis on multiculturalist inclusiveness as a core unifying ideal. In taking up this challenge of ideological renewal, the liberal state strays from the wisdom of recent decades that it should maintain a deontological orientation that focuses on rights and procedural justice, rather than getting embroiled in controversial issues about culture and values. But it increasingly finds itself drawn onto this dangerous terrain by the effects of its own neo-liberal policies and by the population mobility associated with them.

In order to make the linkage between ideology and power on which my argument depends, I draw on Althusser’s distinction between repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) and ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). There is considerable evidence that the wars on terror, crime and drugs that are encouraging military, carceral and judicial responses are resulting in new and intensified forms of coercion and a reinvention of the repressive state apparatus that threatens civil liberties (especially under American neoconservatism). But in Britain concerns about integration are also motivating a more pragmatic attempt at renewing the state ideological apparatus. Here we are witnessing extensive state intervention in the family (with parenting classes), religion (with greater interest in Faith communities as an instrument of social inclusion) and schools (education in citizenship and support for Faith schools), with such interventions being especially oriented to restoring the civic values and responsibility to community, whose attenuation is perceived as a threat to social order. But I also use ideology here in its wider Althusserian sense as including habits or practices as well as ideas, such that the aim is to instil new modes of behaviour and taken for granted norms within a civil society
that is weakened by individualism and torn apart by difference. This entails a range of
disciplinary, bureaucratic and market mechanisms that increasingly penetrate civil society and
everyday life. Their aim is to engender civic attitudes and capacities in order to manage and
normalise the behaviour of increasingly mobile and heterogeneous populations. This is where
I locate social capital building: where enabling and disciplining meld.

My argument is further indebted to Foucault’s account of modern power.4 An advantage of
this is that it does not follow that new forms of power are simply coercive or reprehensible,
nor that there is an intentional government conspiracy to oppress us. Power is also
constructive (for example of a certain kind of citizen), while power and empowerment are
interrelated in complex ways. But power does nonetheless involve disciplining people
through the subjection (and production) of their behaviour according to certain norms and
constraints, against which their performances are continuously monitored, measured and
modified. If recent policy initiatives involve complex and ambiguous processes, recognising
them as forms of power alerts us to the way seemingly innocuous or even apparently benign
or trivial policies can combine and become routinised into structures of domination that were
not foreseen or planned. This is why a careful genealogy of their emergence and of their
location within a wider historical context is needed and why one needs to approach
governments’ recent interest in social capital with a critical frame of mind.

Historical Precedents
Foucault’s work is also useful for showing the connection between economic change,
population mobility and the development of new forms of power, which I am invoking as the
background for recent interest in social capital as a means of governance. While Foucault’s
account of material changes owes much to Marx’s account of the social conditions of
primitive capital accumulation, the former emphasises an especially dynamic combination of
capital and population growth during the C18th as the context (and pretext) for the modern
state’s colonising a range of new strategies to manage the effects of change within daily
existence. One consequence of these new forms of intervention was that the state would
become far more effective in insinuating itself into the fabric of everyday life and in
managing bodies and subjectivities at this quotidian level. I suggest that an equivalent, if
obviously not identical, conjunction of forces underpins the state’s enthusiasm for social
capital in the C21st.

Foucault explains the emergence of discipline (as simultaneously a new form of knowledge
and new techniques of power) in terms of two interrelated developments. The first was ‘the
demographic thrust of the eighteenth century’ where the absolute increase in population, and
hence of groups requiring supervision, was matched by `an increase in the floating population' whose nomadic habits were a particular target. [D&P 218] Individuals `wandering about the country in unpredictable ways' and threatening resistance were now to be registered, classified, assessed, and thereby rendered a calculable and controllable multiplicity. [D&P 219f] The second development was the growth in extension and complexity of the apparatus of production. `The development of the disciplinary methods corresponded', Foucault writes, `to these two processes, or rather, no doubt, to the new need to adjust their correlation.' [D&P 218] Premodern structures were simply unable to perform this adjustment in an efficient and economical way. 'If the economic take-off of the West began with the techniques that made possible the accumulation of capital', he concludes, `it might perhaps be said that the methods for administering the accumulation of men made possible a political take-off', whereby traditional but costly forms of power were replaced by `a subtle, calculated technology of subjection.' In fact, Foucault continues, these two processes of accumulation were inseparable. Capital accumulation supported a system that sustained and used the surfeit of people; the biopolitical techniques used to control this surfeit were indispensable to the capitalist system itself. [D&P 220f] The result is variously labelled a `social orthopedics', `disciplinary society', `the age of social control'.

The new techniques of power, which were for the most part invented in an ad hoc way as disparate responses to particular events or developments, and which targeted bodies as well as subjectivities, went `right down into the depths of society,' Foucault tells us. [D&P 27] The fabric of ordinary lives was thus transformed by new forms of power and new material conditions: the new economy of punishment introduced during the C18 `was an effort to adjust the mechanisms of power that frame the everyday lives of individuals'; `a refinement of the machinery that assumes responsibility for and places under surveillance their everyday behaviour, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures.' [D&P 77] What such interventions permitted was a much closer and more finely-tuned mapping of the material forces that constituted the population.

This evolution of modern power described by Foucault is broadly an account of the means by which formerly tolerated spaces of illegality or licence were reconstituted and domesticated, as an excess of mobile peoples and wild forces was moulded to the requirements of liberal-capitalist regimes. These means were initially often haphazard, makeshift responses to events, some of which were imported and improvised upon from other areas. But a mobile class of vagabonds and nomads that had been thrown off the land was especially targeted because these were seen as useless, dangerous and unproductive people who threatened wealth and social and moral order. Thus criminalized, they were constituted as an enemy of society - `a
wild fragment of nature’ - and incarceration (the beginning of the modern state’s repressive apparatus) was increasingly the penalty deployed. [D&P 101, 116]

Because the eventual generalisation of the new powers across society was the unintended consequence of collective action, the outcome was anonymous and unplanned. But the outcome was nonetheless a powerful and self-replicating system: an intensification of the rationalising processes ascribed by Weber to bureaucracy, but detailed by Foucault in the disciplining of everyday life. Subsequently, C18th innovations in the techniques of power were ‘institutionalised, becoming a form of political relation internal to society by the C19th.’ [‘T&DF’, 57] The new micro-powers that developed in a piecemeal way to manage a civil society destabilised by broad structural changes were thereby colonised by the state. Enlightenment reformers, Foucault argues, were already seeking a form of power that could saturate society as the corollary of universal rights: one ‘capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body’, [D&P 80] thus extending the law onto the ‘infinitesimal level of individual lives’ while integrating them into its general demands. Liberal-democratic régimes became feasible, in short, because they had at their disposal modes of power that rendered populations sufficiently homogeneous, normalised and law-abiding for the new political régime to maintain order.

