“WHOSE HOUSE IS THIS?”
THE POLITICS OF MIGRATION,
HOME & BELONGING

NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2015
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A Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies Newsletter. It has been a busy year for the Centre, and the newsletter reflects our activities over the past academic year, and he work of some of our members. It also includes discussion pieces and interviews.

We are now in the final stages of our large research project, CoHaB (Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging), which is funded by the Marie Curie Initial Training Network. In April, we are hosting an innovative Summer School for all the Early Stage Researchers working on the project. The Summer School will be open to the SOAS community, and we hope to involve staff and students in a thought provoking transdisciplinary discussion on migration, and changing concepts of belonging in the contemporary world.

We have expanded our outreach work this year, collaborating with community organisations on oral history projects, theatre performances, and exhibitions, about which you will hear more in the coming pages.

Now in its 7th year, the Centre has become a thriving space for migration research and the exchange of ideas on population movements and diasporas. The Centre gains much of its dynamism from its creative and energetic postgraduate student members. Much of this newsletter is the outcome of a number of them coming together to reflect, and critically engage with, their migration and diaspora related activities and learning experiences.

As we move towards the UK elections in May 2015, it is evident that British public discourse about ‘the migration problematic’ has intensified. Consequently, as we count down to May, the Centre has organised a series of events, which focus on the place of migrants in British society. The first of these was a public lecture by Les Back, Charlyinne Bryan and Shamser Sinha on ‘New Hierarchies of Belonging’ in London, which was based on a larger research project involving 30 young migrants. Charlyinne read some poetry she had written for the project and Shamser and Les took turns to present us with different aspects of the research. The innovative format was very well received, and led to much discussion on research methods and the relationship between researchers and participants.

Our annual lecture got our series on Migrants in Postwar Britain off to an excellent start. It is 66 years since Windrush landed at Tilbury, an occasion that has become emblematic of postwar migration to this country. Yet, questions of who belongs to the national community, access to rights of citizenship, and more broadly the relationship between migration and British society are as evident as ever in the public arena. The Centre aims to provide forums where we can debate the role of migration, and migrants in 21st Century Britain, offering critical perspectives that challenge much of the often highly simplified public debate.

The newsletter has expanded in scope this year, and includes an interview with Professor Michael Keith of COMPAS, coverage of the opening of the Black Cultural Archives, as well as short articles and discussion pieces by our postgraduate students. It gives particular priority to issues connected with migrants in British society.

We wish to extend a big thank you to Celeste Harber, our CMDS research and administrative assistant, who has edited and helped design the entire publication. The newsletter is result of her hard work and commitment.

Parvathi Raman
Chair, CMDS
This year the Black Cultural Archives (BCA) entered its new, permanent location – a £7 million Grade II Listed House in Windrush Square, Brixton. Its three floors house a learning centre with meeting rooms for hire, reading room and library of over 10,000 titles (not all stored on site), Black archives collection, coffee shop and gift shop featuring BCA memorabilia and the best of Black literature from renowned Black authors like Chinua Achebe, C.L.R. James and many more.

The exhibition room has this autumn held BCA’s first exhibition in its new space, the well-titled “Re-Imagine: Black Women in Britain”, which featured well-known names like war-time nurse Mary Seacole, Baroness Doreen Lawrence and Amy Ashwood Garvey, along with the less renowned.

A well-organized, neatly displayed, modest collection consisting of two screens showing film footage on loop and mostly unframed black and white photographs, mounted alongside brief text explanations, with trendy pods providing additional audio to accompany some exhibits, the exhibition space really succeeded in providing insight and interest.

“Re-Imagine: Black Women in Britain” lived up to its name in that it did not centre around Black British women, but instead focused on Black women born in different parts of the world (Africa, the Americas and The Caribbean), who spent part of their lives in Britain. Highlighting their contribution to British society in the fields of medicine, education, The Arts and entertainment, politics and even The Armed Forces, the display successfully met its goal of inviting visitors to re-imagine Black women in contexts other than The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

“Re-Imagine” plucks Black women’s myriad achievements from obscurity and plants them not only on Windrush Square in the heart of bustling Brixton, but also at the forefront of our consciousness…where they ought to be.

For upcoming exhibitions, visit the BCA Website.

N. N. Dee is the producer and presenter of The Workplace, a radio programme about how to get into, get along and get ahead in the workplace. Tune in live Thursdays at 11:30 and on Mondays at 16:00 for the repeat on Resonance 104.4FM Search “Resonancefm — The Art of Listening” on your favourite radio app like Tunein or Radioplayer. Tweet @nndeewrites.
The UKBA & Those Who Move Around

Fiorenza Picozza

Fiorenza Picozza is a Ph.D. student in Geography at King’s College. She has completed her MA in Migration and Diaspora Studies at SOAS and has been previously working in education projects with migrants and refugees in Rome.
‘Every year over a hundred million people go through passport control to get into Britain. Most are welcome and legal; many are not. For the first time on television, we go behind the scenes with the UK Border Agency, the men and women on the front line of immigration’.

These are the words that open each episode of the TV series UK Border Force, on air on Sky1 since 2008. Throughout the episodes, the camera follows immigration controls at Heathrow, Calais and Dover, as well as some South London neighbourhoods and other areas. Viewers are guided by a narrator and, like in a fast-paced action film, they are shown close-up shots of people breaking down into tears or reacting with anger outbursts as the UKBA agents send them ‘back home’. Sometimes, we are even shown deportations — the eye of the camera follows them inside the plane, where the agents reassure passengers that the person they are ‘accompanying’ is nervous just because she is scared of flying. There is a certain pornographic gaze in this spectacle, a voyeurism that resonates with Susan Sontag’s book Regarding the Pain of Others; except that, in this case, no compassion is inspired in the spectator.

Following a bitter controversy about the government’s use of taxpayers money, Sky eventually returned the £400,000 financed by the Home Office. The move was intended to reassure viewers that the programme was ‘wholly independent’ and not subjected to government propaganda. The series, though, must be understood within the frame of the ‘hysterical’ character of British media, to borrow from Greg Philo’s comments in the Guardian a year ago in relation to the (in)famous ‘go home’ vans. The discourse on migration, in fact, has so deeply percolated into the citizens’ gaze and understanding, that no demarcated line can be drawn between the government and the media’s discourse. This is visible in the comments that viewers write about the programme on Youtube or on other web forums: some get as far as suggesting that fingerprinting is not enough, that a DNA sample should be taken when migrants are caught entering or staying illegally. Note that often these commentators take the trouble of specifying that they are not racist. Yet, at the time of illegality’s fetishism, citizenship is just another word for race. Those who fall outside the protection of the state are not entitled to the same rights as the citizen, and therefore can be subjected to enormously disruptive and harmful procedures such as detention and deportation.

Of course the matter is not exclusively British. It is inscribed in a global, naturalised discourse that dichotomises those who travel and those who migrate, and those who do so legally or illegally. The latter is interpreted as a criminal offence, a mocking gesture in the face of the sovereignty of the state on its own territory. Not surprisingly, throughout the series, the fact that migrant illegality is socio-politically produced, and the purposes that such distinctions serve, are never questioned. Migrants’
own narratives are left unexplored, and the viewer becomes witness to a re-confirmation and self-celebration of the efficiency of the state against ‘the people who move around’, following James Scott’s definition.

