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LIBERAL INTERVENTIONISM AND THE GLOBAL NORTH: THE CASE OF BRITAIN'S INNER CITIES

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Abstract:
Liberal interventionism has tended to be understood as a post-Cold War phenomenon resulting in new patterns of intervention by Western states in countries of the global south. Liberal interventionism has also been seen as a throwback to an earlier *liberal* impulse to govern, namely colonialism, where liberalism is seen as having a dark side despite its ostensible emphasis on freedom. Taking such ideas as a starting point but going beyond them, the paper explores parallels between 'developmental' interventions in areas of poverty and deprivation in Britain's inner cities and their counterparts in the name of international development in the global south, arguing they are all part of the same liberal impulse to govern. Through a case study of one working class community in the South West of England covering the period from its foundation in the 1830s to the present, the paper highlights connections between three phases of colonial/international development (i.e. indirect rule, modernisation, and therapeutic government), and interventions in the community during the nineteenth/early twentieth century, the 1950s and in the period since the 1990s. Drawing attention to continuities in rule across time, the paper shows that many of today's attitudes towards the poor are reminiscent of the past. That more attention has not been paid in the academy to parallels between interventions in the global north and south is puzzling. However, the paper draws attention to the way in which our very methodologies may serve to underpin dominant forms of rule.

Introduction

Liberal interventionism tends to be thought of in relation to the global south – that is as a post-Cold War phenomenon resulting in new patterns of intervention by Western states in countries of the global south. The list of countries where such operations have taken place, or are ongoing, is fairly familiar: Cambodia (1992), Sierra Leone (2000), East Timor (2000), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), Libya (2011). Liberal interventionism has been seen as a throwback to an earlier *liberal* impulse to govern, namely colonialism, where liberalism is seen as having a dark side despite its ostensible emphasis on freedom (Duffield 2005; Rose 1999).

Mark Duffield has described liberalism as an ethos of government, which transcends any one period in time, which "searches for a liberal technology of government", and which "attempts to govern life though its freedom". Duffield has also talked about development as a "technology of security", which while it cloaks itself in benevolence "conceals a stubborn will to manage and contain disorder rather than resolve it." (Duffield 2007: vii). In particular, Duffield mentions things like "order", "betterment", "concern with people", and "moral trusteeship" as being important to the liberal mindset but again often viewed in a controlling as opposed to an emancipatory light (Duffield 2007: 2-8).

Taking such ideas as a starting point but going beyond them in a number of ways, this paper turns the spotlight on 'developmental' interventions in areas of poverty and deprivation in Britain's inner cities, arguing that they are all part of the same liberal impulse to govern. Thus, the paper explores parallels between such interventions and

their counterparts in the name of international development in the global south, where the author has extensive experience of South East Asia. Specifically, the paper argues that our understanding of the liberal impulse to govern will be enriched if instead of treating interventions in the global south and the global north as separate and distinct – as is commonly the case in scholarship – we view them as part of a whole, or originating from a common 'liberal' stable but operating in diverse theatres.[1] More than this, the paper argues that not to make such connections risks scholars being complicit in one way in which the north attempts to rule the south. This point will be further elaborated on below.

The paper is structured as follows: It first looks at the way in which scholars have debated categories such as 'north' and 'south' in the literature to date as there is a rich tapestry of writing in this respect. Secondly, the paper considers various 'critical' narratives of international development, teasing out three 'lenses' which are evocative when thinking about the liberal impulse to govern in Britain's inner cities. Adopting a case study approach, the paper then focuses on one working class community in an inner city area in South West England, namely Stoke Hill (not its real name), covering the period from when the community first took shape in the 1830s to the present day.

To advance the case study, the paper offers three 'vignettes' of Stoke Hill's history looking at the coming of the cotton mill in 1830s and its aftermath, housing

[1] That scholars rarely conduct this 'integrated' analysis can be seen from the fact that it is uncommon to encounter empirical analyses comparing rule in countries in the global south and north. Indeed, to do so, is still regarded as somewhat strange. For an exception see Winters 2011.

redevelopment in the 1950s, and the so-called 'New Deal' of Prime Minister Tony Blair's government. In each case, the paper explores how the people of the community experienced the interventions and how the people have been perceived by those in power. Revealingly, the paper finds much continuity across the three time periods, notably with the community and its people viewed as troublesome and a threat from the outset.

What the paper also illustrates is that the three interventions in Stoke Hill map onto, and have much in common with, three equivalent eras in colonial/international development, namely colonial indirect rule (nineteenth and early twentieth century Stoke Hill), the modernisation drive and quest for universal living standards in the newly independent states of the global south (Stoke Hill in the 1950s), and 'therapeutic governance' following a retreat from modernisation to a basic needs approach (Stoke Hill since the 1990s). Drawing on Vanessa Pupavac's work, therapeutic governance is understood as the linking of psychosocial well-being and security, and developing personalities able to cope with risk and insecurity in a context where not much changes in terms of people's material circumstances (Pupavac 2005).

By making connections between interventions in the global south and the north, the paper offers a modification to some of Duffield's writing with its emphasis on 'insured' life in the north and 'uninsured' life in the south. This sets up a rather sharp juxtaposition between north and south, and in particular distracts our gaze from a greater level of complexity in the north, even if Duffield is alert to not doing this in his work as a whole (see Duffield 2007: 203-214). While the paper highlights a

strategy of power whereby the north seeks to rule the south – through the maintenance of the north-south distinction – the paper is most concerned to tease out the way in which northern elites seek to govern areas of deprivation in their own midst, in ways not dissimilar to how they operate in the global south under the umbrella of international development. That is – and to echo Duffield again – 'species life' has different values not only in the global south but in the north too. More research is needed to flesh this position out but the paper offers a first step.