Contemporary Context

My contention is that structural changes, which are potentially as profound in the early 21st century as they were in the 18th, are again engendering a period of great volatility and with it, a period of reconstructing strategies of power. Since the early 1970s, world population growth and mobility have combined with a resurgence of capitalism to produce new forms of social conflict and instability. The direction of the politics that will correspond to this stage of late- or post-modernity is not as yet clear, in particular regarding whether it will continue to take a broadly liberal form or will retreat to a new mode of authoritarianism or anarchy. What is however becoming evident is that liberal-democratic states are using their residual powers and ingenuity to develop new policies and strategies in order to manage the disruption to modern lifestyles. To put it in Deleuzean terms: unusually fluid flows of deterritorialisation are being matched by efforts at re-territorialisation, through a reinvention of state power. From this perspective social capital is part of an experiment in imagining and deploying innovative or strategies of governance. Of course, policy-makers no more recognise their interventions in these broad terms than the many officials mentioned by Foucault realised that the collective outcome of their reactions to events would be a society of control. But that is really my point: what seems to be a plethora of diffuse responses to particular exigencies (riots, bombs, terrorism) and anxieties (anti-social behaviour, anomie, alienation, segregation) can readily
combine - as happened with C18th discipline - to restructure and intensify modes of governance whose implications are not noticed or therefore reflected upon (much less contested), because it is not always obvious that these are forms of power or that the disparate events to which they are a response are actually symptoms of broad structural transformations whose full effects are as yet only on the horizon.

In terms of economic change, market incursion (commodification) and capitalist accumulation (which, as David Harvey notes, is a continuous process rather than just the primary accumulation Marx saw as necessary to kick-start capitalism) are being intensified on a global scale under the aegis of neo-liberal policies. These in turn affect population movements. One consequence of globalisation is that a vast pool of very cheap labour is potentially available. Western workers have not yet faced the full force of Ricardo’s iron law of wages, which suggests that an over-stocked and competitive labour market will drive wages down to around subsistence level. It is not therefore surprising that neo-liberals should favour open immigration. Yet at the same time, there is a large reservoir of the poor and the recently impoverished who are surplus to market requirements. This is where the casualties of neo-liberal policies and the symptoms of world population growth combine, although as yet their effects are most evident in poor countries. Privatising public and natural assets and the increasing use of credit in a restructured financial system are only some of the procedures by which populations are being displaced, impoverished and managed by market discipline.

Harvey argues in a way reminiscent of Durkheim that neo-liberalism has a propensity to ‘generate a situation that seems increasing ungovernable’, where social bonds yield to ‘social anarchy and nihilism’. To tackle the problems of social contestation and unrest it engenders, he points out, the neo-liberal state relies on increasingly authoritarian and sometimes overtly oppressive measures: surveillance and policing are multiplying along with the increased ‘incarceration of recalcitrant elements’ and intensified social control more generally, as a means for dealing with ‘problems arising from discarded workers and marginalized populations’. I have suggested that a more fine-grained and ideological but rather less visible mode of power is also being invented to tackle such problems.

When it comes to demographic change, sheer numbers are evocative. World population has increased from around a billion at the beginning of the C19th to around 3 billion by the early 1960s and a current count of over 6.5 billion. Although the rate of increase seems currently to be somewhat slower, a world population of 8.9 to10 billion is still predicted by the middle of the current century an extra billion persons is currently being added to the total every 12 to 13 years. Economic, political and ecological push-pull factors, coupled with new technological capacities for movement and communication, mean that many of these peoples are on the
move, their mobility adding to the effects of economic change in altering the sociology of modern states. During 2006 this global population was officially recognised as being for the first time predominantly urban. Mike Davis explains in *Planet of Slums* how most current urban growth is occurring in poor countries, where cities have little planning or services and the distinction between town and country is disappearing alongside the idea that cities are magnets of employment opportunities or sites of industrialisation. [Davis, 7, 10, 14] Davis blames neo-liberalism for falling real wages, rising prices and mass unemployment: phenomena that therefore interact with demographic changes to despoil cities even as they drive agricultural populations there from rural areas. [Davis, 14f, 23, 174] He concludes that ‘overurbanization’ is being driven by the reproduction of poverty rather than by the supply of jobs. The vast majority of these new urbanites – over a billion of them - inhabit slums and megaslums, whose desperate forms include self-built shanty towns, squats, refugee camps and pavement dwellings, many without access to clean water or sanitation (‘much of the twenty-first urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement, and decay.’ [Davis, 19]) The ‘principal function of the Third World urban edge remains’, Davis concludes, ‘a human dump.’ [Davis, 47] Even the World Bank warns that urban poverty will soon become a politically explosive problem in a world of cities without jobs. [Davis, 20]

As yet, the structural effects of such economic and demographic changes are being manifest in relatively limited, discrete forms in Western societies and are being tackled in a commensurably piecemeal fashion, with a variety of responses currently being tested and deployed. Of course populations have always moved, but what has changed is that privileged nations or elites are no longer in a position to manage this process so as to insulate themselves socially from its deleterious effects (as opposed to selectively mining its advantages economically for profits or cheap services). It is in response to this mobility and the disruption or de-containment it entails, I am arguing, that the renewed emphasis on security and policing has to be understood, alongside ideological strategies for integration and normalisation that include building social capital. Under current conditions, social capital is accordingly being invoked as a panacea to tackle two different but related phenomena: the consequences for society of several decades of deregulated markets on the one hand, and the effects of demographic mobility on cultural diversity, on the other. Whereas for earlier thinkers like Putnam the main danger to civic engagement was the increasing separation of privatised individuals, for more recent exponents this is accompanied – even superseded - by the threat of cultural and spatial segregation. It is not therefore surprising that both the studies I examine below link building social capital with the London bombings. The Camden study, for example, cites this event as the context for local government’s increased interest in social
capital inasmuch as it `powerfully underlined the importance of strong community networks that reach out and bring people together rather than sow division’.