In the first episode, while searching a truck in Calais, one agent explains that she doesn’t have a ‘personal opinion’ while working. She acknowledges that people ‘must have their reasons for coming, but they’re not supposed to be travelling this way. We don’t take any pleasure in it, it’s just the job we do’. However, in episode 7, another immigration officer talks about satisfaction: ‘If you don’t catch them you don’t feel like your doing your job’. Whether proud of their authority or sympathetic towards migrants, the agents meticulously undertake their duties and do not show any shame in making their work a voyeuristic form of television entertainment.

The images of Calais are particularly disturbing to me, since my research involves ethnographic inquiry into the impact of the law on Afghan asylum seekers’ everyday life, perhaps the biggest community of unauthorised travellers awaiting in Calais. In the series they are described as the ‘clandestine community’, willing to do anything in order to sneak into a truck and flout immigration control. Among other things, the fact that the UK extends its jurisdiction outside its own territory via juxtaposed controls in France is never problematised.

In these shots, some of the agents’ comments are really disconcerting, for instance statements like ‘Indians are easy to deal with, they are compliant, quiet, and often just disappointed’. The kind of colonial rhetoric that these words echo speaks for itself. Moreover we are shown all the strategies that migrants undertake: where abouts in the lorries they hide, which parts of the lorry they cut in order to get in and then sew or glue from the inside. The camera meticulously lingers on such details: depending on these, the driver can be charged with abetment for not having checked carefully enough whether any seal of his truck had been tampered with. These kinds of measures turn normal citizens into police officers, very similarly to the way in which assisting drowning migrants at sea has been in recent years labelled as aiding or abetting illegal migration.

We are told that one of the major clues of migrants’ probable presence in the lorry is their ‘smell’; although the agents explain that this is caused by the time spent sleeping rough, the linkage made between a particular smell and the migrant immediately inspires racist interconnections in the mind of the viewer. Moreover, among the most praised technologies used to catch the passengers without papers is the carbon dioxide probes, designed to detect breathing. X-ray images inside the truck show migrants hidden—almost buried—amongst commodities; they too are commodities, it seems to suggest. In one of the more hyperrealist of this genre of docufilms, Michael Winterbottom’s *In This World*, we are shown the death from
suffocation of a group of refugees. The UKBA series does not go quite this far.

In an era in which terms such as ‘privacy’ and ‘informed consent’ resonate everywhere, and academic research, for instance, is extremely policed and bureaucratised, the question arises whether the people portrayed in the series had ever been consulted about the presence of the camera. The answer is almost certainly no, since we are sometimes shown migrants getting nervous and asking for the camera to be turned off. Of course, this is to reconfirm that they have something to hide. Moreover, the agents’ faces are sometimes blurred, while those of migrants are always visible, if they are not reactive enough to cover themselves with a scarf when they notice the camera filming.

Yet, despite the teeth of the UKBA, many make it through the channel. In most episodes in which young Afghan migrants are found by the agents, they laugh. This echoes a famous Italian poster of the ‘70s social movements, where a worker is laughing while the cops arrest him. The caption says: ‘A laugh will bury you’. At a closer look, this laughter is extremely important in contrasting the victimising rhetoric of (some) media and of humanitarian agencies. The UKBA agents themselves know that, for these migrants, being caught in the lorries is just an everyday routine, and those who are strong enough to persevere — both physically and psychologically — will eventually make it.

Nevertheless, Britain is no ‘El Dorado’ for undocumented migrants, contrarily to what the mayor of Calais, Natacha Bouchart, recently affirmed, claiming that Britain’s benefit system is far too generous. Consider the small rates of acceptance of asylum claims, compared to other EU countries; the extreme use of detention, which can be extended indefinitely, contrary to the 18 months maximum set by the EU; and the fact that asylum seekers are directly detained while their application is assessed.

Khalid (a fictitious name) made it though the Channel roughly a year ago. He has regular documents in Italy, which means that he cannot work and reside elsewhere. However, due to the lack of job opportunities, he has decided to move again. He has been working from his very first day in London in a Halal butcher’s shop. Although his English is very poor, his Urdu fluency was enough to be hired. Working six days a week, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., he earns 180 pounds salary a week — much below the London living wage, not to mention that he is not entitled to NHS care. In his neighbourhood, UKBA’s raids are very common, and a few months ago a friend of his was arrested while working in the kitchen of an Afghan restaurant. Khalid told me about it laughing. He knew only too well that the same fate might have been waiting for him, and for countless others who reside in the UK without the appropriate papers.
His life in Britain is much happier than it had been in Italy, he says, especially because he can support himself. Yet, he is often haunted by the fear of having made the wrong choice. His condition of ‘deportability’, as a migrant subjected to the Dublin regulation (which determines the ‘competent’ state for the assessment of an asylum claim), means that his life could be severely interrupted at any moment, consequently meaning he must start all over again. This awareness has deep implications on his bodily vigilance: whilst working, he is always watchful, ready to take off his apron and run, as soon as he sees the UKBA car approaching.
Colonial Amnesia: On Britain’s Self-Complacent Historiography

Rana Baker

Rana Baker was a student on the MA program ‘Migration and Diaspora Studies’ last year, during which time she was a prolific blogger and contributor to publications and websites such as Open Democracy and The Guardian.

Since leaving SOAS, she has continued to write for a variety of publications. Here, she gives her perspective on the phenomenon of selective historical amnesia, and its political consequences. The piece is intended to engage discussion.

“Of course,” writes M.G. Vassanji in The Book of Secrets, “the past matters, that’s why we need to bury it sometimes.” Vassanji’s exquisite novel casts light on the Indian presence in Kenya when it was “British East Africa.” It is based on an unearthed diary of a British colonial officer, which becomes the life project of the protagonist. Amid whippings, cold slaughters, and the encroaching shadow of the First World War, we are given a glimpse into the lives of characters long buried, unacknowledged, by Britain’s official historiography. This historiography, which acquits Britain of the historical burden of its presence in the “East,” is the flaunted attitude that this essay intends to question.

The line quoted from Vassanji, if we invert it, reveals the main characteristic of this attitude, namely, deliberate amnesia: “We need to bury the past precisely because it matters.” Liberal politics underlies and underscores this attitude. We must turn our eyes to the future, we are told. This future, it seems, operates in a vacuum and has no relation whatsoever to the people who paved the way for it. In other words, liberal politics works within a frame of “already-ness.” This frame becomes a sort of mechanism by which liberal states declare themselves exempt of any historical responsibility toward the people they subjugated and whose natural resources they continue to colonise. The past is already past, Ebola is already in West Africa, Israel is already in Palestine, Muslims are already potential terrorists. It is now time to move forward; we must tighten our border control in the face of West Africans,
the Palestinians must accept a settler-colonial presence, Muslims will be detained, spied on, and inspected each time they land in our airports. The West is always acting upon something that has already happened and which, we are to understand, it never caused.

