Place, social inclusion and ‘cultural justice’: Reflections on the British experience – a place-based social exclusion policy case study

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The social inclusion and place based disadvantage workshop was held on the 13th of June 2008 at the Metropole Conference Centre in Fitzroy, Victoria, under the auspices of the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Research & Policy Centre and the Victorian Government’s Department of Planning & Community Development. It was hosted by Paul Smyth, facilitated by Allison McClelland, and coordinated by Kristine Philipp. These proceedings are aimed at fostering, informing and stimulating public reflection, discussion, debate, research, and policy initiatives to address one of the central challenges facing contemporary Australian governments, industries and communities.

The following papers were presented at the workshop:
Associate Professor Scott Baum – Making space for social inclusion.
Dr Zoë Morrison – Place, social inclusion and ‘cultural justice’: reflections on the British experience – a place-based social exclusion policy case study
Professor Paul Smyth – Social inclusion down under
Professor Ruth Fincher – Issues of scale: a place-based view of social inclusion centred on redistribution, recognition and encounter
Mr Damian Ferrie – Social inclusion and place-based disadvantage: what we have already done that is valuable for the future
Dr Tim Reddel – Reframing governance and service delivery by ‘place and partnership’: some ideas and lessons from Queensland
Professor William Mitchell – A return to full employment is a precondition for social inclusion
Dr Jo Barraket – Social inclusion, employment and social enterprise
Mr Tom Bentleigh – Places and mainstream services
Professor John Wiseman – Strengthening social inclusion through place based action to improve mainstream services
Professor Bill Randolph – Locating social exclusion: the case of Sydney
Dr Kathy Arthurson – Urban regeneration, scale and balancing social mix

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I argue that ‘cultural justice’ issues need to be taken into account in social exclusion policy focusing on local place-based policy initiatives. I do this by reflecting on research I performed in the U.K. on social exclusion discourse and policy, including a placed-based social exclusion policy in a local setting, the Single Regeneration Budget Round 5 in Blackbird Leys, Oxford. I also do this in the context of a broader argument about what is meant by social exclusion, and therefore what sort of things social exclusion policy should be aiming to address, achieve, and avoid.

I begin the paper by outlining my theoretical understanding of social exclusion and inclusion. In particular, I highlight the issue of ‘cultural justice’ – recognition and respect – as well as the economic, to the experience of exclusion and inclusion. I go on to point out that social inclusion discourse and policy was meant to signal a shift from purely re-distributive understandings of poverty and disadvantage to an appreciation of the multi-dimensional aspects of social exclusion and marginalization. I point to ways that cultural justice issues were not sufficiently prioritized in British government social exclusion policy overall, and the ways place, space and local communities are used as an important part of setting a social inclusion agenda. I then present aspects of a case-study of the Single Regeneration Budget policy, Round 5, as applied in the Blackbird Leys estate, showing the ways this policy perpetuated aspects of social exclusion while attempting to diminish social exclusion. I finish by presenting some alternative understandings of ‘socially excluded places’, which recognize, respect and ‘re-value’ the role of these places in cities, and gesture to the broader structural inequalities which create relations of social exclusion.

2. Social exclusion and ‘cultural justice’

I start with the assumption that addressing social exclusion is fundamentally about addressing social injustice. Philosopher and political theorist Nancy Fraser has argued that there are two types social injustice: economic injustice and cultural injustice. Economic aspects of injustice are ‘rooted in the political-economic structures of society’ (Fraser, 1995, 70). Examples include exploitation, economic marginalization and deprivation/poverty. Class struggles are a good example of struggles about economic injustice – the pertinent theme tying the involved individuals together is their common relationship to relations of production. By contrast, cultural aspects of injustice are ‘rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication’ (Fraser, 1995, 71). Cultural injustice involves misrecognition – being excluded from full participation in society due to patterns of cultural value that constitute certain people and places as comparatively unworthy of respect and esteem, and disrespect – being maligned or disparaged in stereotype public cultural representation and/or everyday life interactions. Gender struggles are a good example of cultural justice – the common factor for all women is their gender, which is socially inscribed by cultural patterns in society, and still subject to various negative discriminations.