There is in fact a variety of targets here – such as `people who lead chaotic lives’ – as well as those who are seen actively to be failing in or excluded from fulfilling their civic duties (from parents to the unhealthy) or engaging in anti-social behaviour. The deployment of New Public Management techniques is one way in which they are monitored, managed and targeted on a micro-level. Some are subjected to the state repressive apparatus; others are treated with a mix of under-funded compassion, intrusive bureaucracy and inefficacious discipline. Above all, the aim is to include and integrate them into the social system where they can be tracked and managed; disciplined and normalised. Building social capital is a useful instrument for achieving this insofar as it manages people’s `free’ time; it moves them into the public domain where their visibility renders them amenable to surveillance and to normalisation as citizens; it encourages self-help rather than dependence on the state and, according to the social capital literature, it renders citizens unwittingly compliant in sustaining the political system.

It is however the challenges of inclusion presented by ethno-religious differences that have become especially urgent in light of recent terrorist events. It is true that these are being met in part through more repressive measures, but the need to complement these with strategies that pacify rather than further alienating already marginalised communities is also obvious. If multiculturalism has been liberals’ main ideological instrument here, republican anxieties that too much diversity might pose a threat to the coherence of British society have also grown, especially in light of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (2001) and 7/7 (2005). The discovery that `home grown’ terrorists were responsible for the London bombings, in particular, has intensified the official search for new ways of integrating what is a now a very heterogeneous (and unequal) population. Because after 7/7, terrorism can no longer be seen in Britain solely as a foreign policy issue, the tougher neo-conservative route favoured in the US has been somewhat displaced by an emphasis on renewing civil society through administrative and ideological measures.

The title of a much-discussed speech delivered by the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality (Trevor Phillips) some two months after the bombs says it all: `After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation.’ He argued that `we won’t find lasting security without integration’. For it is segregation that Phillips described as the greatest threat facing a society where class, race and religion are becoming more exclusive, some districts are becoming ghettos, and even some non-denominational schools are effectively segregated by faith and
ethnicity. The costs of this ‘hard’ segregation, he concluded, are ‘crime, no-go-areas and chronic cultural conflict’. But he also identified a ‘soft segregation’ whereby most Britons only befriend or mix with others from their own racial group. I will argue below that social capital building at the local level is motivated and being designed specifically to reverse these hard and soft tendencies towards segregation. It is in this context that the search for the elusive glue that might reconcile integration with difference is being undertaken. I have already mentioned attempts at reinventing ‘Britishness’ as one such strategy.  

Renewing social capital is another.

Conclusion to part One
Robert Putnam rightly argues that understanding the causes of social capital’s erosion is a precondition for renewing it. However his own understanding is in my opinion too anachronistic, parochial and piecemeal. It is also limited by his desire to quantify all the explanatory candidates in a way that precludes appreciation of the way broader trajectories combine, which a more totalising, global account can offer. In the first part of my paper I have sketched these broader structural parameters as a way of making sense of social capital’s decline over the last three decades (i.e. during the post-1973 restructuring of the global economy under neo-liberal principles) as well as its disruption during the more recent period (one of increased immigration into, and migrations within, Europe since the 1990s, plus worries about integration and security in the current century). It is a global combination of economic and demographic change, I have suggested, that has been responsible for the weakening and tearing of civil society through a particular mix of individualism and diversity. This also explains why building social capital has become an urgent strategy for the state as a component of ideological renewal. Yet this in turn, as I explain in more detail in Part Two, is changing the practical and discursive significance of social capital itself. Here I examine some recent attempts at rebuilding it in the UK, some of which are congruent with – and indeed drawn or inferred from - Putnam’s suggestions, although the context and overall effects I impute to them are rather different from those he envisaged.

PART TWO

Building Social Capital at the Local and Quotidian Level
It would not be true to claim that the British Government became interested in social capital only after the events of July 2005. Writing in 2003, John Field already noted the ‘growing interest among policy-makers in identifying the implications of social capital’, even though he concluded that this had not as yet translated into much action beyond measuring and monitoring.  

There was an increasing awareness that besides (unequally) empowering groups or individuals who possess it, the networks and communications associated with social capital
might be strengthened as a way of tackling urban disorder and disaffected communities. Its ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ forms were perceived as especially efficacious in helping to reconcile alienated groups. If policy-makers’ interest in social capital exploded during the mid-1990s, it is surely not gratuitous that this coincided with greater class disparities and concerns that multiculturalism might after all be a divisive policy. In 2002, for example, a discussion paper produced under the aegis of the Government’s Performance and Innovation Unit identified building social capital as a way of supporting ‘virtuous norms and behaviours’ favourable to civic engagement and economic efficiency, while identifying bridging capital as a way to overcome social, ethnic or religious separation. Recommendations for achieving this include support for parenting and volunteering, as well as signalling the importance of the planning process as a means of involving communities in urban regeneration. Implicit here is the importance of devolving some of the responsibilities for ideological and social capital renewal to local authorities. Camden Council responded enthusiastically.

Case Study One: Camden Council
In 2006, a slim volume was published called Sticking Together. Social Capital and Local Government (2006): the result of a research partnership between the Institute for Public Policy Research and the London Borough of Camden. Camden was a Labour council during the relevant time period and it remains one of the UK’s flagship councils. With an ethnically very diverse population of some 200,000, it includes both wealthy central areas of the city and areas of high deprivation where urban regeneration schemes are underway. In the discussion that follows I interpret Sticking Together from the perspective of my argument that the state’s interest in social capital is part of a more general experiment in renewing power through repairing the ideological apparatus in response to fundamental structural change.