The deliberate forgetfulness associated with foreign presences in non-European lands figures in the language Britain deploys to deal with the Zionist colonisation of Palestine. The frame of reference of British politicians, from right to left, is the 1967 occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem, without paying the slightest attention to Britain’s role in the 1947-1948 Nakba, or ethnic cleansing of Palestine, as Ilan Pappe demonstrates in his book The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine. That Britain’s Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour dispatched a written promise of a national home of the Jews in Palestine to Baron Rothschild is barely, if ever, mentioned in formal British historiography. Consequently, the Palestinians who arrived in Britain in the 1950s as a direct result of their dispossession by the Zionists were left out of official discourse, their political weight brushed aside unacknowledged. In Western discourse, Palestinians are generally immigrants who left their land at some point seeking a prosperous life in Europe. Their Presence Europeenne, to borrow from Stuart Hall, becomes hollowed of its socio-political and historical context without which the Palestinian quest for decolonisation loses its meaning. In her memoir, Ghada Karmi, a Palestinian writer who was expelled from Jerusalem in 1948, describes how Palestine disappeared from British public discourse by the early 1950s. “It is remarkable,” she writes, “how quickly the word [Palestine], went out of general use.”

It was not until the September 1970 Palestinian hijacking of planes that Palestinians were re-inserted in Western public discourse. These hijackings made it impossible for the West to go on with its deliberate forgetting of a people it helped to dispossess. The re-insertion, however, had to conform to the frame of ‘already-ness’ which refused to acknowledge the territories depopulated in 1947-1948 (upon which Israel stands today) as colonised land. The Palestinians, whose national identity became hardly relevant in 1950s, suddenly emerged as already-hostile, or “terrorist”, lot upon whom new laws and restrictions must be enacted. These presumptions become evident if we take a quick look at the sort of questions students applying to study in Britain have to answer as part of the visa application process. Students are required to give a “yes” or “no” answer to whether they have ever taken part in a terrorist activity and whether they have ever expressed support for a terrorist organisation. It is of course reasonable to assume that this set of questions is imposed on applicants from other “Third World” countries. Perhaps more disturbing than the set of questions per se, is the Euro-centrism of their formulation. A student who might have expressed support for what this student perceives as a liberation movement is suddenly forced
to place him or herself within a European Union, United Nations, or White House paradigm, to adopt their standpoints and terminologies, before he or she provides an answer. The applicant becomes both the subject and object of the disciplinary gaze of these institutions; s/he simultaneously becomes an observer and observed.

The amnesia of Western-British in this context-historiography is also transformative. Not only is this deliberate forgetting accompanied by necessary selectivity, but also by varying degrees of transformation which take place to make villains out of the colonised and saviours out of the colonisers. The most recent manifestation of transformative amnesia was when British MPs voted in favour of recognising a “Palestinian state” based on the 1967 formula which allows the Palestinians to establish an impossible state, broken up by Jewish-only colonies and military checkpoints, in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. In November 1947, a similar proposal was more adequately named the Partition Plan and was rightly condemned by the vast majority of the Palestinians, two-thirds of whom were being forced out of their lands in order to make room for a settler-colonial presence which became solidified as Israel six months later in May 1948. British politicians transformed this 1947 event, by means of its amnesia, into something “new” and, worst of all, “progressive” that ought to be adopted by those very Palestinians they helped displace sixty-six years ago. The celebratory rhetoric surrounding the vote has overshadowed the fact that it is, at its essence, a ratification of the Partition Plan. To many Palestinians, the vote sounds more like: “We were right in 1947.”

“Perhaps the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people,” writes Edward Said in Invention, Memory, and Place, “has been over the right to a remembered presence and, with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality, at least since the Zionist movement began its encroachments on the land.” Britain, in many ways fundamental to the creation of Israel, has constantly shied away from its historical responsibility toward its former colonial subjects. The arrogance of British historiography lies precisely in its insistence to treat the question of Palestine as though it emerged in 1967, two decades after it handed the historic land of Palestine over to Jewish-Zionist colonists, who also benefitted from the infrastructure laid out by the British to facilitate their control over, and mass expulsion of, the indigenous population the vast majority of whom lives in the diaspora. British MPs should perhaps begin by acknowledging this historical fact.
Michael Keith

Talks to Celeste Harber

Michael Keith has a personal chair in the School of Anthropology at the University of Oxford and has been the Director of COMPAS since 2008. He is working on projects in the Labour Markets, Citizenship and Belonging, Urban Change and Settlement, and Welfare clusters.

His current work develops past projects on the dynamics of urbanism, the study of cultural difference and the impact of migration on structures and processes of governance. One strand of this considers the politics of migration, integration, cohesion and everyday life in the United Kingdom. A second strand considers the dynamics of migration, city transformation and emergent markets in contemporary China.

Previously, Michael was Professor of Sociology, Head of Department and Director of the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR) at Goldsmiths College. He was also a politician in the East End of London for twenty years and was at various times leader of the Council in Tower Hamlets, chair of the Thames Gateway London Partnership (2000-2006) and Commissioner on the National Commission on Integration and Cohesion.

He Lives in Oxford.

Celeste Harber is a Masters student in the Migration and Diaspora Studies programme at SOAS, and works for CMDS part time doing research and administration. Her dissertation looks at the politics of psychological therapy provision to specific groups of asylum seekers in London.
CH Professor Keith, Could you tell me how you first got involved with working on issues around Migration?

MK Well, I suppose whether they are migration issues or not there is an interesting discontinuity in both British scholarship and public debate about the relationship between issues of ethnicity and racism, and the dynamics of migration. I studied issues of migration and its consequences at University, but my graduate work looked more at the consequences of that migration fifteen, twenty years on, in the context of the riots of 1981. At that time there had been a strong critique of studies of migrant minority communities that were treating them almost as cultural exotica, or so felt some of the more critical scholars. The suggestion was made that what was needed was more of a focus on the institutions of power which tended to reproduce the divisions in those areas where migration had occurred. The call of critical scholarship was therefore for more of a focus on the institutions of power than on the cultures of the powerless.

“...people were putting much too much focus on the exotica of minority ethnicities and not enough on the ways in which those minority ethnicities were being discriminated against.”

My doctoral research looked at the uprisings of 1981 in the context of relations between police and British black communities, and how it was coming to be that increasingly disproportionate numbers of young folk from minority backgrounds, particularly African Caribbean, were finding themselves entangled by the criminal justice system and in confrontation with the British police. So the first book I published is about confrontation between the police and British black communities, which was called ‘Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-racist society’. Now, whether that was race or it was migration it was certainly a focus on the contemporary multiculturalisms of London at that time in the 1980s, and I suppose that’s what has structured my interests since that time.

CH How did you structure that fieldwork experience, and how did the experience affect you and your work?

MK Structuring fieldwork was difficult because at that time — as now in some ways — there was a challenge as to whether or not more qualitative approaches in various academic disciplines provided solid academic results, but also there was an ethical challenge.