Of course, issues of social injustice are never ‘just cultural’, or ‘only economic’. In fact, main point I would like to make here is that, while we need to acknowledge both economic and cultural aspects of injustice, economic and cultural matters are not completely separate, but rather mutually constituted and inextricably connected. We can see this in relation to sexism, to use it again as an example. Cultural aspects of sexism are when things that are coded as
‘feminine’ are routinely devalued and disparaged. But sexism also clearly has political-economic dimensions. Gender still structures our divisions between paid and unpaid labour, between higher paid and lower paid professions (with lower paid female dominated ‘pink collar’ professions often involving support or care work), and even between higher and lower incomes within exactly the same profession.

Another example of the mutually constituted cultural/economic nature of injustice is poverty. Now poverty (‘the condition of having little or no wealth or material possessions’, Oxford English Dictionary) would, by definition, appear to be solely an issue of economics – it is the unequal distribution of resources in society. But it is also widely acknowledged that women and children, certain ethnic minorities and indigenous Australians are vastly over-represented within the population in poverty in Australia. This indicates that poverty is never only an issue of production, the economy, and socio-economic class – these things are clearly fundamental, but the experience of poverty is differentiated and worsened by cultural and social characteristics of gender, indigenous status, ethnicity, age, and so on. Thus, the processes involved in producing poverty are not only those of production and economy, but also what I would term ‘cultural issues’ focusing around the construction of identity – who is given social status and power, who is routinely maligned, who is listened to, who is disparaged and not heard. All these things influence who is paid more and who is paid less, who is seen to have the attributes to get the good jobs and hold positions of influence, and so on. Social researchers and theorists such as Bourdieu (1984) have long argued that class oppression itself is not only produced through relations of production, but also through cultural factors such as negative stereotyping and stigmatization.

Fraser states that the distributive (political-economic) paradigm has supplied the chief approach to analyzing justice claims for at least the last 150 years, while the recognition paradigm (cultural justice) is much newer, emerging in response to the recognition politics (or identity politics – such as around issues of race and gender) of the 1980s and 1990s. I have argued elsewhere (Morrison, 2002, 2003) that British social exclusion discourse and policy prioritized the political-economic aspects of social exclusion over cultural justice aspects, and that this was to the detriment of most effectively addressing social exclusion overall. In this paper, I will argue that a lack of attention to cultural justice issues in relation to respect and recognizing the value of local communities and places led to policy process failure in a British place-based social exclusion policy, the Single Regeneration Budget. But before I do this, I want to look at the recognition of ‘cultural justice’ issues in discourses of social exclusion, including discourses about socially excluded places and communities.

3. The idea of ‘social exclusion’, place and community

‘Social exclusion’ has always been about ‘joined-up solutions to joined-up problems’ (www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk). In relation to ‘joined up problems’, the rhetoric of social exclusion has always been that it is a broader conceptualization of marginalization and disadvantage than ‘just poverty and low income’. Rather, it aims to address the wider causes and consequences of poverty. Tony Blair’s “New Labour” used social exclusion in the run-up to the 1997 general election as a way of proposing to address the living standards of the poorest people. Social exclusion was defined by the Blair government as ‘a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown’ (www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk). In the lead up to Australia’s
2007 federal election, the Australian Labor party took on this definition as its own (Gillard & Wong, 2007), with a particular emphasis on social inclusion through work-force participation. By contrast, the European Commission linked the term more closely with the idea of an ‘inadequate realization of social rights’ (Edwards, 2001, p.267). Indeed, some academics have argued that social exclusion is as much about lack of power, lack of social integration, and inadequate social participation, as it is about lack of access to resources (Edwards, 2001). More on this point later. Clearly, the term is flexible, and has always been said to have ‘multiple meanings’ (Edwards, 2001, p.266).

‘Joined up solutions’ rhetoric comes from a recognition that addressing disadvantage and marginalization is complex, and solutions will need to come from multiple sources. In practice, it has meant a whole of government, cross-departmental approach to addressing a wide range of issues captured under this umbrella term, usually overseen by an over-arching centrally located figure-head. In the UK, efforts were initially spearheaded through the Social Exclusion Unit, which was located in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and which reported to the Prime Minister. A ‘czar’ was appointed to address a particular social exclusion issue (for example, to deal with homelessness, a ‘homeless czar’ was appointed, and the then Minister for Housing headed an inter-departmental ministerial group on tackling homelessness). The South Australian Government and the Australian Government are following similar models.