The paper adopts a qualitative research methodology, drawing on archival research and ethnographic field work in South East Asia and inner city Bristol. The theoretical framework drawn from the literature on international development, and used to explore parallels between interventions in the global north and south, has been tested and refined through the author's research in South East Asia, notably on the international aid community in Vietnam (Gainsborough 2010a and 2010b). However, the paper seeks to offer a window onto international development's dynamics, which has traction beyond any single location in the global south. Consequently, the insights from South East Asia are implicit rather than explicit in the paper.

Let us now turn to the next section of the paper, namely how scholars have discussed the language of 'north' and 'south'.

Debates about language: global north and global south

Scholars have frequently looked at the language we use to divide up the world (Randall 2004; Ecki and Weber 2007; Weiss 2010). Moreover, it is recognised that

whether it is the terminology of ‘first’ or ‘third’ world, developed or developing countries, or the language of north and south, it is not just a question of semantics. The language we use matters. It influences what we see and what we do not see. It is political. The first and obvious point to make is that the language of north-south (and its earlier antecedents) is profoundly hierarchical. It denotes a perceived hierarchy and order in international politics. It implies a direction of travel, even in relation to the more neutral language of north and south, such that the implication is that south will aspire to be like the ‘more advanced’ north (see Rostow 1960/2000 for the classic modernisation theory statement of this).

In addition, the language of north and south homogenises countries in the north and south. In so doing, it leads us away from seeing variation within the categories. It also distracts our attention from what the two categories might have in common. Moreover, that the language works like this can be seen to serve a political purpose which favours the global north. Firstly, by projecting certain things as being attributes of the global south, and not according to this schema, attributes of the global north, the language distracts attention from certain things in the north. Secondly, by defining the global south in terms of a lack, north-south language creates a basis on which the north can intervene in the south because according to this way of thinking the north possesses what the south lacks (and needs).

A classic example relates to something like clientelism or corruption where even when it is acknowledged that such things do occur in the north there is a tendency to mention this ‘in passing’, or as an afterthought, before moving on to stress that clientelism and corruption are primarily attribute of the global south (see Randall

2004: 46 for someone who does this). Such a way of thinking is clearly beneficial to northern elites since it shifts the spotlight elsewhere. Moreover, it is evident that northern elites prefer it this way. At the time of the MPs' expenses scandal in the UK in 2009, for example, the then deputy leader of the Labour Party and cabinet member, Harriet Harman, was quick to rebuff allegations that the House of Commons was "scarred by corruption on the scale of other political systems" emphasising that even though the revelation about MPs' expenses looked bad most MPs were clean (BBC 2009a: 1). Thus, from the perspective of elite rule in Britain, it was important that Harman asserted that whatever the UK's problems it did not suffer from corruption on the scale of the global south, because the legitimacy of the government rested on it.

At the same time, it was also important for Harman to argue that British corruption was not comparable with corruption in the global south because maintaining a distinction between north and south forms the basis – at least in part – on which the UK intervenes overseas in terms of its foreign and international development policy. That is, if there is no distinction, why intervene? At the time of MPs' expenses, the question of the scandal's implications for Britain's overseas development policy was raised in the media, notably in an interview between the then Home Secretary Jacqui Smith and the journalist John Humphreys on the Today Programme (BBC 2009b).

While the political implications of north-south terminology is rarely teased out in quite this way, many scholars are sensitive to the dangers of using such language, not least given the way in which in an era of Pacific-Asia's rise and European and North American decline a sharp juxtaposition between north and south is becoming harder to sustain. Ian Taylor writes of an "urgent need" to recognise that the notion of a

north-south dichotomy is being "reconfigured, if not made irrelevant", noting that visitors to London from the south are likely to be "shocked" by the number of beggars living in conditions one normally associates with the "destitute majority world of the traditional 'South'" (Taylor 2005: 1037). Robert Cox, meanwhile, is clearly pushing in a similar direction when he comes up with three broad categories of population – what he calls the 'integrated', the 'precarious', and the 'excluded'. As Cox notes, these categories cut across territorial boundaries (Cox 1999: 9).

In addition, it is not that no one is suggesting the possibilities of parallels in the nature of rule straddling the north-south divide – even if such observations are generally rare. For example, in an article on Thaksin Shinawatra's Thailand (2001-06), Kanishka Jayasuriya and Kevin Hewison talk about new forms of political regulation which, they say, point towards "the proliferation of a range of innovative governance projects in developed and developing countries" which aim to shape and discipline social conduct within civil society (2004: 18). In discussing the rise of therapeutic governance in international development, Pupavac suggests that the 'therapeutic turn' "parallels trends in Western domestic social policy" giving new attention to the subjectivity of the poor and unemployed, including an emphasis on social inclusion over equality (2005: 173). Moreover, Duffield's analysis of international development with its focus on "conjoining the internal and external frontier" is clearly making similar connections (Duffield 2007: 203-214).

What we see much less of – and what this paper aims to make a first step towards correcting – is scholars following through on these observations with in depth empirical analyses which self-consciously seek to 'destablise' the borderline between

north and south across different time periods, in order to come up with a more integrated understanding of the liberal problematic of governance understood to be operating globally. That such analyses are rare is in part because it is uncommon to find scholars with the expertise (or the inclination) to do field work in seemingly diverse sites. Certainly, the area studies tradition mitigates against this. However, it is also the case that the way in which the discipline of comparative politics is organised works against analyses which straddle the north-south divide, not least because of the discipline's preference for comparing 'most similar' cases. However, to make such a point is simply to highlight the political nature of our methodologies and how the academy often serves as an agent in the north's rule of the south, albeit sometimes unwittingly.[2]

Having highlighted the political nature of north-south language, namely how it distracts attention from politics in the north and forms the basis on which the north intervenes in the south, the paper now seeks to highlight some key perspectives on international development.