The fieldwork involved quite a lot of statistical analysis of those people who had been arrested during the riots of 1981, and looking at those against patterns of deprivation and so on. But, it seemed increasingly clear and important to me that you couldn’t understand the reality of what had happened unless you understood the very specific geographical-historical context in which a riot had happened.
I looked for places in London which were classified by the Home Office as having had riots, and in some of them they were very serious confrontations, but in other places they were effectively ghost riots — almost literally fictions of the Home Office in its typologies and taxonomies. At the same time, there were places that were witnessing very real and very nasty conflict, and so understanding that conflict became the greater focus of the work. My position at the time was influenced by people like Salman Rushdie, who had written quite memorably that ‘racism isn’t our problem it’s your problem’, and writers in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the time who were arguing that people were putting much too much focus on the exotica of minority ethnicities and not enough on the ways in which those minority ethnicities were being discriminated against. That led me to a primary — and I think in some ways mistaken — focus on policing as an institution. I managed to gain ethnographic access to the police in some ways... The work also looked into three areas of London, the areas defined by the then-head of the metropolitan Police Force, Kenneth Newman, as being the three front lines where there was greatest conflict between the police and British black communities. These were in Brixton, Stoke Newington, and Ladbroke Grove/Notting Hill. What became incredibly clear very quickly — although in hindsight would have been clear from the start — was that here were sets of relations that were historically produced. You couldn’t understand one side without understanding part of the other side, even though these narratives and stories, accounts of confrontation, and understanding of the conflict were significantly different between local communities and the institutions of governance, and particularly the institution of the local police. So, although it was focused ethnographically on the police it meant that you couldn’t help but engage with young people and elderly people who had lived in that area for a long period of time. In fact, part of what the thesis and book argue is that the history was meaningful to people who had lived in those areas for long periods of time, whereas history was self-consciously erased in a way, by those people trying to create a ‘police service’ in those areas. So whereas history was being erased by one part of this equation it was being always remembered and replayed by those people who had been at the tough end of the criminal justice system in particular. So that also led to a kind of ethical challenge. I was trying to work inside and outside of the academy and was involved in my Doctoral Dissertation, and working with young people who were getting into trouble with the criminal justice system. That puts great stress on the boundaries between what is the participation and what is the observation when conducting fieldwork. Nice dry facts on a school note pad become easier to deal with than complicated and messy realities where you might expect simple pictures of heroes and villains, but simple heroes and villains don’t tend to emerge from the ethnographic field if it’s engaged with serious material.
I am a great fan of Samuel Beckett, and he says, not in these terms, “fail again, fail better”... so in that sense that we will never achieve the perfect piece of work, but we can at least aspire to be better than we were last time. Hindsight is a very easy science! There are lots of ways I would do things differently, but I wouldn’t be the age of a doctoral student as I was then, so, unfortunately, you can’t reinvent the past. But there were lots of serendipitous things that happened... people who gave me access to their private lives in ways that are incredibly generous at times and surprisingly honest at times as well.

CH On a practical and political level, where does the academic fit in to migration and diaspora, but also to wider issues? And should we be looking to change?

MK ‘Migration’ is very interesting, because the category of the migrant is so deeply problematic. It is made by taxonomies that are imposed upon her or him, as much as by their own self-definition. I think those sorts of complexities of typology and taxonomy are more than just academic self-indulgence, so, if you think about the fact that states are continually classifying the status of those who move, as well as the facility for people to move in the first place, there are very obvious ways in which one’s propensity to move from one part of the world to another is limited by regimes of governance and governmentality. There is also a very straight-forward sense in which what it means to migrate has changed through time. There is a formal definition, a ‘twelve-month’ definition by which migration is classified, but how much is that to do with belonging, aspiration, identification? And if I maintain contact with my family today in a way that would have been impossible ten, fifteen, twenty years ago, (through Skype, mobile phones, various virtual networks,) what does that mean for the notion of movement as opposed to the notion of migration, as opposed to the notion of mobility more generally? So, these categories of temporality, but also the categories of spatiality — how you think about places of origin and places of destination — I think are made more complex by identifications that can be plural.

“Nice dry facts on a school note pad become easier to deal with than complicated and messy realities where you might expect simple pictures of heroes and villains, but simple heroes and villains don’t tend to emerge from the ethnographic field if it’s engaged with serious material.”

If I have family networks that cross national boundaries, the extent to which I exist in virtual worlds all over the world, has challenged what it means to think about migration, but also challenge how I think about where I belong.
One of the things I found quite striking was how you can design a research project, but by the time the research project is implemented, frequently the landscape on the ground is already changing so rapidly that you have to have a research process that is always iterative, recognizing change, particularly in some cities like London where the change on the ground is outstripping the production of research knowledge. So, we have the categories that we start with at the beginning, right the way through to the research results we end up with at the end of the process all being subject to a certain kind of flux, but I think that that alone doesn’t surrender the importance of having a research design and a research engagement that is both ethically aware, but doesn’t surrender to relativism in the sense that it plays down the power of the work that can be produced.

Because if we do those things, then we give in to the tyranny of statistics, the positivist fallacy that to measure all is to know all, and that those are the only ways we can engage with those realities. So I personally would say that means that we need to think about migration in the most broad conceptual framework, but then make sure we tie down its meaning when we are researching a particular context, a particular situation, a particular process.

CH What hope do you have for the blurring of the boundaries between the academy and policy, or policing?

MK I think these things tend to be paradoxical rather than technocratic in the sense that I think hope and despair tend to be much closer than we like to think! I began a study of urban regeneration and minority politics where the ethnography became so confused that the participation and the observation got completely mixed up and I ended up in politics instead, so, doing too much participation not enough observation I guess. So, blurring of boundaries isn’t always a good thing. I think transgressing boundaries can be incredibly productive, but we achieve things and yet recognize that they have limits. I worry about the state of British Social Science in the sense that a more reflexive, more nuanced, more epistemologically aware, more ethically committed Social Science is always in danger of being displaced by those who speak with more certain voices, perform ‘certainty’ and claim the ground of ‘scientific reason’ much less self-consciously, and I think that is deeply problematic. Right now, in 2014, we are seeing a wave of that, but

“...the category of the migrant is so deeply problematic. It is made by taxonomies that are imposed upon her or him, as much as by their own self-definition. I think those sorts of complexities of typology and taxonomy are more than just academic self-indulgence.”
that’s not the first wave, it’s the first wave of 2014! It has occurred in every single generation, probably in every single year, so there is a tension between those kinds of claims to certainty, and sometimes it’s slightly more reflexive and engaged, in a way that crosses boundaries between the academy and the world outside the academy. But also, I don’t think we should assume that just merely blurring those boundaries is a good thing in and of itself, precisely because part of what I think should happen is engagement with some of the more cognitive Social Sciences, to understand the value of what is there as well as the limits of what can be produced. So, if there were more epistemological modesty on behalf of those who measure things, and more commitment to dialogue with other academics from those involved in more qualitative research then I think that would be a more productive sort of academy than we see at the moment lots of the time.