The concept of place has been used as a means of ‘doing’ joined-up policy. Both Britain and Australia have identified the ‘most deprived’ neighbourhoods as sites for an array of social exclusion policies. Indeed, some have said that social exclusion discourse and policy has particularly emphasized the role space and place play in exclusion (Lee, 1999). Certainly, British Labour responded to increased inequalities between rich and poor neighbourhoods (characterized by levels of mortality, educational attainment and income) with a ‘bewildering myriad of policies’ (Imrie and Raco, 2003) based on place and space, including the Action Zone Programmes (Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones, etc), the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Community Development Venture Fund, New Deal for Communities, and their reiteration of the Single Regeneration Budget.

The concentration of poor people and particular social groups within the one place ensures that particular neighbourhoods and ‘communities’ become convenient tools, and often powerful metaphors, in a social inclusion agenda. In the British government’s Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) the Prime Minister stated, ‘We all know the problems of our poorest neighbourhoods...decaying housing, unemployment, street crime and drugs...people who can, move out. Nightmare neighbours move in...The gap between these worst estates and the rest of society has grown’, which has left us with a situation no civilized society should tolerate’. He goes on to state this ‘shames us as a nation’, ‘waste lives’ and ‘we all have to pay the costs’. Powerful rhetoric indeed, and yet its evocation of these problem places, and its ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction, is exclusive within itself. Clearly, the ‘we’ and ‘us’ in this quote does not refer to those people who live in these ‘worst’ estates (those ‘nightmares’, whose lives are a ‘waste’, and who are uncivilized - not part of ‘civil society’): ‘the excluded’ are clearly who ‘we’ are not – and they occupy a space that is very different from that which ‘we’ occupy. While there may be political imperatives to use this sort of language, it can be argued that such rhetoric reinforces negative stereotypes about poorer people, and disregards the cultural harm such stereotypes can cause. I would argue these harms have real consequences,
including the physical avoidance of these places by those who do not live there, contributing to the socio-spatial isolation of the residents who do.

Indeed, some social exclusion discourse has been argued by some to reduce community difference by constructing society as a binary of two seemingly homogenous groups - an included majority and excluded minority (Levitas, 1998), with the implication that the excluded individual needs to cross some sort of dividing line to become an insider (usually through ‘getting a job’). Through this conception, structural inequalities remain largely unaddressed; it is the excluded that must change, not the society that excludes them: ‘Whether in relation to education, housing, community or work, on closer scrutiny many of the underlying [policy] positions require a great deal more of the powerless than the powerful’ (Benn, 2002, p310).

In geographically based social exclusion policy initiatives, the involvement of the local community in a ‘bottom-up’ approach has been posited as essential. ‘Unless the community is fully engaged in shaping and delivering regeneration, even the best plans on paper will fail to deliver in practice’ (Blair quoted in SEU, 2000). British Labour identified community capacity building as core to the success of urban policy. In theory, this has involved communities being provided with the skills and knowledge to become active in eradicating poverty and deprivation. Yet, this idea of community involvement is contradictory. On the one hand, disadvantaged communities become the vehicle through which urban policy agendas are to be delivered, with the community themselves ideally in ‘the driving seat’. As Imrie and Raco (2003) point out, such policy is predicated on the assumption that such communities have the capacity to fully engage as democratic agents – or as ‘equal partners’, no less, in urban policy projects. On the other hand, with such onus placed on the involvement of the community in policy as a means of solving the problems of social exclusion, the causes of deprivation are implicitly traced to a lack of involvement, knowledge and skills of community members, which risks blaming victims for their plight, rather than focusing on the broader structural issues creating the conditions for inequality and marginalization.

In the case study to follow, some community members and organisation end up being involved in a policy as unequal, subordinate partners to government bodies. External experts actually run the policy process, while pre-existing knowledge and expertise – often quite different from that held by the external experts - is pushed out, viewed as inferior, and simply without a place in the quick and complex urban regeneration process.


The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), first started in 1994 under the Conservative government, became a major part of the British National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Under Labour, the SRB was reshaped to target 80% of the 65 most deprived areas in Britain, with funding conditional on the direct involvement of the local community. The objectives of the SRB were to enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between the deprived and other areas and between different groups, and to harness the talent, resources and experience of local business, the voluntary sector and local community. It consisted of six rounds, and 900 schemes, funded to the total of £5.5 billion. The SRB has been seen as ‘one of the British government’s main tools in tackling inequality in Britain’s cities’ (Edwards, 2001, 267).
Round 5 of the SRB required that ‘most bids should have capacity building as a key objective’ (DETR, 1998). Blackbird Leys’ bid was emblematic of this emphasis. Its bid focused directly on community capacity building, and the impetus for the bid came from the voluntary sector and housing sector representatives on the estate rather than the local authority. A local community development partnership, comprising mostly of local volunteers and resident professionals, was initially the bid’s ‘lead partner’. The bid was encouraged by the South Eastern England Development Agency (SEEDA) who viewed it as ‘experimental’ in nature because of the extent and strength of its community emphasis and roots.