Critical perspectives on international development: three lenses

In the post-Cold War period, scholars have offered a myriad of different windows onto international development, including on neo-liberalism (Cammack 2004; Fine

[2] Note here how Randall's conclusion in her article on the notion of the Third World is ultimately a very conservative one in which she calls for the term to be retained if only to "denote the continuing imbalance of economic and political power between…the world's nations" (Randall 2004: 52).

2009; Gore 2000), globalisation (McMichael 1996/2000); governance and anti-politics (Jayasuriya and Hewison 2004), state-building (Hehir and Robinson 2007), southern agency (Gainsborough 2010b; Hibou 2004), complex emergencies (Dillon and Reid 2000), international aid (Duffield 2010), human security (Pupavac 2005), and biopolitics (Duffield 2007). Some perspectives are obviously competing but many are complementary, offering a different piece of the jigsaw, or a different window onto the same thing. Drawing on this body of literature, and my field experience in South East Asia, the aim of this section of the paper is to tease out three key windows which are evocative when thinking about the liberal impulse to govern in areas of poverty and deprivation in the global north. We will then put this framework to the test through an analysis of inner city Bristol from the 1830s to the present.

Window one: the evolution of international development

The first window onto international development highlights the way in which what passes for international development, or its colonial era predecessor, is not static but rather is constantly evolving. The first major break in the liberal impulse to govern can be seen in the aftermath of the transition to independence by former colonies following the end of the Second World War. As is well known, this is the era of modernisation: an optimistic era in which newly independent states were to industrialise and 'catch up' with the more advanced North American and European states, such that they would eventually achieve similar levels of political and economic development, including comparable living standards (Rostow 1960/2000). Admittedly, the era of modernisation took place against the backdrop of the Cold War

so that there was a strongly political element to the modernisation drive, namely that from a Western perspective the aim was to prevent newly independent states going Communist (Hoogvelt 2001: 29-42).

However, modernisation as the leitmotif of international development did not last. In part, this was because it soon became clear that there was no straightforward path along which former colonies would emulate or catch-up with their one-time colonial masters either economically or politically. However, more than this, in the context of instability in the global south, civil disturbances in the north, and the rise of the sustainable development movement, doubts were expressed from the late 1960s about the wisdom of industrialisation and modernisation (see Huntington 1968/2000, and also Pupavac 2010). This prompted a second major evolution under the umbrella of international development, namely the abandonment of modernisation's goal of universal living standards and its replacement with the less ambitious 'basic needs' approach (Duffield 2005 and Pupavac 2005). Based on this new way of thinking, it was no longer expected that populations in the global south would have the same living standards as their counterparts in the global north (Duffield 2005; McMichael 1996; Pupavac 2005). It is in this context that we see the rise of 'therapeutic governance', which seeks to improve people's sense of well-being "by reforming their subjectivity" as a means of compensating for the lack of "material transformation" of their lives (Pupavac 2005: 163). Therapeutic governance continues to characterise international development to this day.

Window two: the metamorphosis of neo-liberalism

The second major window onto international development which can be discerned from the literature, and which is important to this paper, relates to neo-liberalism. At its simplest, we can see a debate about whether the shift from Washington Consensus neo-liberalism to its post-Washington Consensus variant represents a watering down of neo-liberalism's essential core or the very opposite. Most critical scholars are clear that the rise of post-Washington Consensus neo-liberalism and its associated governance programmes represents a more invasive form of neo-liberalism – not least because neo-liberal elites have gained the right to intervene in domestic political matters in the global south which hitherto had been off-limits (Gainsborough 2010b; Marquette 2004).[3]

However, interesting here is to juxtapose this interpretation of a more invasive form of neo-liberalism alongside notions just spoken about of international development's *retreat* from universal living standards to a basic needs approach and a focus on transforming people's subjectivity in the absence of the once promised material gains. Paradoxically, what one has here is a shift in international development whereby northern actors – and the southern elites through which they work – pledge to do less, but nevertheless tighten the screw in terms of more invasive interventions which act ever more directly on people's lives.[4]

Window three: international aid as an industry

[3] This interpretation particularly makes sense of the anti-corruption work pursued by the international donor community in Vietnam. See Gainsborough et al 2009.

[4] Here it seems appropriate to invoke a Luksean approach to power. See Hindess 1996: 68-95.

The third window onto international development which can be discerned from the literature and which, as we will discover, is evocative when thinking about parallels between liberal governance in the north and south, relates to the depiction of international aid as an *industry*. Important here is the vastness of the aid industry and its associated bureaucracy, comprising a multiplicity of state, non-state, and quasi-state actors – so big that it is beyond precise measurement (Duffield 2010). Moreover, despite the nobility of its stated goals, there is a sense in which the aid industry feeds off the very problem it purports to be trying to solve, chasing after revenue streams, competing with rival agencies for funds, and constantly reinventing itself as circumstances change. This has led many to conclude that the aid industry is un-reformable (Easterly 2006; Polman 2010).

In addition, as Benedict Anderson has noted in respect of the state, the aid industry "ingests and excretes personnel in a continuous, steady process, often over long periods of time". It has its "own memory" and "harbours self-preserving and self-aggrandizing impulses", which notwithstanding inter-agency differences, are "'expressed' through its living members, but cannot be reduced to their passing personal ambitions" (Anderson 1983: 477-478).