Even in 2006, Camden could still present concrete policy overtures towards enhancing social capital as a rare and innovative departure for local government, albeit one that is in tune with central Government policy. The Council accordingly describes itself as entering ‘new terrain’, which ‘poses new questions and dilemmas that have not traditionally been at the centre of public policy debate’. Chief among these are not only what kind of strategies and powers a local authority might use to build social capital among its constituents, but also broader issues of governance. This illustrates rather nicely the claim that we are currently witnessing experiments with new forms of power and it is to Camden’s credit that it recognises the importance of reflecting critically on their desirability as well as their efficacy. ‘To what extent’, Sticking Together asks, ‘should the state intervene in people’s everyday lives to bring these changes about?’ (Camden, 4) There is awareness here of the practical limits to the Council’s power – at no level does it have sufficiently ‘fine-grained control over policy
outcomes’ – and that ‘social networks are not simply a gift of the state’ but depend on a range of individual motivations and choices, as well as on long term historical processes. But there is an equally strong recognition that the ‘potential of social capital as a policy instrument is considerable’ and that ‘the stickiness of our social glue is a matter of key importance for local government’, especially since the capacity of communities to generate their own social capital spontaneously is judged both inadequate and waning (Camden, 20, 25, 42, 48).

The purpose of Sticking Together is to examine how to thicken the ‘glue’ that binds communities. This metaphor is associated with the idea of social capital throughout. (In a contemporaneous study, the authors of the Rowntree Foundation’s Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing? voice their doubts about the consensual, communitarian bias of this term, as well as their worries that social capital is itself being invoked as an increasingly meaningful catch-all concept.) Specifically, the booklet’s aim is to present the results of two surveys that were undertaken to measure social capital in Camden during 2002 and 2005, and to consider their implications for Council policy. In order to make these measurements, social capital is broken down into four components: participation, reciprocity, trust and sociability (Camden, 32). The surveys are located explicitly within the theoretical social capital literature developed by Putnam et al., and inferences are drawn from it for the situation in North London. According to the definition used by Camden, and drawing on Putnam, social capital is ‘the networks, shared norms and co-operative relationships that help us to get along together as a society.’ (Camden, 1) Its value is linked (somewhat tautologically) both to the desirability of having active communities and a strong civil society as the necessary ingredients for communal well-being, and to tackling poverty and disadvantage. Implicitly, however, it is the importance of social capital for tackling the paradox of diversity and social cohesion that is paramount. In particular, policies are designed to overcome the ‘soft segregation’ of everyday separateness that Phillips had complained about, as well as to the ‘harder’ spatial segregation associated with ghettoisation. Again, this is reminiscent of central Government concerns with a broader project of ideological repair, but here we see its exhortations being realised on a local and more concrete level. In this context it is recognised by both tiers of government that the simpler but more traditional focus of local authorities on improved social service provision needs to be complemented by a ‘more complex challenge of how to repair the fabric of co-operative relationships on which strong communities are based.’ (Camden, 4)

This emphasis on positive measures to build social capital is set against an acknowledgment of corresponding malaise in local communities, where evidence suggests declining civic participation, trust, co-operation and sense of efficacy, as well as high degrees of loneliness.
These lacunae are blamed principally on individualism, diversity and transience. Although there is no attempt at linking them to wider global forces, it is noted that ‘trends towards increased mobility and potentially greater atomisation’ – that is, the consequences of demographic volatility and the intensified capitalism facilitated by neo-liberalism that I identified in Part One - look set to continue, if not accelerate (Camden, 10). Individualism (46% of Camden’s homes are single-member households), diversity (114 languages are spoken in its schools and ethnic minorities comprise 25% of the borough’s population) and transience (with a high proportion of residents changing their address every year), as well as considerable socio-economic inequality, are all potent forces in this inner city municipality, rendering it an especially desirable locality for fostering social capital while situating it at the sharp end of structural transformation. The challenges presented by its ‘increasingly mobile and privatised’ population (Camden, 19) suggest that novel modes of thickening the glue which once bound more homogenous and stable communities together will be needed if social capital, and its contribution to a more general policy of integration, is to be enhanced. A diffuse variety of possible strategies is accordingly mooted, from the concrete and prosaic (facilitating opportunities for ‘banal encounters’) to the more abstract and aspirational (‘a vibrant civil life’). This also exemplifies the sense of provisional improvisation I have attributed more generally to the current reinvention of powers of governance.

As well as presenting social capital as a potent response to social instability, the text is littered with references to different categories of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. This has in fact become a mark of recent policy-oriented studies and is an index of the shift of concern that has relocated the term within the context of cultural diversity. The Camden study (like the Rowntree one) is explicit about the dangers of bonding social capital in reinforcing exclusivity and segregation, while it extols the benefits of bridging and linking forms that strengthen respectively the horizontal relationships between diverse peoples and the vertical relations between residents and the Council. Indeed, in common with other recent interventions it implicitly presents strengthening the latter two forms as a way of weakening the former. While it is true that Putnam himself mentions bonding capital’s possibly negative social consequences inasmuch as it is associated with sectarianism, ethnocentrism and corruption, and acknowledges that this ‘dark side’ of close social connections can entail inward-looking groups hostile to others and ‘reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups’, this plays a very minor role in Bowling Alone. He is far more effusive about the ‘powerfully positive social effects’ that both bonding and bridging types of social capital can have. ‘Dense networks in ethnic enclaves’, he insists, offer important social and psychological support to members as well as connections to assets that aid entrepreneurialism. The bonding mode provides the ‘sociological superglue’ that helps disadvantaged groups ‘get by’ (even if
it is less helpful than the more outward-looking and looser bridging capital in helping members `get ahead’). In any case, Putnam refuses to make too definitive a distinction: usually bonding and bridging varieties co-exist, he argues, and it is more a matter of more or less than of either/or. So recent distinctions and evaluations are not part of the original theoretical literature, so much as indications of the political refraction that has occurred as the state looks to social capital as a strategy for tackling ethno-cultural segregation.

In analysing Camden’s strategies I have found it useful to classify the assorted suggestions that emerge across the document’s pages according to four distinct categories: political (regarding the Council’s relationship with its residents); civil (inasmuch as this is an exercise in renewing civil association); spatial (an emphasis on urban planning) and repressive (more policing). Once these strategies for building social capital are interpreted through the lens of my historico-theoretical framework, the way power and empowerment are entwined within them becomes apparent.