CH Thank you very much.
Highlights from the year

Stills from Normal: Real Stories from the Sex Industry: A documentary by Professor Nicola Mai
Normal: Real Stories From The Sex Industry
(film screening)

On October 15 the CMDS hosted a talk and film screening by Professor Nicola Mai (London Metropolitan University) as part of its ongoing seminar series. Mai’s documentary, Normal: Real Stories from the Sex Industry, used actors to portray real-life migrants working in the sex industry, highlighting the complex experiences of the ‘victims’ and ‘villains’ of trafficking. His film challenged the often homogeneous representations of victims, revealing diverse narratives of trafficking and emphasizing the agency of individuals. The screening drew a large crowd both from within SOAS and the outside public, and generated a stimulating discussion around the depictions of sex trafficking.

View the trailer here

Leave2Remain
(film screening)

On 24 February 2014, the Centre hosted a screening of Bruce Goodison’s acclaimed new film Leave2Remain as part of the Spring 2014 film series. Based on real-life stories, Leave2Remain is a coming-of-age drama that depicts a world hidden from view. Featuring a soundtrack from the Mercury Music Prize and Novello Award-winners Alt-J, this film is brought to life by powerful performances from an ensemble cast of emerging talent, young refugees and acclaimed actor, Toby Jones. The screening was followed by a Q&A Panel with director Bruce Goodison, and cast members including Massieh Zarrien, Yasmin Mwanza, and Ebrahim Ismail Qorbat, which elicited an interesting and engaged debate from the audience.
Beyond Situated, Everyday, Intersectional Bordering: Translocation, Transcalarity & Transtemporality in Dover-Calais Border Narratives
(seminar)

This October, we were delighted to host Dr Kathryn Cassidy as part of the CMDS Seminar series. Dr Cassidy presented an interesting and well-attended seminar about her work on the EU Borderscapes project, describing how she hoped her work “move[d] beyond a general framing of the situated, intersectional, everyday approach to a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which theoretical insights in these fields can be grounded in research on bordering.”

She discussed some of the processes of bordering that were encountered and negotiated by two of the projects’ informants on their journey to the UK. Also outlined were the parameters and methodologies of the research project, and the strains and tensions of being part of a work package bundled together with other projects operating towards more policy-oriented goals.

A lively question session took place after the seminar, in which the uses and limitations of intersectionality approaches were discussed, and Dr Cassidy’s suggestion of Translocation, Transcalarity and Transtemporality as methodological approaches were debated.

Messages from Paradise #2
(film screening)

Director Daniela Swarowsky joined us from Berlin to screen her new film Messages from Paradise #2, and answer questions from the audience. The thought-provoking film opens a door into the life of young people and how they experience their home. How do Dutch youth born and raised in Holland with parents or grandparents from the Moroccan Rif area define their parents home country and how do they see their own identity and position in Dutch society? How do young Moroccan people from the same area see the emigration of so many Moroccans to Europe? Do they dream of Europe themselves? And what happens when both sides meet each other in Morocco during the summer holidays? How do families deal with the fact that half of the family is on the other side? And what do they expect from one another?
Joint initiatives with external organizations

British South Asian Theatre Memories since the 1970s exhibition. Photo by Hi Ching
British South Asian Theatre Memories since the 1970s
(exhibition)

The SOAS Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies and The Foundation for Indian Performing Arts (FIPA) worked last year on a joint oral history project that aimed to explore and record the history of British South Asian Theatre Memories since the 1970s. An exhibition of the project was held in the Wolfson Gallery at SOAS in 24th April – 9th May, which consisted of a collection of photographs of 32 practitioners key to the establishment and development of South Asian theatre in the UK. The launch event on 28th April included a panel discussion with Avaes Mohamad, Madani Younis (Director, Bush Theatre), Sumar Bhuchar (South Asian theatre marketing and PR), Shaheen Khan (actress), Dr. Stacey Prickett, Dr. Anne David and Dr. Avanthi Meduri (Roehampton University), chaired by the Centre’s chair, Dr. Parvathi Raman. There was a much-enjoyed live music performance by SOAS students Marta Schmidt and Amrit Kaur Lohia, and a poetry reading by Avaes Mohammad.

Jatinda Verma (Tara Arts)
photo by Hi Ching
Making Home (part of Exiles: The Ugandan Asian Story) (exhibition)

The SOAS Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies collaborated on an oral history project last year, which included recruiting SOAS student volunteers to help with collecting oral histories of Ugandan Asians coming to Britain. The project, funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and in association with The Royal Commonwealth Society and The Council of Asian People (CAP), was continued this year and in March-April the Centre hosted an exhibition of the project. Both the SOAS Phillips building 5th floor and the SOAS Wolfson Gallery were used to display the work, which included large metre-square panels showing portraits of the interviewees, and oral histories, artifacts and official documents from the time. Other exhibits included a silk sari, which hung in the main entrance to the library and Wolfson Gallery and attracted much attention from library users. The exhibition was launched on 31st March with a public event in the Khalili Lecture Theatre. Curator Sunil Shah, the Council of Asian People’s Santhosh Chandran, and Centre Chair Parvath Raman gave short speeches and guests viewed video footage from some of the interviews before moving outside for drinks and to see the exhibition.
Sunil Shah is a photographer, artist and curator based in Oxford, UK. His photographic works deal with history and memory as themes which are explored through photographs and documentary material using processes of appropriation and re-contextualisation. He has worked on four curatorial projects: two photography exhibitions and two community initiatives using photography as the basis for representing the Ugandan Asian diaspora. His latest show as curator for ‘Making Home’ was held at the Royal Geographic Society in September 2013, and the images from this are currently on display as SOAS. He is a graduate of the University of Westminster and was selected by the Photographer’s Gallery for the FreshFaced+WildEyed graduate exhibition in 2013.

Rajvi Kotecha volunteered on the project as both a researcher and interviewer. She had a personal interest in the project as both her parents are from Uganda.
RK At the heart of the ‘Making Home’ exhibition was a collection of stories, captured by oral history interviews, exploring the lived experience of expulsion and migration of Ugandan Asians. Having conducted a number of these interviews, I was moved by the multitude of voices — different ages, ethnicities, religions. Some stories contained emotionally charged and traumatic content of expulsion and making a new home in England.

How did you design the exhibition to capture this diversity and did you attempt to maintain neutrality in the telling of the stories?

SS To form a position on how you choose to represent this or any history is a critical and very important consideration in designing a public exhibition. From the early stages of my involvement with the project I was keen to avoid the very familiar narratives that are propagated by the media and certain prominent sources. More specifically, I wanted to steer away from projecting a biased account. Instead, I wanted show this history as a set of conflicting and complex positions that come about from multiple sources and depending on one’s background and experience, create certain resonances. There are many voices within the exhibition: the people we interviewed, the people who contributed, the artists and photographers, the volunteers, the writers and the public institutions who donated content. This implies a neutral position, but in the end there is never complete neutrality, there is always an edit and always a subjectivity, however, any bias was balanced by a subjectivity we brought to it as a collective (as opposed to through any one individual) without an authoritative agenda, through presenting conflicting narratives and by questioning our decisions through critical reflection and dialogue.

RK What were the thought processes behind the themes chosen for exhibition?