The latest manifestation of the aid industry is the fortified aid compound. As Duffield has documented, these are exclusive 'gated-communities' governed by risk management strategies. Cut off from the populations they are purported to be trying to help, they manage projects through intermediaries by email and satellite phone (Duffield 2010).

So, what are the implications of these three windows onto international development for thinking about liberal governance in the global north?

Implications for liberal governance in the global north: differences and parallels

In the preceding section, we highlighted three windows onto international development: firstly, the way in which what comprises international development is not static but evolving from the colonial era goals of indirect government to modernisation, and to therapeutic governance and basic needs. Secondly, we highlighted the way in which while international development has retreated from the material goals it once invoked (e.g. universal living standards), it has nevertheless tightened the screw in terms of a more invasive approach whereby its acts ever more directly on populations (i.e. focusing on people's behaviour, their subjectivity, the ideal personality etc). Thirdly, we drew attention to the character of international aid as an industry with self-aggrandizing tendencies, ultimately unreformable, and structurally pre-disposed not to solve the very problem it was set up to address.

The argument of the paper is that these three windows are helpful when thinking about liberal interventions in the global north. Firstly, as with international development, it is possible to discern a similar metamorphosis over time in inner city areas of South West England as the style and goals of the various interventions there mirror that of international development.

Secondly, as with international development, we can see a tightening of the screw in the inner city in terms of the invasive nature of the interventions. This includes higher levels of compulsion in respect of the welfare reforms in the post-1997 period. However, there are also parallels across time such that much of the language of the post-1997 period concerning Stoke Hill's poor is very reminiscent of earlier periods in the community's history. As has been noted, scholars have drawn attention to similar parallels between liberal interventionism in the global south and colonial era rule (Cooke 2003; Duffield 2005).

Thirdly, while there are clearly differences between the north and the south in terms of the existence or non-existence of a welfare state, even a much retrenched one, there are nevertheless parallels between the way in which the international aid community is sustained by, and feeds off, the global south, and the way in which the (welfare) state and its various agencies operate in Stoke Hill. Neither the aid community nor the welfare state exists to do themselves out of a job. Both are beyond precise measurement. Both are constantly chasing revenue streams, and adapting to new circumstances and opportunities. Both speak a language of interagency coordination and community participation but the former is frequently about control and the latter is often selective and skin-deep. Both see employment as the key solution to poverty and both limit their attention to the local environment ('community' is king), thereby ruling out a more structural examination of the problem of poverty. Both also see the poor as a threat and very often to blame for their problems.[5]

[5] For some influences on our thinking here, in addition to field research, see Cameron and Palan 2004: 130-151; Duffield 2010; Gainsborough 2010b; Kuhrt, 2011; Levitas 2005; Polman 2010; and Rose 1999.

Let us now examine these issues empirically, considering the extent to which such liberal forms of government manifest themselves in inner city South West England. We start with the coming of the cotton mill to Stoke Hill in the 1830s. After this, we will look at a housing redevelopment project in the 1950s, and finally the New Deal of the Prime Minister Tony Blair's government.

The case study: Stoke Hill across the ages

The making of Stoke Hill: cotton and the moral education of the working classes

Stoke was a royal estate (Stoke Regis) mentioned in the Domesday Book. Stoke 'hill' relates to a piece of land sloping down to a marshy area, now reclaimed and known as St Peter's Marsh (Stoke Hill History Group 1997: 7). In the late eighteenth century, Stoke Hill was a sparsely populated rural area on the outskirts of a city in England's South West. In the early nineteenth century work began on the tidal cut and feeder canal, which to this day links Stoke Hill to city's harbour. The digging of the canal would play a major part in the district's transformation from quiet rural area to bustling inner city.

With the feeder canal providing access to the city and the sea beyond, Stoke Hill soon attracted the attention of commercial interests looking to win some of the cotton trade for the city, which up until this point was dominated by the north of England. In 1837, land was purchased in Stoke Hill by a number of local men and some business interests from outside the city, and a foundation stone for a new factory was laid in

April. A year later, with construction of the factory well-advanced, the chairman of the directors, Mr J.B. Clarke, captured the mood at a factory dinner for the workers when he said:

> "We want to improve the trade of the city: we have sufficient capital; we have every natural advantage; we have plenty of water, a beautiful atmosphere, an abundance of unemployed labour, and what we desire is to avail ourselves of all these advantages, and improve the trade of the city" (South West Gazette, April 26, 1838).

The city's Mayor and Lady Mayoress attended the dinner as did the city's MP, Mr P.W.S. Miles. Mr Miles put his weight behind the cotton venture, saying it demonstrated the city's determination to "re-assert her right to commercial importance, and to support her fair name as she had hithertofore done". According to the South West Gazette, the dinner was "of the most substantial kind" serving some "450 men and boys" seated at tables temporarily erected for the purpose (South West Gazette April 26, 1838).

With the factory came urbanisation and a high demand for housing. At the same time, the sudden influx of people to the area prompted concerns on the part of the Church and the city's commercial and political elite about the conduct and moral education of Stoke Hill's new inhabitants. The South West Gazette painted a particularly dismal picture of Stoke Hill against a backdrop of what it called the "gripping hand of poverty":

> "…vice and profligacy of every description abounded. The multitude of young people, mostly girls, were hourly becoming contaminated by the scenes daily passing around them, and the whole neighbourhood seemed about to sink into one common despond of misery and vice" (South West Gazette, September 21, 1843)

The South West Gazette also noted that given wage levels, six days was scarcely enough for "sustaining existence". However, that children had to work to make ends meet was simply explained by the "hard fate of their parents" (South West Gazette, September 21, 1843).