Political
Social capital is enhanced, it is argued, where residents feel some control over their lives. Along with secure employment, material well-being and safety, an accountable authority that is responsive to their concerns is deemed crucial (pp. 20, 40, 42). We do not find these sorts of political and economic concerns in Putnam’s work. They do however correspond with the emphasis on participation and active citizenship stressed by Brown et al. in their speeches on Britishness, where these key indices of democratisation morph into ideological strategies of integration, legitimation and civic responsibility. Open, deliberative relationships between Council and residents; a sense of involvement and consultation in local decision-making and the raised levels of trust that such strategies of linking capital are intended to achieve, are mooted as goals that local government seems more likely to achieve than its central counterpart, while its ability to intervene in everyday lives (to empower and manage) is recognised as greater despite its lesser de facto powers. This is associated specifically with building `bridging capital’ and with the necessity of doing so `imaginatively ’ (Camden, 21).

Some of the innovations cited here (many of them practised by other councils, too, although not necessarily in terms of social capital) are the Council’s use of focus groups, surveys, online discussions, in-depth workshops and a Citizens’ Panel (Camden 23). Council sessions can also be watched on webcam if not attended in person. But a certain dependence on initiatives from central government that are more obviously ideological in their means – citizenship classes in schools, rituals and ceremonies for new citizens and the devolution of power to more local and neighbourhood levels – are also noted as ways of encouraging the
sense of involvement, integration and efficacy on which participation draws (Camden, 11). The Council, meanwhile, has as one of its monitoring criteria the impact that any particular policy will have on building that nebulous ideal of social capital. One might nonetheless feel that the relation of some of these measures to social capital is rather stretched (hence the Rowntree study’s frank concern that the idea of social capital might itself become simply ‘a flimsy new cover for the perennial sociological debate on social order and concerns regarding “community”’). Moreover, the enthusiasm for ideological assimilation and micro-management suggests a government agenda that is a far cry from an earlier association of social capital with spontaneous, more informal, relationships within civil society (such as ‘the social interaction and even occasionally civic conversations over beer and pizza’ that Putnam had associated with now defunct bowling leagues in America (BA 70)).

Civil

It is on the level of civil society that concerns about enhancing social capital have until recently focused, especially within the democratisation literature. This is the realm where voluntary associations and the rich texture of community life would ideally thrive without state intervention, as a support for rather than a target of democratic government. Although there is a more critical literature that presents this public sphere as a valuable critic of government and as importantly separate from the state (for example Habermas’s account of the emergence of the public sphere and its lamentable colonisation by administrative and juridical functions\(^1\)), its capacities have come increasingly to be seen as the pre-condition for an effective state, just as its ability for spontaneous self-renewal seems to have atrophied. If this helps explain why building social capital has now come under the purview of government, attention to civil society’s critical function has been replaced by an emphasis on its ideological role in enhancing integration and legitimacy. Capacity building has itself become a performance indicator.\(^2\)

Supporting grassroots community associations and nurturing co-operative networks accordingly become tasks for the local authority (Camden, 9). Various practical suggestions are made by Camden as ways to encourage shared activities and experiences, such as gardening and residential projects, family outings, community fun days and work with young people (Camden, 22). Like the participatory community Brown associates with Britishness, there is perhaps something rather endearingly amateurish here, reminiscent of an earlier age and of charges sometimes levelled at Putnam regarding his nostalgia for an older America of bowling leagues and family picnics. Yet there is also something very current about the state as instigator of these activities. The biggest danger is that it will destroy the social capital it hopes to build by replacing community initiatives with official activities. The payoff from a
multicultural perspective is however that it might bring together groups whose members otherwise confront one another in ignorance and hostility because they rarely meet. Of course, the assumption here is that once diverse groups do meet, they will discover what they have in common rather than having their prejudices confirmed and that mutual tolerance is always enhanced by shared activities. If the implicit aim is to weaken the bonding capital of inward-looking or excluded groups by strengthening bridging capital, this is to be achieved by cycling social relations through the public realm.

Spatial

The linkage between local communities, local government, housing, public space and social capital is an especially important one. It is after all within their neighbourhoods and communities that individuals most obviously associate in their everyday lives, and where strangers acquire shared interests in inhabiting a common environment and in suffering mutual problems associated with urban disorder. Since local authorities are responsible for planning and the environment, as ‘custodians’ of shared social space, they are especially suitable for intervention at this level and urban regeneration is an obvious point of contact.

In Britain, as elsewhere, neo-liberal orientations and post-modern sensitivities have however sewn distrust of centralised planning as a mechanism of government power. Antipathy towards an earlier planning régime is often associated in the UK with the disastrous slum clearances and tower blocks of the 1950s and 1960s, one of whose consequences was to destroy local support networks. Putnam presents the unintended consequences of destroying local networks by housing and transport policies as a reason for monitoring the impact of government on social capital, while the effect of ‘white-flight’ to the American suburbs is one of his explanations for social capital’s decline. However these are for him indirect and relatively minor factors and he never suggests a more regulatory planning process as a solution (Putnam 1995, 75; 2000, 204f, 280, 413). In the case of the French riots in November 2005, unrest in the banlieues also foregrounded problems of ethnic-cum-class segregation that were blamed in part on the social housing policies that gave rise to the peripheral mass housing schemes of the post-war period, and which were destined to become the abode primarily of second, third and fourth generation immigrants isolated from the metropolis and enjoying little physical, human or social capital. Many of the problems associated with segregation can thus be traced back to an earlier phase of housing policies and urban planning. It is the sprawling suburbs, gated communities, slums, ghettos, and banlieues that are the spatial expression of the failures of social justice and multiculturalism, and whose very existence makes building (bridging or linking) social capital across different constituencies so challenging yet so important. My own view is that housing policies which oblige individuals...
from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds to mix in their everyday lives are probably more efficacious in maintaining healthy communities than are the more nebulous strategies for building social capital (even when these include local participation in the planning process). Unregulated markets and middle class resistance do not however make this an easy option.