SS The Making Home exhibition was shaped through its own research and production. Instead of working on a set theme we decided early on that the shape of the exhibition would be formed through our research. In this way the exhibition had a layer of self-reflexivity. i.e it related to the conditions of its own being. This added authenticity to the results of the project avoiding a kind of predetermination. In simple terms, we would conduct interviews and research archives, books and visual content, and this would expose certain narratives and themes, these would then be incorporated into the exhibition structure. With a team of up to 40 volunteers taking part, we were able to pull together a very large and a richly diverse archive of selected content. Because the history of the Ugandan Asians goes back to the late 19th Century and to put this political history in context, we anchored this content to a chronological thread. It was then a case of breaking up this chronology into short chapters, where we selected quotes and images to form fragments of information. The
intention was not to re-tell a full, accurate story but to invite processes of interpretation and imagination from the viewers who could then form their own position in relation to the history. We didn’t want to tell people what to think, more so, we wanted to allow them the space in which to do the thinking.

**RK** Many people who took part in the project have lived across three continents in three generations. In your opinion, what qualities make up the character of this group of migrants? What defines their identity?

**SS** One thing is for sure is that many East African Asians now feel special and enjoy having been part of that history. For so many, life in Africa was the norm and it came with cultural experience and social relations that shaped their identities. However, without generalizing too much I would say that having migrant roots and then having been forced out of the country to migrate again to other countries, led to new opportunities. It is well known that many of these opportunities were seized and capitalised upon successfully.

**RK** How has the immigration of Ugandan Asians changed Britain?

**SS** I’m not entirely sure, I mean Leicester has probably changed a lot! In all seriousness though, Britain has benefitted hugely from migrants from all over the world for a long, long time and continues to do so. This is a question that politicians and Asian business people like to respond to in order to relate success with the economy and how much the Ugandan Asians have contributed. I am much more interested in a cultural contribution and the stories, East African Asians leave a huge legacy in Africa’s cultural and political history and they continue to do so here, over the past 40 years.

**RK** Immigration has once again become a mainstream political issue. Do current public concerns differ from those faced by Ugandan Asians arriving in the early 1970’s?

**SS** I don’t think so, as recently as a few years back when Polish people started come to the UK to work, I witnessed the same reactions as we had when I was a kid in the 70’s — I remember how some people were so racist and rude. I’ve seen how some people talk of the Polish, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Somali’s etc, I’ve even heard this from people whose own families emigrated here. It makes me think that nothing changes, as long as there are inequalities in the economy, class struggle and ignorance, there will always be someone to blame, there will always be ‘the Other’. Hopefully, projects like these help to familiarise diasporic experience as universal and allow people to think empathetically about notions of home, nationality and belonging.
Joint events with other departments within SOAS

The audience at Identities & Diversities Somali Week event (photograph by Kate Stanworth)
Identities & Diversities: Exploring the Challenges of Discrimination in the Somali Context
(event review)

On 22 October 2014 CMDS, in partnership with KAYD Somali Arts and Culture, and UCL Development Planning Unit, hosted ‘Identities and Diversities’, a Somali Week speaker event, packing the Khalili Lecture Theatre with an enthusiastic and engaged audience. Questioning the discourse of Somali homogeneity, and going beyond the iconic image of the nomadic pastoralist, three distinguished Somali scholars and activists explored other perspectives and facets of Somali identity, highlighting the experiences of young people, women, people from marginalised social groups, and those displaced internally and in the diaspora. They explored the challenges of acknowledging this diversity within Somali culture, of tackling discrimination and fighting for social justice for all in the Somali regions. Each contribution was provocative and moving, challenging the Somali audience to rethink the way that they relate to each other, and challenging non-Somalis to reconsider their preconceptions and ways of engaging with Somali society.

Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, PhD, is a specialist in clinical psychology and public health, and the author of various books. He served in leadership roles in various institutions in Somaliland and is currently Chief of Staff Counselling and Welfare for UNAMID, the African Union/UN operation in Darfur. He spoke with great critical insight about the ambiguities and tensions that underlie strong assertions of Somali identity, particularly exposing the ‘delusion of clan superiority’ and how it is perpetuated, and also highlighting the sometimes contradictory role of Arab / Muslim influences in Somali identity formation.

Ilwad Elman, the Director of Programs and Development at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Organization in Somalia, spoke eloquently about urgent issues confronting young people and women in Mogadishu, particularly efforts to tackle frequent impunity for rape and other forms of gender-based violence. A returnee herself, having grown up in Canada, she also highlighted the issue of young people from the diaspora sent back to Somalia by parents concerned about their behaviour, highlighting the problems and risks that they confront.

Finally, Omar A. Eno, PhD, scholar of African history and development formerly attached to Portland State University and York University, Toronto, and now the founder of Atlas University in Somalia, exposed the massive challenges facing ‘minority groups’ in Somalia. His stories of the difficulties encountered by those identified as Bantu-Jareer, including his first-hand experiences as a member of that group, both shocked and found resonance with the Somali audience — conscious and uncomfortable about these realities.

This lively event was ably chaired by Dr Laura Hammond, Head of the Department of Development Studies, and a specialist in Somali issues. Dr Michael Walls of UCL Development Planning Unit made an important contribution as discussant at the end of this series of critiques, emphasising the sources of strength and possibility within...
Somali society and culture.

While dealing with serious issues, as one audience member pointed out, the evening was paradoxically filled with laughter — perhaps at once a sign of discomfort and recognition of the realities exposed and dissected, and a response to the great skill and rhetorical flourish of the speakers. As Prof Eno put it, ‘I make you laugh and then I slap you!’ Afterwards, several audience members commented to me how rare and exhilarating it was to hear such frank and constructive discussion of issues, too often ignored by both the Somali community and the international community.

If you want to hear a podcast of the event, click here

KAYD Somali Arts and Culture would like to thank Dr Parvathi Raman at the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies for the financial support, and Celeste Harber of CMDS for her organisational support.

If you are interested in following these issues, the ‘Somali diversities’ google group provides a forum to share relevant news and information – please email Anna Lindley al29@soas.ac.uk to join. For more info on Somali Week 2014, click here.

Event write-up by Dr Anna Lindley / Dept Development Studies & CMDS Member / KAYD Board of Directors
Islam, Youth and Modernity in Gambia by Marloes Janson (SOAS)

(book launch)

The Centre was pleased to support the launch of Dr. Janson’s new book, in collaboration with The International African Institute (IAI) and the Department of Anthropology, the Centre of South East Asian Studies, The Centre for African Studies, and the South Asia Institute.

Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia deals with the sweeping emergence of the Tablighi Jama’at – a transnational Islamic missionary movement that has its origins in the reformist tradition that emerged in India in the mid-nineteenth century – in the Gambia in the past decade. It explores how a movement that originated in South Asia could appeal to the local Muslim population – youth and women in particular – in a West African setting, to the extent that ‘converts’ are willing to abandon their youthful pursuits and transgress generational and gender boundaries for a life devoted to God. Tracing the biographical narratives of five Gambian Tablighis, the monograph provides an understanding of the ambiguities and contradictions young people are confronted with in their (re)negotiation of Muslim identity, and the strategies they deploy in manoeuvring between being young and being Muslim. Together these narratives form a picture of how Gambian youth go about their lives within the framework of neo-liberal reforms and renegotiated parameters informed by the Tablighi model of how to be a ‘true’ Muslim, interpreted as a believer who is able to reconcile his or her faith with a modern lifestyle.”