By way of background, Blackbird Leys is an area of diverse tenure housing in Oxford built on the outskirts of the city from 1957, close to where the Cowley car factory was situated. The estate is a twenty-minute bus ride from the centre of the city of ‘dreaming spires’, however its socio-economic characteristics sit in stark contrast to the city’s academic quarters. For example, a study in 1998 preceding the adoption of this policy found that 27% of houses in Greater Leys – the area of newer housing – had incomes of less than $100 per week, and this figure rose to 42% in all socially rented properties. The population is also more ethnically diverse than the city as a whole, with ethnic minorities (most African-Caribbean) making up 10% of the population (Carlton Smith and Darke, 1998). The estate became infamous in the early 1990s following a spate of car-crime and ‘rioting’, attracting negative international media coverage.

This in-depth study of an SRB project was based on interviews with the members of the partnership board, other key people associated with the project, and representatives from the Government Office of the South East, Regional Development Agencies, as well as the national Social Exclusion Unit. These interviews were supplemented by participatory and archival research, and were part of a larger research project on social exclusion in Oxford and Britain. Research on the SRB prior to this study was mostly quantitative in nature (for example, Brennan et al, 1999) or focused on a larger scale (for example, Foley et al, 1998, 1999), with this study providing a unique story about an individual policy project in a particular place.

False partnerships:

Previous research on the SRB found that despite a rhetoric of community ownership, the workings of the SRB created a two-tiered, hierarchical system of policy process whereby professionals remained in control of the project, and local people and the voluntary sector were involved in less powerful and subordinate roles. Thus, while ‘partnerships’ may have ‘looked good on paper’, lead bidders exercised a disproportionate influence over ‘partnerships’ (Hall, 2000), and the time and skills involved in developing, writing and finalizing programmes in line with government guide-lines dictated that the process had to be run by a professional (Fordham et al, 1999).

Certainly, the timing of the policy ensured only superficial community consultation: in Round 5, potential bidders had 4 months to determine what the community wanted done. Given this tight time-span for community consultation (Fordham et al, 1999; Edwards, 2001), a later round of the SRB incorporated community consultation time after the completion of the bidding process, when the funding had already been granted on the basis of an existing project plan. In reality, for Round 5 of the SRB this meant that many bids were local authority officials’ personal projects that had been worked up previously and taken off the shelf.
Funding arrangements solidified this situation of professional and government control: SRB money could only be reimbursed to a partnership, rather than paid up-front, so organizations needed to have extensive legal and financial structures in place to receive a grant (Edwards, 2001). In Blackbird Leys, none of the voluntary organizations had this sort of capital or infrastructure, which played an important part in contributing to what ended up being an unequal partnership indeed. Perhaps not surprisingly therefore, given these constraints, in Blackbird Leys the local community development organization eventually had to relinquish their role as lead partner to the local city council. One could argue a lack of recognition and respect for local priorities and processes resulted in their exclusion from the policy leadership process.

**Bidding to be stigmatized?**

‘The system has for a long time put us down…They’ve told us we’re useless, we’re worthless, we’re liars, we’re cheats, we’re lay-abouts, we’re lazy…you say that to somebody often enough and they believe it…’

Problems have also been previously documented regarding the competitive bidding process for SRB grants. Not surprisingly, the contents of the bid needed to include the objectives, outputs and objects for performance measure. But this has been said to create a narrow range of projects with easily quantifiable outcomes (Ward, 1997), with ‘non-economic objectives’ receiving ‘limited priority’ (Fordham et al, 1999). The bidding process offered payment for ‘performance measure’, but not less tangible outcomes like ‘giving people back a sense of confidence or pride’ (Foley et al, 1998). Bidding thus assisted the structuring of a funding system where cultural aspects of social exclusion were hard to incorporate.