If the explanations for poverty were deemed straight-forward, so too were the solutions. The owners of the Cotton factory were clear that the solution lay in giving people employment. Mr Clarke said that from experience he knew that "a man was never happy unless properly employed" adding that "as long as men, women, or children were in idleness they were exposed to mischief" (South West Gazette April 26, 1838). Education was also high on factory owners' list of priorities. Simultaneous with building the factory, therefore, a school was built because as Mr P. Maze, another of the factory's owners, emphasised the directors were "desirous of improving" the "moral and social condition" of Stoke Hill's inhabitants (South West Gazette April 26, 1838).

Beyond employment and education what Stoke Hill's residents also needed, according to both the mayor and MP Miles, was religion. They were unanimous that "no portion" of Bristol was in more urgent need of religion than Stoke Hill. Thus, on

May 24, 1842 at 1pm, the cornerstone of St John's Church was laid, with the money for the church coming in part from the owners of the cotton factory. An "elegant dejeune" was held at Stoke Hill House, then privately owned but later to become St John's rectory. Cake and wine were laid on for the parish children (apparently!), who were said to number some five hundred. Platforms were erected around the "immediate scenes of operation" mostly occupied by "elegantly dressed females". There was a procession, and a band played Rule Britannia and God Save the Queen. The weather was wet but as the Gazette noted the "labouring classes" who formed the majority of those present, "conducted themselves with great propriety", scarcely noticing the rain, it said, on account of their "interest in the proceedings" (South West Gazette, May 26, 1842).

Both the mayor and Mr Miles spoke at the stone laying ceremony. The Mayor said that he was certain "that nothing could tend more to the prosperity of the community than an extensive diffusion of the truths of the religion" and that he hoped that with the example of the church before them, his fellow citizens would be "roused from their lethargy" (South West Gazette, May 26, 1842). His remarks were echoed by Mr Miles who said that he hoped that the church would prove a "blessing to the inhabitants" (South West Gazette, May 26, 1842).

A little over a year later, St John's Church was consecrated at a service attended by, amongst others, the Bishop of Gloucester and the Mayor. The Reverend John Hensman preached the sermon on Chronicles 2: 15-16 ('Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears shall be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine

eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually'). While the Gazette did not provide details of the sermon, noting only that it was "chaste, solemn and appropriate", it did comment on the behaviour of the people lining the streets leading to the church, remarking that aside from "occasional marks of levity" they on the whole conducted themselves in a "very orderly manner" (South West Gazette, September 21, 1843).

In the wake of the building of St John's Church, Stoke Hill continued to expand as more people moved into the area seeking work and somewhere to live. The area's rural feel was quickly lost. In the 1866, the cotton factory was joined by South West Wagon Works at Trooper's Hill following the opening of a new suburban rail link there. St. Vincent's iron works opened in the area in 1869, and in 1873 the Barrow Road engine depot started operating. St John's Church extended its activities too. Stoke Hill became a parish in it own right in 1850 and in 1883 St John's opened its first mission hall. By 1895, Stoke Hill's population was estimated at around 10,000 people.

In the days before the welfare state, poor relief was provided by a combination of the Church and a variety of other charitable groups. In 1877, the Redcross Street Medical Mission set up a branch dispensary in Stoke Hill having been operating in the general area since 1872. In the same vein, in October 1911, staff and students from local university established the University Settlement in Stoke Hill. This was part of a wider 'settlement' movement operating in the UK and US whereby people from more privileged backgrounds established houses in slum areas with a view to living and working alongside the poor and helping to tackle poverty. The University Settlement

in Stoke Hill, known simply as the Settlement since 1995, continues to operate to this day.

Through this vignette, we have seen how nineteenth century Stoke Hill was transformed from a sparsely populated rural area to a densely populated industrial and residential area in the space of just thirty to forty years. The area's expansion quickly prompted concerns among the city's elite about the behaviour and moral education of the area's inhabitants. It is clear that Stoke Hill and its residents were seen as a problem, and tending towards degeneracy, right from the outset. In particular, there seems to have been a preoccupation with the sheer number of people in the area and its seemingly uncontrolled expansion. Based on the evidence presented here, what the people of Stoke Hill really thought is never clear since their view is always expressed second-hand by outsiders who profess to speak for them.

The break-up of a community: Housing redevelopment in Stoke Hill in the 1950s

In the early 1950s, Stoke Hill still comprised the old terraced housing and narrow streets which had emerged in the nineteenth century following the opening of the cotton factory. By the 1950s, much of the housing was in a state of disrepair and some had suffered bomb damage during the Second World War. In the early 1950s, the City Corporation (now the City Council) started work on plans to redevelop Stoke Hill, which would involve clearing large swathes of the area and replacing the terraced houses with 'state of the art' blocks of flats. Outline plans were presented to residents in 1952 and with a few minor alterations became the basis of a Compulsory Purchase Order in 1953. The Stoke Hill Redevelopment Scheme was to proceed in

three stages with each stage expected to take about three years to complete (Gardiner 1995: 45).

The scheme encountered significance opposition from local residents from the outset. In early January 1953 the South West Evening Post reported 160 objections to the compulsory purchase order. According to the Post, these objections would be heard at a public enquiry overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the City Corporation scheduled for February.