History on Film: Slavery & The African Diaspora From a Global Perspective

(film event)

The Centre collaborated with the Department of History, the Centre for Media and Film Studies, and the Center of African Studies to put on this series of films and panel discussions with the filmmakers. The three-day series included screenings of films about, amongst others, democracy and ethnicity in Benin, Afro-Brazilian memories in Rio de Janeiro, Afro-centric notions of beauty in Brazil, and identity and masquerade dance between Mozambique and Somalia. Each day included a chaired discussion.
Spotlight on Our Members

photograph by Emmanuel Maillard from the award-winning book *Borders & Margins* by CMDS member Dr. Maryann Bylander

She also has the chapter ‘Histories and contemporary challenges of crisis and mobility in Somalia’ (co-written, Laura Hammond and Anna Lindley) in Anna Lindley [Ed] *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge 2014). Follow this [link](#) to get a 20% discount.

She has also been continuing to work with UNHCR on their Global Initiative on Somali Refugees. She wrote a Background Paper, “History, overview, trends and issues in major Somali Refugee displacements in the near region,” that was used in a High Level Panel Meeting chaired by the High Commissioner in November 2013 and at a Ministerial Meeting held in Addis Ababa in August this year. Paper is available [here](#). The Ministerial Meeting resulted in the issuing of ‘The Addis Ababa Commitment Towards Somali Refugees’.

Anna Lindley has published the edited volume “*Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*” which includes contributions from several CMDS members. The initial workshop was supported by CMDS in 2012.

Other publications this year include:


*Questioning the notion of ‘drought displacement’: environment, politics and migration in Somalia*, Forced Migration Review, No. 45 (2014)


Dr. Bylander reports several recent publications:


“Borrowing Across Borders: Migration, Credit and Migra-Loans in Rural Cambodia” Development and Change 45(2) (2014)

Her book *Borders and Margins* (collaborative project with Emmanuel Maillard) was published in Cambodia, in coordination with Friends International. Photos from the book have won awards from contests sponsored by COMPAS and the ILO. The authors also published a photo essay in the Phnom Penh Post.

Dr Bylander was also awarded a grant as part of the ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Award, of the American Sociological Association ($6,390) which was awarded for research on the connections between migration and microcredit in Cambodia.
photograph by Emmanuel Maillard from the award-winning book Borders & Margins by CMDS member Dr. Maryann Bylander
Dr Keenan reports that her book, titled ‘Subversive Property: Law and the Production of Spaces of Belonging’ was published with the Routledge Social Justice Series in July.

This year she also won the Socio-Legal Studies Association Prize for Article of the Year, for her paper, ‘Property as governance: time, space and belonging in Australia’s Northern Territory intervention’ Modern Law Review 76(3) 464–93.

Dr Harris has published the following:

Dr. Elgenius has recently been involved in the international project assessing communal and individual effects of the economic slump ‘Hard Times’ with Professor Anthony Heath (Oxford) and Tom Clark (Guardian).

A book has been published from this project:

Hard Times: The Divisive Toll of the Economic Slump
Yale University Press, (2014)

Clark and Elgenius highlighted some of their findings in a Guardian Feature called ‘Benefits crackdown leads to divide and rule within poor communities’. This project has assessed the reality of the recession for the disproportionately effected groups including e.g. ethnic minorities, disabled, young men, single mothers. Gabriella presented ‘Findings from the ‘Hard Times Project’: division and isolation following the tornado effect of the economic slump’ at the Institute of Education on 11 November and at the Woolf Institute Roundtable event in Cambridge on 13 September, 2014.

Gabriella is currently preparing a book with Professor Peter Aronsson, “National Museums and Nation-building in Europe 1750-2010: Mobilization and legitimacy, continuity and change” Routledge, (December 2014)

This volume uncovers the strategic nature of nation-building and the role of museums, ‘high-culture’ and cultural heritage in this process. National museums are perceived of as manifestations of cultural and political desires as opposed to straightforward representation of the historical facts of a nation. The authors assess the degree to which national museums have created models and representations of nations, their past, present and future, and proceeds to assess the consequences of such attempts. This book constitutes the first comprehensive and comparative perspective on national museums in Europe and their intricate relationship to the making of nations and states in accordance to dominant narratives. The latter is relevant with increasing diversification, competing and alternative narratives.

Gabriella presented a related article entitled ‘Politcising apology and performing egalitarianism: and the repatriation of cultural (national) heritage and human remains between the ‘Nordic’ countries’ in Manchester at the annual CRESC conference on Power Culture and Social Framing and on 23rd October at a workshop on post-colonial narratives at Linneus University in Sweden.

Gabriella is continuing to research two related projects this academic year:

Diaspora communities and Homeland in the United Kingdom ‘To what extent does homeland matter?’ (funded by the British Academy and John Fell)

Can national events create cohesion? Why are some national events more successful than others? (multi-funded). This conducts research into unexplored issues on ‘national events’, ‘national days’, diversity and cohesion.
Dr Davé reports the following publications:


She also spent five weeks in Moscow in June-July conducting fieldwork on the issues of ‘legality’ of Central Asian migrant workers in Moscow.

Professor Hintze reports that her student, Rastin Mehri, of the Department for Study of Religions, completed a PhD on The Zoroastrian Community of British Columbia, 2014.

Jonathan Goodhand has been awarded part of a Cluster Grant to lead a project with the research theme ‘States, frontiers and conflict in the Asia-Pacific’.

The 3 year project brings together a multidisciplinary team from the University of Melbourne and SOAS and sits under the under the ‘Security and Political Engagement’ research theme. Its starting point and underlying assumption is that frontier regions constitute a particularly fruitful vantage point for understanding processes of statebuilding and contestation, development and transformation in Asia. It is their contention that incorporating a frontier perspective would lead to significant changes in policy and practice.

The first strand, ‘States, sovereignty, legal pluralism and violence,’ looks at how statebuilding and contestation unfold through fragmented sovereignty, decentralized violence, jurisdictional complexity and multiple political allegiances, and how borderland elites and populations exploit and manipulate the borders imposed upon them.

The second strand explores borderland economies as highly connected spaces, characterized by nets of extraversion linking spaces of production, exchange and consumption. The third strand of the research will look at Migration, networks and flows, and explores the drivers, dynamics and effects of movement into, out of and within frontier zones, and the attempts by states to ‘fix’ populations (and commodities) in space.
Spotlight on Our PhD Candidates

photograph by Emmanuel Maillard from the award-winning book *Borders & Margins* by CMDS member Dr. Maryann Bylander
Lennon is a PhD student at SOAS whose research focuses on the narratives and experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain, particularly how they consume space and place, and consequently negotiate being and belonging, through music. It aims to bring to the fore experiences of migrant spaces that are not necessarily characterised by abjection, but manifest the complexities of migrant and diasporic identifications, through a rarely explored avenue in the studies on Zimbabwean migrants, music.