A bid also had to include ‘a systematic description of the area and why it’s deprived’ (Interview with government official, December 2000). Or, as the bidding guidance notes state, local partnerships must ‘make the case for SRB support by marshalling available and relevant information about local need’ (DETR, 1998, 6). Essentially, communities were bidding to be viewed as the most in need, the most ‘worst-off’, which could lead to unfortunate results. One member of the Blackbird Leys partnership board stated that while the best way of conceptualizing Blackbird Leys for the people living there would be ‘as an active, mature, safe, vital community’, to portray the place like this would be, as they put it, ‘a disaster in terms of levering funding’:

‘Bidding is encouraging you to focus on the negatives rather than focus on the positives, so a lot of minds are kind of aimed that way’.

Or, as one local resident put it, in order to get government funding, the area needed to be seen:

‘As poor, down-trodden, drug-ridden, alcohol ridden, crime-ridden – everything bad you can think of. That’s the way you get money.’

As another resident said,

‘I’m not going to turn around and say it’s perfect in Blackbird Leys, but they do kind of make out that [it’s] the dregs of the dregs. And I think they do exaggerate that when they’re looking for funding’.
This discourse, perhaps combined with the media representations of the place, translated into small, everyday interactions that had the potential to perpetuate exclusion. For example:

When [a senior government official] just heard I’d been in Blackbird Leys he said, ‘So were there wheels on your car when you came back?’…I think if it’s in the mind set of movers and shakers in the community that there’s likely to be criminality around then it’s likely to filter through.

But perhaps these discursive games don’t matter overall – they are simply part of the hoops that must be jumped through in order to receive government funding. However, on the contrary, I would argue these sorts of images of ‘the most deprived places’ matter very much indeed, and go to the very heart of a key potential problem with area-based social inclusion policy.

**The requirement of external expertise:**

The processes of SRB required expert knowledge to understand and participate in the running of the policy on a day-to-day level, meaning that local people’s knowledge and skills were essentially subordinated to external professional experts. To begin with, writing a bid required the employment of ‘professional bid writers’ who produced ‘slick’ documents that ‘pushed all the right buttons’ (in the case of Blackbird Leys – this was a professional external to the estate).

‘Insider knowledge’ turned out to be essential. Government guidelines were viewed by many as intimidating documents that government officers had to be called upon to interpret. As one local involved said, ‘You need an expert [to understand the guidelines] who can be paid to do nothing much else then go around to all the conferences and meetings and talk to all the people and get the jargon’. Some went so far as to say the impenetrable language of the policy documents was ‘designed to inhibit – to be a barrier to local people being involved’. Certainly, even if it wasn’t designed with this in mind it was the effect they appeared to have. As the head of the (former) local lead partner stated: ‘Things weren’t spelt out in the guidelines…we were left wondering - was it just assumed we would know this?’ No locals were involved in the bidding process, no locals were ultimately in leadership roles on the partnership board, and locals were found to attend board meetings the least: ‘The first board meeting I went to, it completely lost me…I stood up and said - I don’t know what you are talking about’.

While some did find they eventually gained a level of expertise in ‘policy-speak’ required to participate, ultimately this expert language dictated the content of meetings and the nature of policy action. Meetings dealt with the ‘strategic objectives’ and ‘quantifiable outputs’ framed in the bid, which according to the residents involved made it difficult for the ‘real concerns’ of the community outside of these to be discussed and heard. (And also clearly meant the policy was not able to evolve with developing community issues). Interestingly, one of the issues that was apparently unable to fit into the policy’s existing strategic objectives / quantifiable outputs was a suggested local solution to respond to domestic violence on the estate. Domestic violence is an issue that highlights differences and violent conflict within the community – something that doesn’t ‘fit’ within a unitary ideal of ‘the community’ as a place with unified interests and needs.
Theoretically there was a thirst for local knowledge and input. Indeed, professionals would lament the presence at SRB meetings and sponsored events of just the ‘usual suspects’ among the locals who would attend, rather than ‘the real socially excluded’ who remained elusive indeed. By definition, those locals who were already involved were not among the ‘very worst off’, who the policy makers most wanted the policy to target. Yet, neither were these locals who were involved ‘expert’ enough to make a significant contribution to the policy’s day-to-day running, which prioritized external wisdom over local ideas and norms. External experts on the local partnership board talked about the local community being ‘taught’; one described how the involvement of local volunteers with the project required a lot of ‘hand-holding’.

Overall, this approach meant that government expertise was not only prioritized but also viewed as implicitly superior to local expertise, influencing whose voices were heard, valued and acted upon. Thus, while the policy was meant to refute the notion that ‘Whitehall knows best’ (DETR in Hall, 2000, 11), the opposite essentially occurred.