On January 6, some two hundred people crammed into St John's Mission Hall – itself one of the condemned buildings – for a public meeting about the planned redevelopment.[6] One of the concerns related to the compensation residents would receive for having to leave their homes. According to the Evening Post many people were reassured on the issue of compensation at the meeting and hence withdrew their objections to the compulsory purchase order (South West Evening Post, January 7, 1953). However, it soon became clear that talk of an end to the opposition to the Corporation's redevelopment plans was premature. There were still over one hundred objections to the compulsory purchase order in relation to the proposed second phase of the redevelopment. Moreover, on the day of the public enquiry, the Evening Post ran another story indicating that many people in Stoke Hill still had major misgivings about the scheme.

[6] The Mission Hall survived and is now the Worker's Club although it is in a bad state of repair such that its days may finally be numbered.

Speaking on behalf of the Stoke Hill Traders' Association at the enquiry, Dr W.W. Veale called on both the Ministry and Corporation to show concern for the people who would be affected by the redevelopment, and not to use its powers "capriciously, unreasonably or prematurely". Dr Veale also drew attention to what local residents liked about their existing accommodation and why they were opposed to living in flats:

> "Stoke Hill residents do not want to become inmates of a kind of human rookery, where all the amenities of their private lives are communal.
> These people now live in their own houses. They have all the individualism of the average Englishman and value their privacy." (South West Evening Post, February 10, 1953)

Highlighting the gulf between the Corporation's thinking and that of local residents, Dr Veale continued:

> "The Corporation consider they are doing these unhappy people a favour by allowing them to live in this 'paradise' – but these unhappy people view the prospect of this flat dwelling in horror and dismay." (South West Evening Post, February 10, 1953)

Dr Veale's comments fell on deaf ears, however, as the Corporation was determined to press ahead with the rebuilding, opposition notwithstanding. Expressing the local authority view at the public enquiry, Mr J.B. Tomlinson said that the Corporation

wanted to give Barton Hill residents a chance to live in "healthier surroundings" in "modern dwellings with all the latest amenities". Mr Tomlinson said that many houses in Stoke Hill were dangerous and "unfit for human habitation". Calls at the public enquiry for the compulsory purchase order to be delayed until the land was actually needed were rebuffed by the Corporation's chief architect who said it was impractical to move forward in a piecemeal manner as this would be inefficient and push up costs (South West Evening Post, February 10, 1953).

It was not just that the Corporation and local residents differed over the preferred style of housing. What is also evident is the way which the very character of Stoke Hill's residents was being called into question in relation to the dispute. One letter-writer to the Evening Post, who simply signed himself a 'ratepayer', took issue with a comment by Alderman Hennessy, a city councillor, who had apparently said that Stoke Hill's "little tin-pot two penny-halfpenny shop-keepers" did not do much business and that many of them had other jobs anyway. The implication, it would appear, was that it would not matter if the shops were swept away in the redevelopment. However, the councillor's remarks were strongly rebuffed:

> "As regards Ald. Hennessy's remarks about tin-pot shops, the fact that there is not a single big shop in the area has nothing to do with the matter. If these little shops had not served some useful purpose they would have put up the shutters years ago" (South West Evening Post, September 24, 1953)

As part of the same exchange, 'A Ratepayer' said that the people of Stoke Hill had not asked the Corporation to "take over their premises". He described the compulsory

purchase order as being in the same vein as Adolf Hitler's principle of "piece by piece". Also responding to Ald. Hennessy's comments, the Stoke Hill Planning Protection Association accused him of failing to understand the character of the people of Stoke Hill, emphasising that they were "in no sense grasping" but that the shopkeepers had been "promised a fair deal" and that they expected to get it (South West Evening Post, September 26, 1953).

In August 1953, and with local opposition showing no signs of abating, the Ministry approved the compulsory purchase order, clearing the way for the redevelopment to go ahead. A few buildings were to be spared, including St John's Church and vicarage, the University Settlement, the local swimming baths and the Lord Wellington pub. However, apart from this, the redevelopment was to proceed as planned with demolition work to begin in a matter of months. To make way for the redevelopment, families were required to leave their homes and were moved out to other parts of the city. Many were relocated to the city's newly forming 'outer estates' such as Hartcliffe and Lockleaze. Although some residents did return to Stoke Hill, many did not. For many, therefore, the Ministry's decision signalled the end of an era.

One local resident who witnessed the destruction of old Stoke Hill first hand described it as a plan to "wipe out a community" (Gardiner 1995). Writing about it some forty years later, he vividly captures the sense of dislocation felt by the community:

> "I remember watching from a distance as a crane fitted with a large steel ball was used to smash down the old stonework. The whole side of a street disappeared in just a day or two. Bulldozers came in and the rubble was taken away in lorries."

> "One sunny Sunday afternoon…I remember walking around St John's Street, Brougham Street and Henry Street looking at all the empty houses. As I walked along Beaufort Road I passed number 23 and noticed that the front door was open so I ventured in. I can remember to this day how…I reminisced the years that I had lived in that house. My footsteps echoed the emptiness as I wandered from room to room." (Gardiner 1995: 46)

The first tower block, Stoke House, was completed in 1958. Much was made of its state of the art technology and mod-cons, including central heating, fitted kitchens, and communal clothes' washing facilities. One returning couple who took a flat, a Mr and Mrs Fryer, who had been rehoused at Broomhill on the outskirts of the city, said they would miss their big garden but that their new flat had "many compensations", including "exalted views" and an "easy-to-clean kitchen" (South West Evening Post, June 19, 1958).