Carrie is currently studying for a PhD at SOAS. Her current research focuses on how government-led redevelopment and economic diversification programs, immigration controls at the border and within the city, and the increased policing of unlicensed vending in Paris’s Goutte d’Or neighbourhood are affecting relations between migrants and non-migrants. Her research touches on issues of racism, affective economies, civic associations and belonging in neighbourhoods undergoing socioeconomic restructuring.

Nydia A. Swaby is one of the two Early Stage researchers doing a fellowship at CMDS under the CoHaB project. Her research examines black British feminism as a set of ideologies, discourses, and practices that might be termed diasporic and seeks to theorize the term ‘black’ and unpick the notion of ‘blackness’.

As part of her CoHaB fellowship, Nydia spent term one at the University of Stockholm in the department of Social Anthropology and presented a paper entitled ‘Black British feminism, differentiation, and the dynamics of diaspora space’ at the Centre for research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO) seminar on December 2. Her article entitled ‘Disparate in voice, sympathetic in direction: gendered political blackness and the politics of solidarity’ was published in a recent issue of Feminist Review that commemorates 30 years since the publication of ‘Many Voices, One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives’. Nydia will also participate in a panel discussion during the launch party for the special issue at Goldsmiths College on December 11.

Returning to SOAS in term two, Nydia will run tutorials for Gendering Migration and Diasporas and The Anthropology of African and Asian Communities in British Society. With support from CMDS, she plans to host a screening of Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years and will help to organize the CoHaB summer school, which takes place in April 2015.
Špela Drnovšek Zorko
Department of Anthropology & Sociology

Špela is also one of the Early Stage Researchers undertaking a doctoral research fellowship at SOAS under the CoHaB project. Her research addresses intergenerational family narratives among migrants from the former Yugoslavia living in Britain. She is primarily interested in how mediated memories of Yugoslavia shape notions of belonging, gender, and notions of the political, as well as how intergenerational investments in the past are constructed at an intersection of diaspora and post-socialism. Her research further aims to locate such homing encounters within British trajectories of migration and belonging, and within spatiotemporal narratives of the present.

In the past year, she has presented a paper entitled “Researching memory and temporality at a point of diasporic post-socialism” at the SSEES Postgraduate Conference, UCL, and a paper on “Mobile memory, mobile space: methodologies of narrative and movement” at the Memory on the Move Workshop at the Central European University in Budapest. Her article “Diasporic memory and narratives of spatiotemporality” is forthcoming in ‘Symbolism’ (Special Issue on Diaspora, December 2014). Špela has also been doing a non-academic secondment at Migrant Voice, a migrant-run media organization based in London, and teaching tutorials on the “African and Asian Cultures in Diaspora” course in the anthropology department.
CMDS Members (SOAS)

FIONA ADAMSON ......................................................... Politics & International Studies
NADJE AL-ALI ............................................................... Gender Studies
DIAMOND ASHIAGBOR ......................................................... School of Law
MASHOOD BADERIN ......................................................... School of Law
JING BIAN ................................................................. Financial & Management Studies
RICHARD BLACK ............................................................. Pro-Director of Research & Enterprise
VLADMIMIR BRAGINSKY ................................................. South East Asia
CRISPIN BRANFOOT .......................................................... Art & Archaeology
JAMES BRENNAN ............................................................. History
ANNA CONTADINI ............................................................. History of Art & Archaeology
DIAMOND ASHIAGBOR ......................................................... School of law
NADJE AL-ALI ............................................................... Gender Studies
KAI EASTON ................................................................. Development Studies
BHAVNA DAVE ............................................................. Politics & International Studies
LINDIWE DOVEY ............................................................. Languages & Cultures of Africa
CATRIONA DREW ............................................................ School of Law
LUCY DURAN ................................................................. Music
RACHEL DWYER ............................................................. Languages & Cultures of South Asia
KAI EASTON ................................................................. Languages & Cultures of Africa
GABRIELLA ELGENIUS ....................................................... IFCELS
SAMİ EVERETT ............................................................... Anthropology & Sociology
ROSSELLA FERRARI ........................................................ Languages & Cultures of China & Inner Asia
PAUL GIFFORD ............................................................... Study of Religions
CHEGE GITHIOA ............................................................. Languages & Cultures of Africa
CHARLES GORE ............................................................. History of Art & Archaeology
BEN GROOM ................................................................. Economics
LAURA HAMMOND ........................................................ Development Studies
ADAM HANIEH ............................................................... Development Studies
JANE HARRIGAN ............................................................ Economics
HERMIONE HARRIS ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
RACHEL HARRIS ............................................................. Music
CATHERINE HEZSER ........................................................ Study of Religions
ALMUT HINTZE ............................................................. Study of Religions
KEITH HOWARD ............................................................. Music
BRUCE INGHAM ............................................................. Linguistics
TANIA KAISER ............................................................... Development Studies
SARAH KEenan ............................................................. School of Law
LALEH KHALILl ............................................................... Politics & International Studies
KARIMA LAACHIR ........................................................ Languages & Cultures of the Near & Middle East
KEVIN LATHAM ........................................................... Anthropology & Sociology
ANNA LINDLEY ............................................................. Development Studies
YOSEFA LOSHITZKY ......................................................... Centre for Media & Film Studies
FRIEDERIKE LUEPKE ........................................................ Linguistics
DOLORES MARTINEZ ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
WERNER MENSKI .......................................................... School of Law
NIMA MINA ................................................................. Languages & Cultures of the Near & Middle East
PETER MUCHLINSKI ........................................................ School of Law
SCOTT NEWTON ............................................................ Development Studies
PAOLO NOVAK ............................................................. School of Law
CAROLINE OSSELLA ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
JOHN PARKER ............................................................... History
PARVATHI RAMAN ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
CHRISTOPHER DAVIS ....................................................... Anthropology & Sociology
JOHN CAMPBELL ........................................................... Anthropology & Sociology
KOSTAS RETSIKAS ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
MARIE RODET ............................................................... History
ELAHEH ROSTAMI-POVEY ........................................... Media & Film Studies
RUBA SALIH ................................................................. Gender Studies
EDWARD SIMPSON ........................................................ Anthropology & Sociology
GUHARPAL SINGH ........................................................ Arts & Humanities
SUBIR SINHA ............................................................... Development Studies
STEFAN SPERL ............................................................... Languages & Cultures of the Near & Middle East
ANNABELLE SREBERNY ................................................ Media & Film Studies
CAROL TAN ................................................................. School of Law
TANIA TRIBE ............................................................... History of Art & Archaeology
ALYOSXA TUDOR .......................................................... Gender Studies
YAIR WALLACH .............................................................. Languages & Cultures of the Near & Middle East
ILANA WEBSTER-KOGEN .............................................. Music
LYNN WELCHMAN ........................................................ School of Law
AMINA YAQIN ............................................................. South Asia Department
COSIMO ZENE ............................................................. Study of Religions