Increasing, social capital has become a panacea for reversing segregation and ensuring that people from diverse communities are obliged to interact in their daily lives by sharing their rather ordinary experiences. The connection between physical and social space is accordingly recognised as a vital one. Involving local communities in urban regeneration and design, as well as planning congenial public spaces, is appreciated as a good way to enhance their social capital. This is why planning strategies feature prominently on Camden’s agenda. Sticking Together is frank here: such mechanisms for bringing populations together are worthwhile ‘even if they sometimes smack of social engineering.’ (Camden, 49) Whatever their class or cultural differences, the Council reasons, people can still share experiences of local parks, shops and streets, and perhaps interact more positively in local libraries, nurseries and schools. Gated communities and mono-cultural inner city housing must be shunned (Camden, 28, 48). The provision of multi-use, safe, well-designed spaces and mixed, sustainable communities is vaunted as a goal of the planning system. On a smaller scale, communal gardens, wider pavements and the safety of public spaces are all cited by Camden as means for facilitating civil engagement. It is everyday, public interaction and even the most attenuated, diffuse manifestations of bridging capital that become valuable in a society in danger of disintegration into closed communities and isolated individuals. It is the flaneur who strolls through public spaces and who seizes the opportunity for chance encounters, experiences or conversations with others, who enlivens this metropolitan imaginary as an alternative to the alienation of the urban slum or suburban dystopia. If this is a rather attenuated form of civic association, it makes sense once the political agenda shifts to security and integration.

Repressive

The strategies for building social capital are presented by Camden Council as positive measures associated with accountability, capacity-building and environmental improvement. There is nonetheless a realisation that lack of safety and security are factors that discourage street life, community participation and trust, so it is not possible to avoid all mention of the local authority’s responsibility for sustaining a repressive apparatus. Anti-social behaviour measures, together with more intensified local policing, are therefore included here. The latter is more explicitly presented, however, in terms of its symbolic significance for strengthening the ideological apparatus. Community policing and the greater visibility of local police on the
streets suggest, according to the surveys, that such measures have helped to build trust in local crime-fighting authorities rather than being perceived as an incursion by coercive organs of the state into the fabric of everyday life.

**Interim Conclusion**

According to my broader framework, the rather haphazard and ‘imaginative’ strategies that local authorities like Camden are undertaking, which still look quite piecemeal as well as often vague or banal, are examples of experiments with new, or reinvented, modes of power that are being undertaken at different levels of the state. They are not intrinsically sinister and as yet the British Government’s aspiration for ‘joined-up’ government has not materialised. This is why they seem so innocuous and invisible as forms of power. But collectively, these strategies for enhancing social capital and thereby empowering local communities are also mechanisms by which the state takes a greater interest in the details of everyday association and experience and acquires the means to manage them. Participation in local politics or events is constructed in terms of specific activities and agendas; public spaces and visible publics are more readily kept under surveillance; publicly-funded activities are subjected to financial monitoring; civic associations supported by the state lose autonomy and sustainability.

**Case Study Two: The Rowntree Foundation**

Some of these concerns are more apparent in a second study of social capital published during 2006, called *Faith as Social Capital. Connecting or Dividing?* This was undertaken on behalf of the Rowntree Foundation. One of the UK’s largest social policy research and development charities, the Foundation originated as a philanthropic trust set up by the nineteenth-century Quaker, Joseph Rowntree. Broadly left leaning, it seeks – in its own words - to understand the causes of social difficulties and explores ways of overcoming them: hence its interest in social capital. Like the Camden study, this one also combines attention to grassroots experiences of social capital building with an acknowledgment of its importance for government policy and recognition of its local significance for building sustainable neighbourhoods. Unlike the Camden study, however, it focuses specifically on Faith communities as a potential source of social capital. While the study is interesting in its own right, it again illustrates some interesting aspects of the way social capital discourse is changing as it becomes embroiled in government policy.

Faith communities are recognised here as a possible resource for ‘engagement, connection and understanding’ and thus as a means to social inclusion (Rowntree, 1). This is in line with the Government’s enthusiasm for Faith Schools as conducive to building human capital and
inculcating civic values. As the study notes, too, ‘the UK government has identified “Faith communities” as potentially key “containers” of social capital’ in relation to its targets for social inclusion and community cohesion, while privileging them as a means for reaching out to those who are ‘hard to reach’ (Rowntree 2). New Labour’s support for Faith Schools and its overtures towards religious groups have nonetheless been extremely controversial, while the Government’s vulnerability to concerted opposition by the major religions over certain human rights issues (most notably concerning homosexuality and reproductive rights) has only increased anxieties here. This second study is more circumspect than central or local government reports, both in its attitude towards social capital and in its identification of Faith communities as its vehicle.

In acknowledging the influence of rational choice theory on the social capital literature, the Rowntree study recognises that the economic model of individualism with which such theory is sometimes associated is also part of a neo-liberal policy agenda that invokes social capital as one way of transferring responsibility for well-being from government to individuals (thereby acting ‘as a cover for welfare cuts’). It therefore finds Putnam’s focus on civic and personal responsibility worryingly congruent with a neo-liberal tendency to transfer responsibility for social exclusion to the poor and it thus indirectly associates itself with those thinkers (such as Bourdieu) who have linked social capital to inequality. It is aware, too, of the difficulties that accompany social capital where this is associated with the hierarchical, inegalitarian and patriarchal structures that often pervade more formal organisations, especially where these are associated with closely bonded communities. Here it makes some intriguing allusions to ‘newer forms of association and affiliation’, even transgression, that are more consonant with non-traditional, informal, marginal and non-consensual practices, although unfortunately it does little to flesh these out within a Faith environment. There are also concerns here about the ‘social glue’ metaphor beloved by Camden, which is associated with an over-emphasis on social cohesion and stability (hence with bonding capital). For this study, images of gluing together raise the spectre of assimilation and closed community. The Rowntree report also identifies ‘state managerialism’ – almost inevitable once government is involved in funding civic associations since this entails accountability for public funds and subjection to the monitoring, targets and micro-management that exemplify contemporary modes of governance - as destructive of more autonomous forms of capital-building and therefore as often detrimental to trust in public authorities (and vice versa).

This more critical appraisal of social capital is complemented by ambivalence regarding Faith communities as one of its bearers. While acknowledging that such communities can serve as voluntary service-providers and encourage values of care and tolerance, the Rowntree authors
also recognise that they can be sources of segregation and intolerance inasmuch as they ‘create retreat, division and conflict’. These are concerns briefly alluded to by Putnam as examples of social capital’s ‘dark side’. Although he acknowledges that a new Great Awakening would not be an ‘unmixed blessing’, and links proselytising religions with bonding social capital and fundamentalism with intolerance, Putnam enthuses about the role played by religion in an earlier (American) flourishing of social capital and cites faith-based communities – provided they are ecumenical, pluralistic and tolerant – as an important element of spiritual revival. But there is considerably less concern in his work about overly-bonded groups than there is in the post-7/7 British literature. If the biggest danger Putnam sees here arises from the fraternity that is ‘most natural within socially homogeneous groups’, and the ‘easy answer’ he offers is to build bridging capital instead, these are mentioned only briefly and without further sociological or political exploration. (BA 351-362; 408).