Since high rise flats were completely new at this time, the opening of Stoke House attracted much local attention. In June, people were invited to "see for themselves the attractive results that [had been] obtained", including viewing an exhibition flat. According to the Evening Post, some 5,000 office and factory workers from nearby Knowle flocked to the area on June 23 alone, resulting in huge queues and some

difficulty in ensuring all visitors were out of the flats at the end of the day (South West Evening Post, June 24, 1958).

Following the completion of Stoke House, other flats soon followed, changing the skyline and dwarfing St John's church. However, it was not long before it was clear that high-rise living was not modern panacea it was thought to be. The last block of flats built in Stoke Hill, Ashmead House, was completed in 1964 some four years behind schedule. After this, the Corporation's redevelopment plan was quietly shelved; its later stages were never implemented (Gardiner 1995: 45-47).

Today, Stoke Hill's flats are viewed as the very epitome of urban deprivation and unhealthy living, and as such are at the bottom of the pile in terms of housing choices. Moreover, all the new housing being built in the area today is of the low-rise variety.

In this vignette, we have seen how the views of Stoke Hill's residents about the redevelopment were ultimately ignored by people from outside the community who believed they knew what was best for them. However, it was not simply a dispute over a preferred style of housing, what is also evident is how the character of Stoke Hill's people, variously depicted as 'grasping', 'unhealthy', 'living in squalor', and resisting 'progress', was called into question.

The denigration of a community: Stoke Hill and Blair's New Deal

Following the levelling of large parts of Stoke Hill in the 1950s, the community entered a further period of decline as many of the traditional industries which had

provided employment for generations were eclipsed by new technology or found they were uncompetitive in the new global market. In November 1965, the last steam engine left the Barrow Road shed, ushering in the diesel era. In April 1970, ownership of the Butler Tar Works at Crew's Hole, another Stoke Hill employer, passed to British Steel but a decade later it too closed. In 1980, St Mary's Board Mill, itself once an important local employer, went out of business.[7]

The consequences of industrial decline for the community were far-reaching. It was not simply that people lost their jobs – bad enough though this was – but the community's confidence and self-esteem was damaged, particularly that of its men, as one generation after another followed each other into unemployment. Commenting on the closing of the Barrow Road shed in 1965, one railway work said wistfully: "I suppose one cannot stand in the way of progress. But that cannot alter one's personal sentiment" (South West Evening Post, November 15, 1965).

In 1973, the Heath government launched its Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in a bid to tackle the high unemployment plaguing the country. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the University Settlement, which by this time had become a community association, played a key role in delivering MSC training in Stoke Hill. By its own admission, the injection of government funds which accompanied the work provided a much-welcome boost to its budget.

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[7] The memory of St Mary's Board Mill lives on in the form of a social club in Stoke Hill.

The Settlement's transformation into a community association and its close association with the MSC marked a change in the character of the organisation as it became much more closely associated with government largesse. It was against this backdrop that the Settlement started to 'professionalise': for instance, in 1974 it appointed its first ever 'director' and paid staff outnumbered volunteers for the first time in the organisation's history in 1982. The Settlement also ceased to be a residential organisation with its last resident moving out in 1985. This too represented a significant change for the Settlement taking it further away from the goals on which had been founded.[8]

The sense of decline and ongoing social dislocation in Stoke Hill around this time can be seen in other ways too. In 1995, with the 'brave new world' of the 1950s high-rises long since in abeyance, the second block of flats to be built in Stoke Hill, Glendare House, was demolished when it was realised that the cost of repairing it would be greater than demolishing it. Two years later, Stoke Hill's once popular swimming pool, which had served the community since 1903, closed after the Council declared it was no longer viable. On its site, now stands the local primary school and children's centre.

Changes to the surrounding road network have also increased Stoke Hill's sense of isolation from other parts of the city. In 1993, the old, thirteen-arch Barrow Road bridge was demolished to be replaced by a new, two-lane flyover, known as St Peter's Causeway. While the new road clearly aids the flow of traffic in and out of the city it

[8] Reference removed to protect anonymity of field site.

also serves to hem Stoke Hill in more as the road forms a de facto barrier with the city beyond, and Stoke Hill is no longer on the route to anywhere.

In 1998, against this backdrop of decline, Stoke Hill was selected as one of seventeen New Deal for Communities areas.[9] This was a flagship project of Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour government, which had come to power a year earlier pledging a programme of regeneration in some of England's most deprived areas. While the talk was of social inclusion and community, the language concealed a much harsher government agenda characterised by a retreat from equality, welfare retrenchment, and where the poor were frequently seen as being to blame for their predicament (Cameron and Palan 2004: 130-151; Levitas 1998/2005: 138-145). Moreover, while the New Deal's principal goal was getting people back to work, there was also a strongly 'therapeutic' element to its programmes as it sought to 'correct' 'dysfunctional' personalities and improving people's sense of well-being, even if their material conditions did not change much.