**Paying the experts:**

‘One critic has dubbed the New Deal for Communities as “the new deal for consultants”’ (See Imrie and Raco, 2003, p 27)

Again, financial arrangements sealed this process. Payment for participation in the SRB was selective, and mostly went to the professional contributing to the policy who lived off the estate. Local residents with no professional status were not paid for any of their involvement in this policy – this was the community contribution, or ‘capacity building’ as anticipated. Yet their work was clearly of financial value. For example, in one striking example, when a local refused to continue her work in a voluntary nature, the work was advertised as a paid job. Not surprisingly, she reported feeling ‘used and abused’! As another resident put it:

‘They [the outside professionals] know how to [get the money], so the area ends up with a small portion of the total money [coming from the policy]. And that’s so wrong.’

Indeed, this gestures to a wider issue about the expectations of local residents when ‘regenerating’ deprived communities: the expectation that they will supply aspects of their own infrastructure and service on a voluntary basis when other more affluent communities, with clearly more resources to do so, are not expected to do the same.

‘We expect the poorest and most deprived and disadvantaged people to be running their own services…People who’ve got money, they send their kids to the Montessori school around the corner. They don’t have to set the bloody things up, run them, and go there every day.’

**What ‘community capacity building’ really means:**

Ultimately, the local residents and community workers involved in the SRB project became disillusioned with any ideas about a community partnership with the council and other government bodies. ‘They don’t understand community partnership at all’, one local said, and described partnership meetings as being told what the council thought, and ‘if any of those ideas fitted with what we thought – that’s partnership’. When relinquishing the lead role to the
city, the local community body in Blackbird Leys felt that the project was failing because the bottom-up approach it was trying to pursue was simply too idealistic.

To reiterate: while operating against a discursive backdrop of community involvement and capacity building the SRB appeared to engender relations of power that subordinated the locals involved. When members of the partnership board were asked to define ‘capacity building’ in the context of this project, answers all centred on the perceived deficiencies and dependencies of the residents themselves. For example, capacity building was said to mean: ‘It’s to teach the community how to stand on its own two feet and work to improve itself’. Or: ‘It’s about making people build their own capacity so things are sustained’. This fits in with a broader trait of some social inclusion discourses where the cause and solution to social exclusion is focused only on the excluded themselves.

5. Recognising, respecting and ‘re-valuing’ Blackbird Leys
This view of ‘the socially excluded’ as the problems to be addressed, even at a local level, can also be challenged. For example, a broader examination of the city of Oxford found that the large and small institutions of the city depended on the low income labour of many living in Blackbird Leys. This is the place that provides the space to live for the cleaners, child-care workers, retail workers, security guards, cooks and so on who form the basis of the city’s support, care and infrastructure. Recognising and respecting these aspects of places such as Blackbird Leys, uncovering the inter-dependencies between apparently polarized neighbourhoods within a city, presents a different picture, and indeed a ‘revaluing’, of ‘socially excluded’ people and places.

It is also important to recognize that, while this estate was characterized by a long-standing and loyal community of residents (some in their fourth generation of residence), other parts of the state housed people in social housing who had recently experienced the crisis of homelessness. Many of these people did not choose to be located in Blackbird Leys, were living in an unfamiliar area away from their social networks, and intended to move out as soon as they had a job, a better job, or access to alternative housing. Even if such residents were able to benefit from grants such as the SRB, they were likely to move out and move on, with other people in crisis situations moving into their place. ‘Community capacity building’ does not appear to take account of this short-term cyclical residency. Furthermore, these are surely not the sort of people who should be working on ‘community capacity building’ anyway – working to provide their own services, because some level of ‘community involvement’ must be proven in order to receive place-based government funding.

6. Conclusion
This paper has outlined an understanding of social exclusion based on theories about social justice comprising of both economic justice and cultural justice. Looking at social exclusion policy in the UK, it has applied these to macro policy discourse about social exclusion, and to the progress of social exclusion policy applied in a particular place. Social exclusion is not just about economic factors and simplistic re-distribution – it is also about a lack of recognition, and a lack of respect. Social policy that seeks to address social exclusion must therefore explore ways and means to address these aspects of ‘cultural injustice’, such as through re-valuing the role certain ‘socially excluded’ people and places play in our community, and through recognizing the skills, knowledges and wisdom they already possess. Social policy must also avoid unwittingly perpetuating the misrecognition and disrespect afforded to socially excluded people and places.
7. References


8. Suggested further reading