In light of its authors’ hesitations, the upbeat conclusions of the Rowntree study - which broadly commends more government involvement in funding and listening to Faith communities - seem somewhat out of sync with the body of the report inasmuch as this had consistently found lacunae and problems in the nature and practices of social capital within Faith communities; criticised ‘the dangers of the celebratory tone of some official policy documents and Faith-commissioned research’ and presented evidence that surely remains too sketchy, anecdotal, equivocal and meagre to support conclusions that Faith communities really are making a significant contribution to bridging or linking social capital, or that further state intervention is warranted in supporting them. At best, the conclusions remain aspirational rather than following from the examples cited.

Faith as Social Capital shares with many other studies of participatory models an observation that religious-based associations tend to rely on a small number of highly motivated individuals. This is important, because it throws into doubt the sustainability of such associations while raising questions about their capacity actually to socialise members into the kind of civic values associated with social capital, inasmuch as their activities tend towards élite involvement that lacks a mass membership. It also casts doubt on the representativeness of religious associations that are praised, effectively, for acting like interest groups in winning resources and influence for their constituents.

In regard to this latter point, I think the Rowntree study unwittingly illustrates (and reproduces) an ambiguity that runs through a lot of the social capital literature. On the one hand, there is an instrumentalist argument for social capital: it is valuable because it advantages individuals, facilitates collective action and enhances a lot of social indicators that
interest the government (such as economic productivity, educational standards, low crime rates and so on). The impact of rational choice theory is apparent here and it helps explain why the state is so interested in building social capital. Faith as Social Capital itself exemplifies this approach inasmuch as it focuses on Faith communities as self-help groups for those who are otherwise poor in other forms of capital. This is where it commends them as interest groups and as a means for the marginalised to ‘get by’. On the other hand, there is the more normative interest in community and democratisation that focuses instead on building a strong public sphere and civil society. Social capital is not used instrumentally here; rather, it is recognised as intrinsically valuable since it socialises those who participate in associational life into the civic values and competences that are constitutive of a vibrant democracy. It is not therefore directly concerned with the distribution of money and power but with the quality of practices and values, which are themselves an indirect consequence of a range of activities that are typically more recreational or vocational than instrumental or political. Rather than being part of a zero sum game, social capital increases or decreases to the benefit or detriment of the entire community. As Putnam puts it, the civic solidarity associated with this sort of social capital can be perceived as a moral resource and ‘unlike a material resource, it increases with use and diminishes with disuse.’ This aspect basks social capital in the positive aura of participatory, deliberative democracy. It thereby renders capacity building ideologically attractive as a policy and helps to legitimise (and obscure the significance of) interventions made in its name.

The Camden study exemplifies this latter perspective inasmuch as it presents strengthening civil society as a resource for its entire community as its primary concern. The Rowntree report also recognises this aspect of social capital, but there is a stronger instrumentalist component here, which is why despite its concerns about overly bonded religious groups it applauds Faith communities as service-providers and representatives of the poor and excluded. Such functions are not of course without merit, but it is surely important to clarify these instrumental reasons for investing public capital in a particular social group and to weigh them against cultural anxieties their bonded or elitist nature arouses. In other words, it is important not to confuse egalitarian, materialist arguments with cultural and democratic ones, and to be clear about the basis on which one offers support.

Conclusion
If Faith communities are of particular interest to the state as bearers of social capital, it is both because they can be used as a means to integrate some of the groups that government may be unable to reach (in particular those who ‘lead chaotic lives’), and because some of these groups are associated with the kind of closed, inward-looking ethos whose violent alienation
from society policy-makers fear. It is in this context that building social capital is being used on the one hand, as a substitute for state welfare and on the other, as a general synonym for social integration and a legitimization of the ‘social engineering’ this invites. It is in the latter context that the refinement of social capital into two or three distinctive categories occurs, with these being mapped onto a new set of concerns about identity and difference. This distinction is acquiring an increasingly Manichean valorisation as bad (bonding) versus good (bridging or linking) social capital is identified respectively with the sort of closed identity of (in particular ethno-religious) groups that threaten social integration and a healthy civil society, as opposed to those that weave broader but more diffuse networks across different constituencies. The social capital that is valued in the more policy-oriented, post 7/7 climate of post-multicultural integration is that of the ‘thinner’ bonding associated with more attenuated networks which traverse a civil society of relative strangers. Social capital is called upon here to build bridges and link constituencies: not just as another variety of networking but as a means to weaken the ‘thick’ bonding and ‘dividing’, ‘destructive’, social capital associated with more inward-looking (tribalist, isolated, stagnant, oppressive and exclusionary, as the Rowntree report has it) forms of group identity associated with ‘the dark side’ of bonding capital. As cited by the Rowntree study, census data in the UK indeed confirms that increasing ‘numbers of people live in religiously diverse districts. There is evidence of neighbourhood segregation and separate – “parallel” – lives within bonded networks with limited bridges and links.’ (Rowntree, 51) This is why building such bridges and links – the very definition of desirable forms of social capital – is central to repairing the fabric of civil society. This is really less about empowering communities than managing, even weakening, them.