In Stoke Hill, the Settlement, which had delivered its last MSC project in 1990, played a key part in helping the community win selection as one of the New Deal areas, including a £50 million budget. In Stoke Hill, the New Deal was managed by Community at Heart. Given the government's emphasis on 'community' participation, this was a resident-led organisation, comprising twelve locally elected board members along with representatives of key agencies working in the area, such as business, the council, the primary care trust, and the police. New Deal money funded work in a wide range of areas including business and employment, housing

[9] In 1999, the New Deal was extended to twenty two other areas.

and the environment, young people, tackling racism, community development, health, education, sport, and the arts.[10]

The New Deal also precipitated a significant amount of new building in Stoke Hill, including housing. One of the new buildings was the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, which opened in 2004. As well as housing a GP surgery and a dentist, the Wellspring offers a range of complementary therapies and a learning kitchen. On its website, it describes itself as a "community building" aimed at improving people's health and well-being.[11]

The Settlement continues to be a major player in stoke Hill providing a range of services to the community in the areas of drug and alcohol addiction, adult learning, families and young people. It operates from a building known as the Beacon, which opened in 2002 and was itself funded with New Deal money. For a period, Stoke Hill was looked upon as one of the government's flagship projects. This precipitated a surprise 'pre-election' visit by Prime Minister Blair in November 2003.[12]

Not everyone in Stoke Hill is so enamoured with how the New Deal money has been spent, however. In the pubs and on the street, the white working class frequently ask what they got for their £50 million. Many think it was wasted on consultants, fat cat

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[10] Reference removed to protect anonymity of field site.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

salaries, and red tape.[13] Others view Community at Heart as having been 'out for itself', implying that even though it comprised 'community representatives', it was not representative of the 'real' Stoke Hill. This point relates specifically to the issue of the immigration. The era of the New Deal coincided with a big influx of Somali immigrants to the area – the first time that predominantly white Stoke Hill had experienced such inflows. This has caused racial tensions. Against this backdrop, a common refrain among the white working class is that they have been 'abandoned' by the Council and that New Deal promises have not been kept. Some even describe the £50 million as a bribe to allow the Council to settle the Somali population in Stoke Hill.[14]

While it would be hard to deny that the New Deal has brought some benefits to the area, many of the changes are superficial. Behind the façade of the smart new low-rise housing, the primary school and children's centre, and the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, all of which have sprung up over the last decade, the overall health and life-chances of Stoke Hill's population are still far behind other parts of the city. Laurie Hill ward, which includes Stoke Hill, is among the most deprived 1% of all areas nationally. People in the area are more likely to be unemployed and suffer from chronic ill-health than their wealthier counterparts in the rest of the city and elsewhere. Most striking of all are statistics for life expectancy at birth for the ward,

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[13] When questioned on this point, one former Community of Heart employee, who was not local to Stoke Hill, concurred before adding candidly that the New Deal had paid for his mortgage.

[14] Conversations and correspondence with residents, 2010-11.

which is a full nine years lower than the more prosperous areas of the city (Neighbourhood Partnership Statistical Profile 2010).

In the last of our three vignettes, we have seen how the Blair-era New Deal was experienced by Stoke Hill's white working class. With the rise of the social inclusion agenda, what we appear to have seen is an attempt to contain rather than solve the problems of Britain's inner cities. In Stoke Hill, this has manifested itself in changes to the road network, which unwittingly or not have increased the community's isolation from other parts of the city, and 'therapeutic governance' delivered by organisations like the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and the Settlement. While what they provide is valuable in many ways, it is arguably sticking plaster in the absence of a more wholesale transformation of the community's fortunes. The Settlement in particular has morphed over the years and is now ever more closely aligned to government agendas. Ironically, however, disaffection on the part of Stoke Hill's white working class, where there is a strong sense of not having a stake in society, is as intense as it has ever been.[15]

Conclusion

Drawing on research in both inner city South West England and South East Asia, it has been argued that there is much to be gained from viewing interventions in areas of poverty and deprivation in the global north alongside their counterpart interventions in the name of international development in the global south: that is, seeing all such interventions as part of the same *liberal* impulse to govern. Moreover, not to see

[15] Ibid.

things in this way, the paper has argued, risks us being complicit in the way in which northern elites attempt to rule not only the south but areas of poverty and deprivation in the north.

Through a case study of one working community class community in the South West of England covering the period from its foundation in the 1830s to the present, the paper has highlighted parallels between three phases of colonial/international development (i.e. indirect rule, modernisation, and therapeutic government), and interventions in Stoke Hill during the nineteenth/early twentieth century, the 1950s and in the period since the 1990s. The paper has also drawn attention to continuities in the nature of rule across time such that much of the language of today in respect of the poor, along with the proposed solutions to poverty, is reminiscent of the past. In particular, what the paper has shown in relation to the people of Stoke Hill is that the community has always been viewed as a troublesome, a threat, and largely responsible for its own misfortune. This serves as something of corrective to those who make connections between contemporary and colonial attitudes towards the poor, neglecting the fact that such attitudes have probably been present all along.

In some ways, that there might be parallels between interventions in the global north and south should not surprise us given the common liberal heritage. However, this only serves to make it more puzzling that there are not more analyses documenting the fact, like in this paper. Here, it is worth highlighting the way in which the academy is organised, and how our very methodologies serve to underpin dominant forms of rule.

Looking to the future, further research is clearly needed to advance the issues raised in the paper. Firstly, there is scope to look more closely at the relationship between liberal social and development policy towards the north and south, the connections and disconnections, and how they feed each other. Secondly, there is scope for greater investigation of the South West of England case both across time and comparing it with equivalent time periods in sites in the global south.

Finally, the situation in Stoke Hill is worth bringing up to date. Funding for the New Deal came to an end in Stoke Hill in 2010 coinciding with a change of government and the launch of Prime Minister David Cameron's 'big society' agenda. While it is too early to say how exactly the coalition's agenda will pan out, all the early signs are for continuity with the New Deal rather than change – witness the language about the poor which accompanied the riots of August 2011, for instance, and the strong element of compulsion accompanying ongoing welfare reforms. In Stoke Hill, the Settlement has been chosen as one of ten 'kickstarter' organisations to work with Locality, the organisation leading the government's £15 million programme to recruit and train 5,000 community organisers. Stoke Hill is again on the receiving end of a new, liberal-inspired, intervention.

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