From this point of view it is, paradoxically, sometimes beneficial that requests for more funding and recognition of Faith communities should tie them into managerial processes of governance, while weakening their identities by meshing them into the diffuse networks of linking capital. The question is whether on the one hand, associations that engender social capital within civil society can survive the interest that government is taking in them and on the other, whether this is not in the end a mechanism for destroying the sort of ‘bad’ social capital associated with segregation and replacing it with much looser public associations that hardly seem to count as social capital at all. A further question is then whether the concept of social capital itself can survive its discursive cooption as an instrument of public policy and as part of a broader experiment with new forms not of democratisation, but of power. With this in mind, I finish with a summary of the main ways I see building social capital as a strategy of power.
First, as the Camden study recognises, there is a ‘social engineering’ element involved: one whose aim is to manage populations in order to maintain social order. This is not a conspiracy theory but it does suggest an experimental, piecemeal invention of new techniques of governance that involve reconstructing and normalising modes of citizenship. Despite the emphasis on integration, this constitutes a new set of exclusions: of those who are seen to be intentionally resistant to inclusion and thus ‘unBritish’. These are constituencies that remain privatised, anti-social and dependent on the one hand, and unduly bonded or intentionally segregated, on the other. They include peoples who decline to participate or to mingle visibly in public space (most explicitly, fundamentalist as opposed to moderate faith communities).

Second, the diffuse mechanisms needed to enhance social capital legitimise increasing intervention in everyday life in the name of its democratisation. A plethora of ad hoc innovations here serves as a conduit for the state further to constitute and discipline grassroots level experiences where social, familial and community networks, values and affects circulate. Inasmuch as people are being encouraged to participate in local associations, social networks and public spaces, their activities are rendered more visible and more amenable to surveillance (Britain has the most cctv cameras in the world). Just as the critical theorists lamented the commodification of leisure time that controls so-called ‘free time’ under market discipline, so public activities associated with social capital also manage personal time and space.

Third, greater local participation justifies policies whose parameters have usually been decided on in advance (especially in terms of budgetary constraints), through a participatory process that is carefully managed. In many cases this strengthens unaccountable élites and formal modes of representation at the expense of the more spontaneous, unpredictable and apolitical forms of civic association that were initially linked to social capital in the democratisation literature. Applying a Foucauldian formula of power/knowledge here, it is also evident that involving local communities in governance not only extends power over their activities in the name of empowerment, but also generates new knowledge about such groups that further enables their management.

Finally, this also encourages such groups to operate as interest groups that operate through official political channels and are regulated and monitored by funding mechanisms inasmuch as they receive public money. It further encourages voluntary, self-help activities within groups, which then helps attenuate claims on the welfare state and renders the marginalised and the poor responsible for their own condition (it becomes their duty to generate enough
social capital to `get by’). In this instrumental form, building social capital is closely aligned with the neo-liberal agenda.

Both the 2006 studies I considered illustrate how much the focus on social capital has changed over recent years. I have argued that local and central government’s new-found interest in building (bridging and linking) social capital needs to be understood in a wider context as one strategy for repairing civil society in light of global economic and demographic volatility. Official interest is motivated here by concerns with inclusion and integration rather than with equality and democracy and this changes the overall significance of this resource in ways that need to be examined genealogically as well as understood alongside other innovations in managing populations through repairing the ideological (and repressive) state apparatus.
Notes

1 From a rather different perspective, but also arguing from a critical standpoint, Adam Fagan that EU capacity building assistance in Eastern and Central Europe has come at the price of destroying indigenous local networks to the benefit of NGOs and institutional élites, while ignoring local capacities in favour of bureaucratic structures and governmental funding criteria. The civil societies that were once applauded as the means of democratisation are thus being weakened by top-down institutionalisation. See Fagan (Political Studies 2006; book).


5 Foucault, ‘Truth and Juridical Forms’ in Rabinow ed. Politics vol. p.57. 'The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application.’ [History of Sexuality vol. 1, 141] see also Marx, Capital vol. 1 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1954), p. 686ff.

6 D. Harvey, Spaces of Global Capitalism (Verso 2006), p.58.

7 US census bureau website; Wikipedia; UN website at www.unfpa.org/6billion/populationissues;

8 Davis, Planet of Slums (Verso 2006)

9 In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Putnam found ‘unmistakable evidence of change’ in the US, where levels of political consciousness and engagement, as well as trust in government and police, all increased relative to the previous year. R. Putnam, ‘Bowling Together’, American Prospect 13, 3. Assessed on 24 February 2007 at http://www.prospect.org/print/v13/3/putnam-r.html One suspects that these were however short-lived phenomena. In the UK, 7/7 has seemed in the long run to increase civic distrust, especially in attitudes towards Muslim communities and between them and the police, and in terms of feelings of safety in certain public spaces.

10 ‘T. Phillips, ‘After 7/7: Sleepwalking our way to Segregation’, delivered 22/09/05. Reproduced on the CRE website at www.cre.gov.uk/ Accessed 16/10/05. Here Trevor Phillips identified a more general failure of integration that arises from focussing primarily on equal rights for different groups and an emphasis on difference rather than commonality. He was nevertheless at pains to distinguish integration from assimilation but also, from an ‘“anything goes” multiculturalism’ where tolerance of diversity reifies into isolation of some communities who pursue separate values and pose the danger of social fragmentation.

11 Britishness is one of Phillips’ main themes in his speech and he uses it in the way described earlier, to combine diversity with cohesion. Thus his criteria include ‘our comfort with diversity’; ‘our multi-
ethnicity and our ease with it’ as a defining core value. This theme would be taken up again by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, early in 2006, when he again focused on shared British values as a way of binding. Brown is explicit here that it is the challenges posed by asylum and immigration, multiculturalism and inclusion, diversity and integration, that motivate a new interest in what it means to be British. At this stage it however seems unlikely that this ragbag of values is much more than an early experiment in updating some sort of cosmopolitan nationalism. See G. Brown, ‘The Future of Britishness’ (14/01/06), www.fabian-society.org.uk/press_office/display.asp?id=520&type=news&cat=43, accessed 17/01/2006. Many of Brown’s themes had already been anticipated by a speech given by Tony Blair on 28/03/00. www.guardian.co.uk/britain/article/0,2763,184950,00.html accessed 22/02/07. Noting that ‘We are living through a period of unprecedented change’, where a failure to specify ‘our national identity’ has given opportunities for ‘sectional social and economic interests’ to thrive, Blair presented the solution to such challenges as being ‘to rediscover from first principles what it is that makes us British and to develop that identity in a way in tune with the modern world.’


14 Putnam actually lists these components as consequences of social capital that arise from the social networks which define it (Bowling Alone, 22). One would therefore have to infer that where these indices are high, that elusive quality of social capital exists.


17 J. Habermas, The Social Transformation of the Public Sphere (Polity, 1962).


20 Rowntree Trust website
